Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Ella Baker School
K-8 02M225
317 East 67 Street
Manhattan
NY 10065

Principal: Joshua Satin

Dates of Review:
January 31, 2018 - February 1, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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

Ella Baker School serves students in grade PK through grade 8. 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>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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</tbody>
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### School Culture

**1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults**

Area of Celebration | Well Developed

**3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations**

- Additional Finding
  - Well Developed

### Systems for Improvement

**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**

- Additional Finding
  - Proficient

**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**

- Additional Finding
  - Proficient

**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**

- Additional Finding
  - Proficient

**4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning**

- Additional Finding
  - Proficient

**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**

- Additional Finding
  - Proficient
Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support includes both academic and social-emotional learning.

Impact

There is a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward the school's goals and positively impacts student behaviors. School leaders meaningfully involve student voice in decision-making to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts and structures are in place to know each child well and personalize supports.

Supporting Evidence

- Daily structures to the school day such as morning meetings and end-of-day meetings, allow communities to be built, and students reported that they feel safe. These structures are enhanced with additional support programs, such as Responsive Classrooms. Town meetings, involving all grades, pre-kindergarten through grade eight, are held twice a month in the auditorium to build an inclusive culture. Students have a meaningful voice in school improvement plans. For example, the students gathered 170 signatures to propose changes to the school's fall festival that they presented to school leadership to facilitate a compromise to the expectation for fall festival activities. As a result, the students were able to dress up in a mix and match style. A parent reported, “Earlier this year, there were changes to restrictions on what kids could and couldn’t do during recess, such as playing tag. The kids got together on their own to present a petition to relax the rules around recess, and the recess policy changed. They got to do whatever they wanted to do and it taught ownership, a good lesson to learn.”

- The school goal of building a consistently positive school culture to solve problems constructively through practices such as Collaborative Problem Solving is evident. Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data from the same period last school year shows a decrease of incidents, from seven to two. The number of suspensions remained at zero as of January 2018 and continues a trend of zero suspensions reported at the school last school year through the same period. The results of the OORS data shows evidence of a safe environment and inclusive culture that positively impacts student behaviors.

- A variety of personalized structures are in place, including multi-aging within classrooms by combining two grade levels together in classes across the school to target academic learning. Multi-aging allows students to know students across the school well. It allows students to take on different roles, including being mentors and mentees. Teachers know students well through two academic years at the school, and students understand that any classroom contains students who learn at different levels and in different ways. The guidance counselor has created a number of programs that create a supportive environment for students, staff, and families. Beginning in the fifth-grade students are exposed to a variety of high schools, and the staff guides students and parents through the high school application process. Peer mediation is in its second year and involves peer mediators and the direct action of students as part of the solutions. The guidance counselor facilitates small groups where students discuss strategies for getting along, working out differences and monitoring one’s own emotions. She has also outlined a program in the middle school grades which supports their social-emotional needs through work on the use of social media, drug and alcohol prevention, and classes designed to promote sexual awareness.
## Area of Focus

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

### Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding student achievement; however, practices were not yet evident across a vast majority of classrooms. Assessment data is used to adjust curricula and instruction; however, there is not yet evidence that tracking progress is leading to increased mastery.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. One example from a fourth-grade writing assignment read “Great use of dialogue and flow of story. Next when you go over this story once more, work on finding different ways of saying: said. For example, “she shouted, she replied, she screamed, she interrupted.” An example from a third-grade writing assignment read “In your next piece, we will help you work on breaking your writing into paragraphs and choosing an exciting title!” Actionable feedback appears on post-it notes and written on rubrics across the school in different grades and subjects. One student reported, “On my math poster, using volume and height, I was able to help my groupmate, and I was able to get a better understanding of the graphing website that our teacher gave us feedback on. I got a 3 on my math poster, that’s good. Mostly he didn’t just grade us on the work itself, we were also graded according to the rubric on participating with others work, and how we are responding to feedback.” While actionable feedback is apparent across classrooms, some student work brought to the meeting with students did not contain actionable feedback, illustrating that this practice was not yet in place across a vast majority of classrooms.

- Teachers use rubrics to rate personal essays, document-based question (DBQ) essays, independent reading, and students’ engagement and preparedness during classroom discussion. Teachers also use the different rubrics associated with New York State Regents exams to give feedback on text analysis and writing from sources. Teachers indicate glows and grows or areas of celebration and improvement on slips of paper attached to rubrics. Additionally, teachers use rubrics as checklists. One student reported, “Sometimes we use rubrics on our writing pieces. Last year, we used a rubric on our writing, it showed us how to make it flow, if it makes sense, how to add details and look for words that you spelled wrong, by circling them and then writing them correctly.” However, assessment practices do not yet offer a clear portrait of student mastery, as evidenced by some students who reported during the student meeting that they were unsure of their overall academic progress.

