Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Middle School 322
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 06M322
4600 Broadway
Manhattan
NY 10040

Principal: Erica Zigelman

Dates of Review:
April 26, 2018 - April 27, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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

Middle School 322 serves students in grade 6 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Findings

The grade and content level teachers are engaged in structured collaborations and distributed leadership practices.

#### Impact

Teacher team work has resulted in strengthened teacher capacity and the incorporation of protocols spearheaded by grade leaders, with positive effects on student learning across the school.

#### Supporting Evidence

- A seventh-grade teacher team was observed engaging in inquiry work using the ATLAS protocol to analyze students’ argumentative essays about the death penalty. Teachers analyzed the student work and shared their strengths such as citing sources, use of transitional words, real-world connections, use of claim, counterclaim, and conclusion. Teachers shared that students grappled with unpacking the claim in their own words, need to work on elaboration, repetition in the writing, and issues with grammar. Teachers shared their interpretations of the data and noted that students were using the sentence frames in their writing and that they needed to explain their evidence. Teachers shared the implications for their classrooms such as students needing more instruction on the citing of evidence, elaboration, and how to use different arguments in their writing. Teachers decided to construct a checklist for students to support them in citing from sources such as articles and books. To diminish repetition, teachers discussed creating a sheet for students to track their usage of transitional words and have a peer review their work. As a result of the teacher team work, teachers mentioned that the professional collaborations foster the sharing of best practices, allows teachers to amend their lessons based on peer feedback, and promotes coherence among the disciplines because teachers are using key language and strategies such as, “talk to the text.”

- All teachers collaborate in grade-level and content teams using the ATLAS protocol to analyze student work to promote the schoolwide goal of writing across the curriculum, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence. A sixth-grade math team analyzed student work specifically looking at the use of elaboration and supporting details in the annotation of math problems. Teachers decided to reinforce the use of sentence frames in student writing and annotation strategies such as underlining and circling key words in word problems, similar to strategies used in English Language Arts (ELA). A sixth-grade science team noticed that students were showing difficulty with elaboration in their writing and making excessive use of transitional words; therefore, the teachers created a word bank for struggling students and incorporated visuals to support student writing. A seventh-grade team’s notes across the content areas focused on the students’ ability to elaborate, explain, and analyze their evidence in their writing. Trends noted in the analysis of student work cited the excessive use of transitional words, elaboration, repetition in vocabulary usage, and issues with citation. As a result of the professional collaborations, the teachers implemented the reading apprenticeship across disciplines (RAAD) strategy, thus establishing instructional coherence.

- Distributed leadership practices are embedded so that teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Structures such as grade leaders establish the protocols used to analyze student work across the team. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) teachers all take the lead in implementing cross-curricular lessons in their classes, which has led to more professional development opportunities for teachers. MSQI and ELL coordinators have provided teachers support in implementing strategies such as RAAD and grouping of students during lessons.
Findings
School leaders use Jupiter Ed, survey results, and teacher voice to evaluate and adjust school culture and professional development practices.

Impact
Purposeful adjustments to school culture, professional development, and teacher teams have yet to result in increasing school wide coherence.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty have a process in place to regularly evaluate the quality of school culture via online reporting systems and anecdotal evidence from staff. The school uses the online grading portal Jupiter Ed to track the number of incidents and positive behavior comments logged. School leaders noted that an uptick in positive behaviors logged reflected better student behavior in classes, improved attendance and that students are more engaged. Additionally, school leaders and teachers use a point system in their classes to track promptness, commendable behavior, and adherence to the uniform policy. Points are used to record student progress towards participation in school events and trips. It is unclear how adjustments are being made to ensure the increase of coherence of practices related to school culture across the school as there has been a slight uptick in school occurrences.

- School leaders review online survey results to evaluate the quality of school culture. Survey results indicated that more parental outreach was needed. As a result of this data, a School-Based Option (SBO) was created to change school hours to accommodate time for parental engagement. The SBO was approved and there is a designated weekly time for parental engagement. Additionally, Jupiter Ed is used to monitor the percentage of parents logging into the system to keep abreast with school-related events. At the time of the review, 53 percent of the parents have logged into Jupiter Ed; however, it is unclear whether these adjustments are consistently effecting a change in school culture.

- School leaders have a process in place to regularly evaluate the quality of teacher team work and professional development practices. The school leader reviewed the professional development offerings provided to teachers and noticed that there was a lack of teacher voice in professional development. The school leader adjusted the professional development offerings to include teacher voice such as including teacher input in attending off-site workshops. As a result of the adjustment, protocols such as “Talk to the Text” protocol was established as a result of teacher voice. Teachers are implementing these protocols across classrooms. Teacher team work has been adjusted to incorporate a team objective in their note-taking tracker as a result of adjusting the teacher team practices.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders strategically integrate the instructional shift of writing from sources and using evidence from sources to make an argument by embedding these skills in curricular documents and academic tasks.

