Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School Of The Arts And Technology

Elementary 03M166

132 West 89 Street
Manhattan
NY 10024

Principal: Debra Mastriano

Dates of Review: November 28, 2017 - November 29, 2017

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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. 166 The Richard Rodgers School Of The Arts And Technology serves students in grade K 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The use of budget, coaches, and partnerships and other organizational decisions, are well aligned to support the school's instructional goals. Additionally, the use of staff time is structured so teachers meet regularly and deliberately to reflect on curriculum, student work, and align professional responsibilities with the school's instructional goals.

Impact

Strategic organizational decisions have led to meaningful student work products and resulted in improved instruction that engages students in challenging academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Students across grades are improving their reading and writing skills as a result of school leaders strategically assigning teachers to professional development that is aligned purposefully to the instructional focus of improving student’s phonemic awareness. School leaders acquired a phonemic program and hired coaches who train and collaborate with teachers to equip them with instructional strategies that effectively and efficiently meet the learning needs of all students. Data analysis of weak phonemic awareness skills in grades three through five informed this decision. Because of the strategic intervention, data for students in tiers one through three has evidenced a closing of the achievement gap in addition to students showing improvement in phonemic awareness across the grades.

- Staff survey results indicated a desire by teachers to increase their professional collaboration. As a result, a staff community-building program was established that supported staffs' level of comfort with administration and it has led to an improved sense of trust. Additionally, a charter was established between all staff to create an environment that supports accountability amongst teachers without micromanagement. All staff signed the charter and plan to revisit the impact of this organizational decision through periodic surveys to ensure they are contributing effectively to the instructional goals of ultimately improving student learning.

- Teachers meet regularly during scheduled inquiry meetings to review student work and have common planning time to ensure coherence with curricula and instructional approaches are consistent across grades. The professional learning meetings use protocols to review student work and plan for instructional next steps. Additionally, the teachers are able to norm their understanding and implementation of the school’s instructional foci, including the use of mood meters addressing social-emotional learning, and increased reading and writing across all content areas.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teachers consistently provide scaffolds for students to complete their work, however, the scaffolds lack extensions and high-quality supports.

Impact

Not all students, especially the highest achievers, are engaged in challenging and differentiated tasks and provided opportunities to demonstrate their higher-order thinking skills in their work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers generate and provide students with scaffolds and tools to support their engagement in challenging tasks. In a grade four math lesson, high-quality supports were provided to engage all the students with completing a task at three proficiency levels. However, during a grade four writing lesson, students were tasked with using mentor texts when preparing to write their own persuasive essay. Students used a provided checklist to identify proper elements from the mentor text. Some students were provided with an additional tool to “stretch their [thinking] out,” however, it was not evident how students who were provided the additional support referred or utilized the tool to engage critically in review of the mentor text. Similarly, in a grade three reading class, students were provided note-taking papers to annotate their findings while reading, although guidance to extend their thinking with the note takers did not lead to higher-order thinking for most. Overall, scaffolds that were provided to support student engagement in appropriate tasks were not well-matched to extend students thinking or of high-quality.

- Students in a grade five social studies class analyzed historical maps from the perspective of an explorer to determine how geography played a role in explorers' routes and destinations. Partners discussed and inferred unique aspects of the maps’ design and layout to interpret the cartographers thinking. However, similar high levels of thinking and ownership were not uniformly observed in all classes. For example, in another class, students were practicing writing the letters p and j; however, many of the students were already fully capable of writing full sentences. Additionally, although the learning objective was to practice penmanship, only some students were provided sky-worm paper to demonstrate their competency.

- During a grade two math lesson, students in small groups rotated around to different stations seamlessly and used selected challenge cards to complete an extension task and demonstrate critical thinking. Although some classes in the younger grades followed a similar practice, opportunities to strategically engage in high-quality student-centered challenging work was not embedded across all grades, even though students stated they desired and were prepared to handle more extensions with their assignments.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data, consistently align to the Common Core Learning Standards, and integrate the instructional shifts.

**Impact**

All Students have access to curricula and instruction that cognitively engages them thus promoting college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curricular planning documents strategically integrate the instructional shifts across all topic areas through purposeful reading and writing units of study. Students are challenged to write high-quality persuasive, argumentative, and personal narrative essays that require evidence to support their claims. Furthermore, students write referencing exemplary mentor texts, informative and explanatory texts. As a result, coherence of English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts are embedded across grades, and result in students producing above-grade level quality work products, according to standardized rubric criteria.

- Lesson plans include learning objectives strategically connected to the Common Core Learning Standards. For example, a grade five-lesson plan promotes college and career skills of analyzing historical maps from a variety of perspectives and periods. A grade three-lesson plan designed to have students interpret whole-number quotients, makes connections to using multiplication and division to solve complex word problems by creating equal groups and arrays.

- Lesson documents ensure access to learning by teachers’ planning and revising tasks to meet the needs of all students. During weekly grade level meetings, teachers review curriculum and plan for upcoming lessons/units using student work products. Additionally, they follow a protocol to identify grade-level standards and incorporate checklists and rubrics that support the instructional focus of reading and writing. Student data is also used to plan additional instructional supports and scaffolds to meet the needs of the students. Grade two teachers created below level, on level, and above level different value placemats to support student access when representing two digit numbers with base ten blocks. Teachers further adjusted the above grade level placemats to include a hundreds column for advanced students based on their competency and prior performance.
Findings

Across grades, teachers use a variety of assessment measures to align curricula and instruction with student progress toward goals and to provide actionable feedback to students. Additionally, teachers’ checks for understanding are ongoing, although the protocol of student self-assessment is less frequently part of classroom protocols.