- Common assessments are used to determine student progress and considerations for schoolwide support, such as through Academic Intervention Services (AIS). This year, two new assessment tools monitor students in reading and writing, **ABC Foundations for Young Children and Writing Pathways**. In addition, the school has expanded their implementation of **Words Their Way** to reinforce academic vocabulary. Running Records reading assessments are administered three times annually, and teachers maintain Primary Learning Records, to document their observations and interactions with students. The common assessments result in ongoing curricular modifications across content areas, for example a third/fourth grade humanities unit on Ancient Greece was designed to combine reading, writing, social studies, and art.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Coherent curricula are building to promote college and career readiness for all students, including citing textual evidence. A diversity of learners has access to the curricula and tasks and is cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and New York State content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. The school adapts units of study from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for reading and writing. In addition, grades three through five engage in Looking for an Argument?, a curricular framework from Urban Academy, for reading, writing, reasoning and argumentation skills. For math in kindergarten through grade five, teachers use a combination of curricula from Investigations and Math in the City. Teachers also develop their own science and social studies units, using DOE materials as resources.

- The instructional shift requiring that students apply math concepts to build fluency is evident in curricular documents. In a seventh/eighth grade math lesson plan, students build the foundation of equation building through equivalencies. A first/second grade math lesson plan includes students using a range of strategies to add and subtract groups of tens. The instructional shift requiring that students develop their skill in writing from sources emphasizing the use of text-based evidence is apparent in curricular documents. In a first/second grade writing lesson plan, students are tasked with writing a table of contents for their nonfiction chapter book. In a first/second grade reading class, students are learning about sharing text to self and text to text connections with a partner while reading. In a seventh/eighth grade lesson plan, students are reading nonfiction texts for information.

- Curricular documents provided evidence of emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students, including students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) and English Language Learners (ELLs). For example, a third/fourth grade writing lesson plan for students revising their fiction drafts includes time for the teacher to work on the carpet with identified student by name to look at individual endings together and give feedback as a group. The lesson refers students to a chart in the room as a scaffold to prompt students. The lesson plan leads students to work in pairs with supervision from the teacher on the carpet. As a result, curricula reflects higher-order thinking skills and rigorous habits for students.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best by making and doing. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products and take part in discussions that reflect high levels of student thinking and participation through peer and group work in classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- In a first/second grade class, a math lesson includes groups working on strategies for adding and subtracting tens. A group of two students worked with the para-professional on adding and subtracting. One group of six students sat on a rug with teacher as a student was describing his thinking about his problem written on the white board. The teacher asked follow up questions of another student next to him who was able to speak to his learning from what the previous student had mentioned. Students in another group with their graphic organizers were writing down lots of shapes like coins in order to illustrate different ways to make 51 with dimes and pennies. In a kindergarten class, during work time, which involves student choice in their learning, one student in particular could articulate her learning with doubles plus one and why she needed a four to complete her bubble gum machine graphic.

- In a third/fourth grade social studies lesson, students completed a reflective activity on a Henry Hudson project presentation. The teacher posed questions and students placed thumbs up to indicate that they had something to share as they sat in an open rectangle participating in discussion. Students were prompted to select a peer with their thumb up to be the next speaker. Then the lesson transitioned to students working on their February Conference Reflection based on feedback sheets from their presentation as a preparation for the upcoming Student Led Conference (SLC). In a fifth/sixth grade class, an ELA lesson on reading of text focused on several questions. What followed was a teacher-led discussion and the lesson transitioned to a silent conversation activity. Paper with photos of waste were passed out to each group, students wrote down on the chart paper with peers their thinking about the images. Student work products and discussion reflected high levels of student thinking and participation, however this was not evident in some classrooms.

