Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 142 Amalia Castro

Elementary 01M142

100 Attorney Street
Manhattan
NY 10002

Principal: Daphna Gutman

Dates of Review:
February 6, 2018 - February 7, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 142 Amalia Castro serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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## School Culture

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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To what extent does the school... Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

### Additional Finding

#### Proficient

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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To what extent does the school... Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Additional Finding

#### Proficient

## Systems for Improvement

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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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To what extent does the school... Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products

### Additional Finding

#### Well Developed

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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To what extent does the school... Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community

### Additional Finding

#### Proficient

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
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Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection

### Area of Celebration

#### Well Developed

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<th>Area</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

### Additional Finding

#### Proficient

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<th>Area</th>
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<td>5.1</td>
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Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS
Findings
School leaders support the professional growth of teachers using frequent cycles of observations. Feedback addresses strengths and challenges, including next steps for improvement of practice.

Impact
School leadership and teacher leaders have an effective system to observe and support teacher practice through follow-up collegial conversations and professional learning opportunities, resulting in the elevation of instructional practices and implementation of strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence
• The school leadership team has an effective formal observation cycle in place to support the professional development of teachers and provide actionable feedback on instructional practices and next steps for improvement. Similarly, frequent informal non-evaluative instructional walks and follow-up collegial conversations provide additional opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and identify further professional learning needs to close gaps in classroom practices. School leaders frequently analyze teacher observation data to determine progress toward meeting the schoolwide instructional goals and identify specific practices that require support. Additionally, the analysis of assessment data and student work products allows teacher peers to identify instructional strategies to close achievement gaps, thereby leading to improved pedagogy. Teachers report that participation in collaborative team work and professional learning sessions, along with meaningful feedback on formal and informal observations by school leaders and colleagues, has strengthened their pedagogical practices. A review of teacher observation reports indicate that teachers receive specific actionable next steps for improvement. As a result, the school’s Advance data shows 93 percent of teachers rated effective or highly effective, with 75 percent of teachers rated highly effective in their practice. This is an indication that the school leaders’ observation cycles are having a positive impact on classroom instruction.

• The school leaders’ pedagogical expectations for teachers are shared with staff at the beginning of the school year so that teachers know the expectations for teacher practice and student learning and can align their professional goals to the schoolwide instructional foci. Schoolwide component ratings of the Danielson Framework for Teaching are monitored by school leadership, and findings are shared with the professional development committee to identify trends and patterns in instruction. Components identified as areas in need of improvement are then addressed. For example, teachers needing extra support in specific domains are encouraged to join study groups to collaboratively improve their practice by adopting research-based strategies. Moreover, individual teachers needing targeted support are offered in-class coaching from an administrator and/or a guided intervisitation, thereby resulting in teachers’ meeting their professional goals and the school leaders’ instructional expectations.

• The vast majority of teachers participate in peer-to-peer intervisitation in which they provide collegial feedback to one another. During follow up meetings, intervisitation team members share best instructional practices that will address any gaps seen in instruction. For example, teachers report that one result of observing specialists such as a speech therapist provide intensive intervention to students has been the strengthening of their own abilities to support the language needs of students by emulating the specialist’s practice in their own classrooms.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessment data to make adjustments to curricula and instruction. Teachers use rubrics aligned with curricula and content standards across grades and disciplines.

Impact

Common assessment data are used to assess students’ progress toward meeting the standards and inform curricular revisions. Although teachers use rubrics to provide feedback to students regarding their progress and performance, it is not yet meaningful for students in the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels, teachers use common assessments, rubrics, and checklists aligned to grade level curricula, Common Core Learning Standards, and content standards. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) writing rubrics and checklists were adopted to promote consistency across disciplines, with teachers using the rubrics to assess student work products, and students using checklists to self-assess their progress. Students stated that the use of exemplars and mentor texts in conjunction with teacher feedback during conferencing has helped improve their writing, and they feel these practices are preparing them for the next grade level and the State English Language Arts (ELA) assessment. However, a review of student work indicated that the quality of actionable feedback they received varied across content areas. While some students received specific next steps such as, “you need to add more text evidence to support your claim,” others had unclear statements such as, “your introduction needs work.” Furthermore, students reported that the meaningful feedback comes mainly in their writing tasks.