Impact

Actionable feedback that is provided to students regarding their achievement and baseline exams is used to adjust curricula, although it is not yet providing all students with an awareness of their next learning steps. Checks for understanding are leading to effective adjustments to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Most students receive feedback on their assignments from teachers and peers in the form of glows and grows. Students reported the feedback they receive informs them of where they did something they always do and something they still need to work on. One student expressed this helps “so next time I can write with a lot of detail.” However, several other students shared assignments that they were unable to explain the grade they received.

- A grade five student shared an opinion piece he wrote on banning chocolate milk in school. He highlighted criteria from the rubric where he performed on grade and above grade level. He was able to express that this informs him of his “approaching grade six learning, although I am not there yet.” However, most students were not able to offer a similar clear portrait of mastery using their rubrics.

- Teachers use a variety of reading and math assessment measures to adjust curricula and grouping of students. For example, assessment results guide teachers to assign specific students interventions to support their learning such as counters or array makers when writing multiplication facts. Other students may be provided sentence stems to explain their skip counting techniques when doing multiplication. Similar practices are used in ELA to provide checklists or small group instruction for students, while more advanced learners work independently to complete their assignments. Additionally, assessments are used to identify students who perform significantly below grade level as a marker to provide them with alternative curricula through pull-out services to guide them with explaining their thinking and advance their learning.

- Teachers use a variety of assessment practices as checks for understanding during instruction to make effective and timely adjustments. For example, a grade three teacher directed several students to discuss how to improve the playground and recess time prior to writing their persuasive essay so they could develop more clarity of persuasion. Based on their responses to the teacher initiated questions, some students in a grade three math class were provided additional number lines to help them find all the factors that go into 24. During a math lesson, the teacher explained and demonstrated to a student the difference between 62 and 602, when he mistakenly wrote a zero in the tens place.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide professional learning sessions to meet those expectations. Additionally, a culture of high expectations is communicated to students from a variety of stakeholders via feedback, guidance, and advisement.

#### Impact

Staff is aware of establishing expectations connected to college and career readiness and the need for success for all students, in addition to being accountable for their own professional growth.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides all staff with a handbook at the beginning of the year and conducts regular staff meetings regarding instructional and professional expectations. Additionally, newsletters are shared weekly with staff including attachments regarding criteria for successful lesson planning. Furthermore, school leaders surveyed all staff to inform their community building efforts, and have developed a charter to communicate expectations. Teacher professional development connects to building a coherent social emotional learning environment and ensures a clear understanding of content, pedagogy, planning, culture, and assessment to support student achievement.

- Staff members receive feedback regarding expectations aligned to instruction and the Danielson Framework for Teaching through formal and informal observations. Teachers acknowledge that constructive criticism helps guide them to focus more explicitly on professional development sessions as they move forward. Teachers note feedback they receive from observations has supported improving classroom environment, instructional approaches, and professional growth. For example, several teachers note the focus on providing students effective differentiated instruction and high-leveled questions has led to more open-ended questions being asked of students across classes.

- Students are challenged to meet grade level expectations through rigorously designed curricular tasks. Additionally, most students create goals aligned to meeting their academic and personal expectations, and keep them posted at their desks. However, many students are not able to articulate how their educational goals prepare them for the next level of their education. When asked, they could not relay their goals without explicitly reading them from their desks. In the coming months, the school is implementing student led-conferences with grade five students so they can articulate and take ownership of their progress towards graduation.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Grade level inquiry teams consistently analyze student work products from diverse learners. Additionally, teachers contribute to school based decisions to improve student learning opportunities.

Impact

Structured professional collaborations result in improved instructional approaches and contribute to progress towards goals for groups of students. Additionally, teachers offer insightful suggestions to improve experiences for all school community members throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teams of teachers analyze student work samples and identify areas in which they can further improve their instruction for groups of students based on their levels of proficiency. For example, when a group of students did not master the concept of division, teachers decided to provide manipulatives, including counters and arrays, to improve student content knowledge. Similarly, teachers recognized during review of student work products that they needed to ask more open-ended questions to support a variety of answers. Teachers acknowledge this has led to higher-order thinking by students and allowed deeper conversations amongst peers.

- During a math inquiry team meeting, teachers reviewed several student samples of a word problem that required students to find three different solutions and provide an explanation for each. The teachers discussed their noticings and commented on the level of sophistication students used to explain their thinking. However, during the discussion teachers did not share how they would change their instructional strategies, thus minimizing the extent to which the noticings would result in shared improvements in teacher practice and promote further mastery of goals by all students.

- All teachers receive professional development through the school. Additionally, many teachers attend professional learning from outside sources that they have researched and chosen to attend. It is understood by teachers that they will share their new learning with their colleagues after the training. Teachers are provided the opportunity to turnkey their professional training experience during or after school. For example, a guidance counselor established a word-of-the-month program connected to a growth Mindset initiative she is supporting schoolwide, based on her professional learning experiences. Additionally, a new teacher proposed an intervisitations initiative for the current year so teachers can visit peers and support their own professional learning. Intervisitations amongst teachers has already led to shared best practices and improved student learning experiences.