Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Harbor Heights
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 06M349
306 Fort Washington Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10033

Principal: Monica Klehr

Dates of Review:
March 13, 2018 - March 14, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Liza Zarifi
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

Harbor Heights 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>Proficient</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 of Celebration</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
The faculty’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is built upon the theory of action that strong relationships with families and the community partnerships will support students’ growth and academic success. Structures are in place that support the academic and personal growth of students.

Impact
The school is safe, and the culture is inclusive. Students are meaningfully involved in decision-making to guide school improvement efforts. Each student is known well by at least one adult who supports attendance, social-emotional learning, and advisement that impacts students’ academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The faculty meaningfully involves students in guiding school improvement efforts, including through student-led conferences that build student leadership, motivation, and ownership of their achievement in classes. Each teacher supports a group of students to prepare for their parent-teacher conferences by walking students through a reflective process, including looking through their portfolio pieces, identifying strengths and areas for growth, reviewing the Jupiter system to identify any missing classwork and know their grades, and to set goals for improvement. Students reported feeling more confident through leading conferences and that they had a better understanding of their grades. Parents reported appreciating hearing about their children’s grades directly from them and understanding the goals they set.

- The student council reviews data points on school safety and survey data in order to give feedback to the faculty. The student council reviewed some of the data points from a survey to help faculty better understand some of the reasons students gave certain ratings, and to be a partner in developing solutions for improvement. The People’s Theater Project helps sixth- and eighth-graders to develop student voice and leadership skills, engage in social justice conversations, and learn about theater arts. Students complete feedback and reflection forms on activities and experiences with partnerships and field trips in order to inform faculty monitoring and evaluation. As a result of these practices, student voice is meaningfully involved in decision-making for school improvement efforts.

- Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult. From the beginning, families are supported with the registration and application process, and reported feeling welcomed and informed because of the staff. Many students and families are newcomers in this school community and are also navigating the New York City education system for the first time. The Pupil Accounting Secretary is the first point of contact and ensures that families are supported through registration, learn about the school, and are aware of services and programs available. Families then work with a teacher who assesses students and matches their educational program with their needs. All students reported that they have more than one staff member they feel comfortable going to if they have an issue.
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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</table>

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school’s shared beliefs about how students learn best through linguistic scaffolds, use of graphic organizers to support English Language Learners (ELLs), teaching explicit vocabulary, and engaging students in content and language objectives. There were missed opportunities to ensure teaching practices are reflected coherently across all classrooms.

Impact
Across classrooms, student thinking and participation led to meaningful work products; however, there were some missed opportunities to facilitate student ownership of discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in a math class were supported to use academic language to describe their work and share their thinking. As one student shared work on the projector, the teacher pushed for precise mathematical language to explain their thinking to the class. Students in a Home Language Arts class were supported to use precise academic language when identifying types of analogies in poetry. There were some missed opportunities to ensure students utilized academic language across all classrooms. Students in an English as a New Language (ENL) class read an article and had to identify the theme. There were no scaffolds or supports observed to provide students with academic language around the skill of finding themes.

- Annotation is a focus across content areas to support students to access complex texts. Students were observed utilizing the strategy across classrooms, including in a sixth-grade ENL class where students read an article and annotated for main ideas, surprising statements or questions. Students in an eighth-grade science class annotated a text as they read to highlight evidence in response to questions. There were missed opportunities to utilize annotation strategies to support access to complex texts in some classrooms. In a social studies class, students were asked to read a primary document text but without direction on annotation strategies or support to access the text for readers at different levels. Students in an ENL class read a text and there was no direction given for annotating the text for specific elements. Some students underlined a few lines; others did not mark up the text.

- Students were able to take ownership of discussions through sharing student work to the class and having student roles in small group work. In a science class, students read a text together and responded to discussion questions. One student in each group captured the discussion points in a Google doc, and another shared responses on the whiteboard. In a math class, students had opportunities to lead whole-group discussions through sharing their work on the projector and talking through problem-solving. There were some missed opportunities in a few classrooms to facilitate student ownership of discussions. In a social studies class, the teacher primarily shared his own thinking about the meaning of a political cartoon in connection with a primary document, missing an opportunity to have students share insights or own discussions with their peers about the material.
Findings

Leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core), the instructional shifts including text-based evidence, and to the language needs of students through teacher planning from curricular resources and assessment data. Curricula and tasks are planned using student work and data through teacher team meetings and individual teacher planning.