- In a fifth/sixth grade class, students were sitting in groups working on Word Masters Lists. The lesson transitioned to a teacher to student classwide discussion about vocabulary words, and students were prompted to use the Frayer Model graphic organizer. In a seventh/eighth grade writing lesson, students were working with differentiated texts. One group worked with a teacher on annotating an Emancipation Proclamation document, another group worked with the other teacher on a 13th amendment text, and other students worked independently or with partners using laptops to compose essays with chosen thesis statements and extensions for counter claim. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through its teacher observations and professional development (PD) plan. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
Prompt written feedback and constant communication and support has increased mutual accountability of expectations around teaching and learning. Communication with families provides opportunities for them to partner in students’ education.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standards for professionalism and high-quality instruction. School leaders support teachers in understanding their instructional expectations by conducting informal classroom visits that are followed by a write-up summarizing what was seen, providing feedback, and transparently identifying the next-steps that they will be for during the next visit. For example, “We agreed on the following steps for promoting higher levels of intellectual engagement: Ramping up questioning and use of evidence in the lesson. We brainstormed possible strategies including: modeling, using a debatable question, and using text next time (rather than a film).” A PD plan makes clear that school leaders support teachers in their understanding of expectations in addressing topics such as “Instructional Strategy Groups,” “Building a Shared Understanding of Rigor,” and “Questioning and Discussion Techniques.”

- Mutual accountability for high expectations is demonstrated through teacher teams assigned to a cohort model based on mixed-grade level assignments and is supported by school leadership as well as instructional coaches. Teachers decide what the cohort team will focus on. In some cases, instructional coaches suggest or facilitate protocols, provide background on instructional strategies and share feedback from classroom visits. A teacher reported on the culture of mutual accountability, “We’re really hard working. It feels good to work hard and at the end of the day be wiped out. There’s solidarity amongst all of us, you’re contributing to something that everybody feels strongly about.” Another teacher reported, “There are four teachers in integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes, who hold each other accountable in ICT requirements. Part of our cohort meeting is dedicated to ensuring that all of us are meeting the needs of our ICT students and we support each other through that process.”

- The Parent Teacher Association Executive Board helps to monitor programs that are in place for effectiveness. One parent shared, “My son’s third grade teacher noticed that he was a little behind his peer group. She expressed that we’ll have him assessed, and she let me know where he's at, as he was quite far behind. She had him read ahead during daily classroom activity and increased reading homework to 40 to 45 minutes periodically based on what he was reading. Two months later, they conducted another assessment, and he’s caught up to mid-third grade level. The teachers diagnosed the problem and had a strategy to help him to get back on track.” The school communicates high expectations with parents through curriculum night, student-led family conferences, publishing celebrations, narrative and checklist report cards that go home to families three times a year. Another parent reported, “The student-led conferences are family conferences, he takes a lot of pride in his work, any kind of reading or writing. I only see the work he does at home, whenever we have a conference he's finally gets to speak about his work in a way that allows us to partner with his teacher to support his progress.”
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based grade-level teams that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Collaborations within grade-level teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacity. Teacher team work typically results in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- An observed fifth-grade cohort inquiry team used the tuning protocol during their meeting as they looked at student work from writing assignments. Three teachers presented work examples from students in their classes. Other teachers reviewed the work samples and filled out a graphic organizer sheet for compiling observations that included what the students can do, what they can almost do, and what the next steps are. The team proceeded to discuss trends and patterns in student work by giving warm and cool feedback in order to determine next steps. Next steps were identified as designing lesson plans for teaching the students transitions, leads and elaboration skills. The team then determined instructional strategies to best address next steps, as teachers referred to curriculum and looked at their planning sheets. Teachers also reviewed conference sheets that included student data regarding skills. Next steps also included more practice in describing landscapes and experiential learning piece. Teachers noted that the conference reflection feedback during the meeting was helpful to improve their own practice.

- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaborations. A teacher reported, “When I look at student work, I notice the student in your class is having similar struggles. The work of this team pushes us to how can we challenge them to reflect and discuss, and we are going to do this unit again in two years.” Another teacher reported, “We’ll get ideas from each other on how to differentiate their work, such as the graphic organizer how to format the prompt.” Another teacher shared, “Finding the time to take notes and write observations during our team meetings helps me plan for activities that will help our students develop skills, language and independence. For other students it helps me keep track of all the strategies we’re implementing across our classrooms to help with self-regulation and managing transitions throughout the day.”

- As a result of teacher team work regarding the school goal of implementing a foundational skills curriculum in early grades, student progress is evidenced in reading by data from ABC Foundations for Young Children shows 31 out of 42 students on grade level, Fountas and Pinnell running records showing students making growth and Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for students showing growth when comparing beginning of the program to current time period during the school year. The school goal of consistent use of reading interventions is supported with data documenting that six of seven students identified as struggling readers in fifth and sixth grade showed progress in reading levels as documented in the Wilson Just Words data comparing levels in September 2017 to January 2018. In math, classroom notes show progress of student growth. Teacher-created narrative reports detail increases in student achievement over time since the beginning of the school year.