- Across grades and disciplines, teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward achieving mastery of the standards, to identify trends in student achievement, and to make adjustments to curricula and pedagogy. School leaders and teachers adopted the TCWRP after an analysis of assessment data and student work samples revealed that students were struggling to reach mastery in writing. Similarly, to improve the number of students meeting or exceeding the standards in math, teachers use EngageNY mid- and end-of-module assessments, which teacher teams continue to revise to meet the needs of all students.

- Data related to students’ pre-reading skills, such as letter identification and phonemic awareness, are collected by kindergarten teachers and stored on the school’s shared drive. This allows teachers and service providers such as speech therapists and reading interventionists to collaboratively plan targeted lessons using common data. In addition, teachers meet in small groups with students weekly and use running records to determine reading groups and revisions to curricula and instruction. Across grades, teachers reported using student common assessment data to create instructional groups and provide differentiated instruction to close the achievement gap for struggling students.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Rigorous academic tasks that promote college and career readiness are planned to accommodate a range of learner styles in most classes.

Impact

The curricula reflect thoughtful planning and integrate tasks with rigorous habits, building coherence across subjects and grades and supporting the engagement of students in higher order thinking. The instructional shifts and high-level tasks are not yet strategically embedded across all disciplines and classes, though.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership team and faculty are focused on implementing the instructional shifts and the Common Core Learning Standards across content areas and grades. The leadership team decided to supplement their English Language Arts (ELA) curricula by utilizing the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) units of study as the foundation of their literacy instruction. This resulted in increased opportunities for students to engage with complex texts and in rigorous writing tasks by utilizing the workshop model for planning instruction. A review of lesson plans indicates that ELA tasks consistently require students to make a claim or support an argument using a variety of sources, annotating textual information that they intend to cite during classroom discussions or when writing a persuasive essay.

- Math teachers use the EngageNY modules as the basis for the math curricula. In addition, school leaders opted to partner with an outside educational consultant to provide professional learning sessions focused on implementing the instructional shifts and planning supplemental high level academic tasks. For example, some math lessons include student-centered, inquiry-based tasks that require students to hold collaborative conversations about the mathematical concepts being learned and to consider multiple solution strategies and perspectives. However, a review of lesson plans and units of study reveals that the vast majority of teachers have not yet strategically embedded the instructional shifts in all disciplines to build instructional coherence across grades and content areas.

- Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills and provide supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. For example, teachers developed a read-aloud curriculum to provide all students with access to complex texts and opportunities to engage in high-level peer discussions through integrating supports such as conversation starters and accountable talk stems. A review of lesson plans indicates that most teachers plan small group instruction to provide targeted instruction for struggling students and supports for ELLs and students with disabilities by planning for scaffolds in their instruction.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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#### Findings

Teaching strategies align to schoolwide goals and provide entry points through the use of scaffolds to promote student participation in challenging academic tasks and high levels of discourse.

#### Impact

Students engage in high levels of thinking and discussion, leading to the development of meaningful work products across classrooms. However, the strategic use of teaching practices and high-quality supports to engage all students in challenging tasks is not yet employed in the vast majority of classes.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, instructional practices are aligned to the school’s articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. One overarching schoolwide belief is that pedagogy must engage students in purposeful reading and writing in every lesson to strengthen the capacity for all students to exhibit high levels of learning. School leaders and teachers identified utilization of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCWRP) workshop model as the best way to align instructional practices to this schoolwide goal and ensure that students are engaged in rigorous academic tasks in kindergarten through fifth grade. The workshop model was observed being utilized by teachers in most of the classrooms visited.

- In most classrooms, lessons and teaching documents represent an understanding of students’ diverse needs, resulting in academic tasks and activities that engage students in appropriately challenging cognitive activity. Some lessons include supports such as scaffolds and generate challenging discourse to intellectually engage students, including students with disabilities, struggling students, and the highest achieving students. In a co-taught second grade reading class, the teachers parallel taught the lesson by modeling how readers gather information from multiple texts to become an expert on a topic. The teachers used purposeful grouping to transition students into leveled guided reading groups and provided differentiated tasks to challenge them at their appropriate levels, thereby providing multiple entry points for students. Additionally, students requiring further support were given verbal prompts, visuals, and “ways to say more” discussion stems as scaffolds as they worked collaboratively to answer the essential question of the lesson: How can I gather information to become an expert on a topic?