Impact

The integration of the instructional shifts across the content and subject areas has resulted in coherence and the promotion of college and career readiness, so that all learners must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers integrate the instructional shift of writing from sources and using evidence from sources to make an argument. This shift of focus was evidenced in curricular documents and tasks across the content areas. An eighth-grade science unit showed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards as well as content standards. The instructional shift of citing textual evidence to support what the text says was noted. Students were tasked with engaging in a debate about the pros and cons of genetic engineering. In addition, students wrote a paragraph citing textual evidence from articles to substantiate their arguments for or against genetically-modified organisms. A social studies task required students to read leveled articles about the death penalty, analyze an argument about the death penalty, and then devise their own arguments for or against the death penalty.

- Curricula and tasks across grades and subject areas challenge all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) to think critically and incorporate real-world applicability. A seventh-grade math lesson plan aligned to Engage NY essential questions asked, “How can we use rational numbers in real-life problems?” Students were tasked with solving problems to analyze a back-to-school supply sale to discern which product was a better buy. A bilingual math task required students to write an informative essay about proportional relationships, how to identify them on a table or graph, and how to determine the constant of proportionality. Scaffolds such as vocabulary lists and an essay outline were provided as supports for the diverse learners.

- Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills are embedded so that all learners demonstrate their thinking. An eighth-grade ELA task required students to construct an argumentative essay on whether or not children who engage in cyber-bullying should be criminalized. Scaffolds to support the organization of the writing and the analysis of textual evidence were provided to enable all learners to have access to the task. An eighth-grade health task required students to produce an argumentative writing piece on whether or not meat should be incorporated into one’s diet. Citing textual evidence from sources, students were tasked with delineating an argument for or against eating meat. An eighth-grade science task required students to design their own experiment to determine what affects a plant’s growth. Students constructed their own experiment such as the effect of classical music on plant growth. Students interpreted their results and demonstrated their thinking.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices reflected students engaged in hands-on, active learning experiences with real-world connections that was evident in student work products and discussion.

Impact

Student thinking and participation demonstrated student ownership of their learning, thus evident in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices consistently reflect the schoolwide beliefs that students learn best when they are engaged in hands-on, active learning experiences with real-world connections. In a sixth-grade Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) science class, students investigated how pollutants can be physically separated from the air. Using materials such as sand and iron fillings, a magnet, tweezer, and a filter, students wrote a procedure to simulate the removal of pollutants from the air. During the investigation, students worked collaboratively in pairs and discussed their procedures, the rationale for their steps and what they hoped to accomplish during the investigation. In an eighth-grade ELA class, students were engaged in a lesson to determine how the setting in their historical fiction text affects the characters. Students read differentiated texts set during World War II. Table leaders in each group facilitated a discussion about their texts and the effect of setting on their characters while annotating the text using Post-its. Students were engaged in discussions answering questions such as, “Who is affected by the war the most and the least?” “Who is affected by the setting the most?” Students in their groups were heard stating that parents were affected the most and used textual evidence to substantiate their claim.

- Instructional practices reflected real-world applicability for students to make meaning during the lesson. In a self-contained health class, students engaged in a discussion about diabetes in minority populations and the significance of diet choices. Students weighed in on foods found in their local grocers and in the cafeteria that may contribute to diabetes such as potato chips and soda. Students made pledges within their groups, such as eliminating soda from their diets and drinking more water as a preventative measure against developing diabetes. In a seventh-grade social studies class, students examined important facts about the California Gold Rush and used the “what surprised me” reading strategy and scaffold to make meaning of the documents. In their groups, students discussed their readings and cited evidence from the text such as, “What surprised me was that ninety percent of the people that went mining were men.” Another group added on by stating there were no women involved in this endeavor. Another group performed an extension activity by questioning one another about the interesting facts they found in their articles. This practice of students making real-world connection was evidenced in the vast majority of classrooms, where students demonstrated their thinking verbally and in writing.

- Students engaged in student-to-student discussions using academic vocabulary and evidence-based accountable talk to show ownership of their learning. A seventh-grade dual language math class required students to solve one-step equations with fractional coefficients performing the inverse operation. Students engaged in a turn-and-talk and discussed, “Why are we solving equations?” Students stated that equations are used to solve events in their daily lives. Additionally, students created a vocabulary list as they mentioned the word in their discussions. In a seventh-grade engineering class, students designed a device to prevent trash from littering the environment. A member of each group visited another group, sharing their designs and receiving feedback on how to improve their design, such as adding a sensor to detect aquatic life when cleaning the water.
Findings