- In a fourth grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, students closely read a mentor text to identify literary elements and devices the author used to create a high-quality essay. Students were provided with an inquiry question: “What makes for a good literary essay?” and were asked to annotate while reflecting on how they might incorporate some of the components of the essay into their own writing. The teachers ability-grouped the students to work together in pairs while they provided one-on-one and small group supportive instruction to students requiring additional assistance. All students were provided with Universal Design for Learning supports, such as an essay outline and charts with transitional words and components of an essay. However, the level of differentiation and supports to engage all students in challenging tasks varied across the other classrooms visited.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
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Findings

The school leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to students and their families. Students and parents receive guidance, advisement, feedback, and support to meet those expectations.

Impact

Systems of accountability for students and consistent communication to families about students’ progress result in the majority of students and their families being aware of their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff members implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations to students and their families that are connected to a pathway to college and career readiness. To ensure that all students are challenged to meet or exceed those expectations, students and parents are provided feedback on student progress in English Language Arts (ELA) via the assignment of “reading jobs,” their link to career readiness and responsibility. Students are assigned reading “jobs,” assignments and tasks which require them to read a minimum of twenty minutes per day, which they must complete in order to reach their individual reading goals and move up to the next reading level. Similarly, students are required to maintain a self-assessment checklist during class to ensure that they meet the learning objective of the lesson. Parents reported that the majority of teachers also utilize an online application that allows them to monitor their children’s academic and behavioral progress on their smartphones and interact via text messaging with their teachers. As a result, families are able to understand where their child is on the continuum toward college and career readiness and being prepared for the next grade level.

- Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school’s expectations to prepare all students for college by its strong focus on the schoolwide goal of improving students’ literacy skills. Parents receive regular updates on students’ progress in reading and writing through traditional means such as backpack reports and parent-teacher conferences, but most families opt to use the school’s online system which allows parents to monitor their progress in real time. Parents expressed appreciation that they can access information about upcoming events and workshops via the school’s website in addition to traditional means.

- The school’s leadership team and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students but also to providing the ongoing support required to meet those expectations and promote student ownership of their academic work. The staff has a set of clear structures, such as guidance for fifth grade students that assists them in applying for a middle school of their choice. Indeed, parents reported positively about the support they received in the middle school application process. Parents further reported that if their children are struggling in a class, they are immediately notified and offered additional academic support during the school day. Moreover, they can also opt to enroll their children in afterschool help or Saturday Academy.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
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**Findings**

The majority of teacher teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school goals and support implementation of the Common Core and the professional growth of teachers.

**Impact**

The participation of teachers in Teaching Learning Communities (TLCs) is resulting in increased instructional capacity for teachers and access to the curricula for groups of students, thereby positively affecting student learning across grades and content areas.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations to ensure the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards across grade levels and content areas. School leaders have partnered with an outside educational consultant to coach the TLC teams that meet weekly. These teams collaborate on revisions to curricula and instructional resources while sharing best practices that support multiple entry points into lessons for a variety of learners. The work products generated by the collaborative teacher teams, such as lesson plans, unit plans, and student materials, are shared among faculty at grade level meetings and during professional learning sessions. In addition, the resources are posted to the school's shared drive to allow access to the documents by all staff members. Teachers reported that it makes co-planning and planning for support staff easier because they have access to all of the curricula for the classes that they work with and can essentially meet virtually at any time.

- School leaders have created structured time for the majority of teachers to meet in grade level teams and TLCs. Teachers use this time to analyze trends in student achievement data and student work products, including writing samples, to make adjustments to curricula at all grade levels, including the scope and sequence of the units of study of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program. Additionally, teacher teams have created a read-aloud curriculum to provide students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), with additional opportunities to engage with complex texts and high-level discussion, with supports from staff.

- Teacher teams use a structured protocol to examine student work samples to ensure alignment to the Common Core, the instructional shifts, and the school's instructional foci. During a fourth-grade team meeting, teachers were observed using the ATLAS protocol to examine student writing samples to generate noticings and wonderings. Some teachers noticed that the majority of students had done much pre-writing planning, resulting in well-organized paragraphs. Consequently, they wondered what instructional strategies were utilized that led to this organized writing, so that they could be replicated across classes. In addition, a review of agendas and meeting minutes indicates that a major focus of the TLC teams is to work on adjusting the math curriculum and pedagogy. The goal is to increase student engagement in math lessons by shifting instructional practices to include more student-centered discussions about mathematical concepts and identifying multiple solution strategies to problem-solving.