Teachers use the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) and student-facing checklists that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers use varied assessment practices to check for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers make mid-lesson interruptions to make in-the-moment adjustments to the lesson to meet the needs of all learners and provide meaningful feedback to students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect varied use of ongoing checks for understanding. An eighth-grade math class required students to identify and calculate supplementary and complementary angle pairs and use facts to solve for an unknown angle. The teacher checked for understanding using thumbs up or down, and conferenced with student groups as well as individual students by posing as the questions, “Where does the angle start?” “Can you give me an obtuse angle measurement?” Students went to the board to demonstrate their answers while corrected by the teacher. A sixth-grade ELA ICT class required students to identify a social issue, character traits, and a significant moment in their differentiated texts citing textual evidence via a graphic organizer that resembled a Facebook or Twitter page. The teacher checked for understanding by asking students if they encountered anything challenging in their texts by using the thumbs up or thumbs down strategy. The teacher conducted a mid-lesson interruption based on looking at student work using a small-group assessment tracker. The teacher showed the students an example of student work under the document camera. Students used an accountable talk checklist and a cooperative learning evaluation form to assess their conversations and work.

- Teachers check for understanding, adjust the lessons, and students self-assess against an assessment criterion. In a sixth-grade ICT science class, students self-assessed their work using a checklist to evaluate their procedures written to simulate the reduction of air pollution. Additionally, the teacher used thumbs up or down to discern if students understood the assessment criteria. The teacher conducted a mid-lesson interruption by having another student explain the assessment criteria. The teacher conducted an anticipatory set activity using Plickers to determine what students already knew about pollutants. In a seventh-grade dual-language math class, students worked on solving one-step equations with fractional coefficients performing the inverse operation. The students used a check for understanding card to signal the need for assistance. Students also completed a reflection and rubric at the end of the lesson to evaluate their level of understanding of the concepts vis-a-vis a novice, apprentice, practitioner, or expert, thus informing students if they have met the learning target. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers adjusted the lesson by using small group instruction or mid-lesson interruptions to ensure all students’ learning needs are met.

- Teachers across all content areas use the student-facing checklists, and Teachers College Reading and Writing Program checklists to evaluate student work. Samples of student work provided actionable feedback to students and students expressed that the feedback was meaningful. For example, a student’s essay commended her for using evidence; however, the student used an excessive amount of evidence in few body paragraphs that hurt the overall quality of the essay. The student stated that this feedback is meaningful for it is used in other classes such as science and social studies. Another student’s feedback asked the student to ensure that the evidence matches what was conveyed in their essay. This student also mentioned that the feedback is used in social studies and science classes, thus demonstrating that the feedback is meaningful.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and professionalism through verbal and written communication. Parents receive ongoing communication connected to college and career readiness through workshops and an online grading platform.

## Impact

Mutual accountability for expectations is attained via peer intervisitations and teacher-facilitated professional development. School leaders successfully partner with families through parent volunteer opportunities.

## Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate clear expectations on instruction and professionalism through structures such as new teacher orientations, a staff handbook, and support from content-specific coaches. Administrative memos remind teachers to have lesson plans accessible during administrative visits and provide a recommended lesson plan template that incorporates elements for a highly-effective lesson plan. Teachers receive professional development on maintaining student portfolios throughout students' tenure in middle school to display the progression in student work. The staff handbook articulates expectations for classroom environment such as evidence of student articulation of rigor in their own words, mathematical practices visible for all students to adopt, resource bin accessibility for students, and clearly-written objectives and agendas for lessons. The school is a part of the Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) that provides the school with structures for instruction such as literacy across the curriculum, and reading strategies such as “talking to the text” and Reading Apprenticeship Across Disciplines (RAAD). Accountability for these expectations occurs via instructional walk-throughs and classroom observations.

- New teachers receive mentoring and differentiated support from administrators and colleagues, aligned to the school’s instructional foci of writing across the curriculum with connections to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. New teachers attend a series of professional development sessions that provide them with support on instruction in the classroom environment, checklists to reflect on effective and highly-effective teacher practices on engagement, questioning, discussion, and assessment in instruction. Further, teachers receive tools for professional responsibilities via checklists and templates to adopt structures for their professional growth. Content-specific coaches and staff developers provide teachers with feedback on implementing hands-on activities for science, implementing TCRWP components, and supporting students with disability teachers in writing quality Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and conducting IEP annual reviews. Teachers hold themselves mutually accountable for these expectations via peer intervisitations and facilitating professional development workshops on looking at student work and teacher collaboration.

- School leaders provide parents with ongoing communication about the high school admissions process, and online grading platforms to deepen their understanding of college and career readiness expectations, as well as how to meet them. Parents are aware of their children’s academic progress through online platforms, quarterly progress reports, and robocalls regarding school events such as honor roll ceremonies. Teachers go beyond the weekly parent engagement time to meet with parents to discuss their children’s progress. Parents mentioned their involvement in workshops on nutrition, navigating through online resources for parents of newcomers, support of counselors on the high school admissions process, and the online grading platform. Parents also volunteer time at the school, thus partnering with the school.