Impact

Teachers make purposeful planning decisions that build coherence across grades and promote college and career readiness for all students. Refinements to curricula and lesson plans ensure that a diversity of learners have access to academic tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional shifts including text-based evidence and academic vocabulary are emphasized across grades and content areas to support the needs of students who are all ELLs. Academic vocabulary is supported through the Word Generation program and implemented in language arts classrooms. A sixth-grade home language lesson plan identifies four key vocabulary terms relevant to the lesson on analogies in poems. An ENL lesson plan indicates integration of an article and key vocabulary from the Word Generation unit on identifying informative versus entertainment writing. An eighth-grade math lesson indicates key vocabulary related to the content on angles and lines and supports students’ use of the vocabulary through posting definitions and asking students to use it in their discussions.

- Citing text-based evidence in responses and discussions is planned across content areas and grades. A social studies lesson plan asks students to consider the lasting effects of World War I through the lens of primary documents and to use evidence to support their thinking. An eighth-grade science lesson plan, asks students to read a text and integrate evidence to support their analysis of how objects from space can affect planet Earth. A sixth-grade science lesson plan includes a text and a video and asks students to integrate evidence from both in their discussions of the atmosphere. An ENL lesson plan includes an article and a graphic organizer to support students to cite evidence from the article in developing their arguments.

- Lesson plans integrate language objectives across content areas to support ELLs to access the curricula and academic tasks. A sixth-grade home language lesson plan indicates a language objective around describing analysis of poems by using comparison language. An eighth-grade science lesson includes a content and a language objective to support students to use vocabulary to explain characteristics of planets. A sixth-grade math lesson includes a content and language objective that supports students to explain equivalent fractions and quotients using academic vocabulary.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
 Teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school curricula, including teacher-created rubrics, across content areas and grades. The faculty uses common assessments, including New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) and the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA), to determine student progress toward goals across grades.

Impact
 Teachers and students receive actionable feedback about student achievement through assessments and rubrics. Assessment results are used by teachers to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The IRLA is administered three times per year to all students to inform access to appropriately-leveled reading materials and tasks in English. The information is shared in trackers across content areas so that all teachers have feedback regarding student achievement in order to adjust their instruction. Students reported being able to track their progress and understand their strengths and areas for growth in English reading proficiency.

- Teachers utilize the Multilingual Literacy Screener to ascertain reading comprehension levels for students' home languages. The assessment provides teachers with feedback on what level of home language instruction is appropriate for an individual student, including where students are with early literacy and reading comprehension. This assessment helps teachers to identify which class is appropriate for a student and to monitor growth.

- Teachers utilize rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback on their strengths and areas for growth on projects and tasks. Writing rubrics assess student work in four components, and teachers include an additional next step for students. For example, one student shared a piece with a score of three out of four on the citing evidence component of the rubric, and the next step reminded the student that only one piece of text evidence had been included, and next time should include two to three to support the claim. Students also shared a feedback form that grades components of their writing including the introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion, organization, and conventions, in order to give targeted feedback to ELLs. Each feedback form includes a space for student reflection and a next step to work on based on the grade and the score.

- The math team uses exit slips, quizzes, and online programs including Reflex: Math Fact Fluency and Spatial-Temporal (ST) math to assess student strengths, areas for growth, and adjust instruction accordingly. Students are able to view results instantly through the online programs, and track their overall progress on Jupiter. Teachers meet weekly to review data in order to get feedback on specific strengths and gaps in learning to inform instruction.

- Teachers assess ELLs using NYSITELL and ENL progressions and adjust instruction to ensure that students at each ENL level have access to the curricula. Additionally, students are grouped into language-appropriate classes to ensure the right amount of instruction in their home and second language in each content area.
**Additional Finding**

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and professionalism to the entire staff through workshops, staff meetings, and professional development. Faculty successfully partners with families and effectively communicates expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness for students through workshops and school events.

**Impact**

Leaders provide training to the staff and collaboratively set expectations with, and gather feedback from, staff, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. Families are partners in supporting student progress toward high expectations.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Leaders and staff create expectations collaboratively and hold each other accountable through training and feedback. School leaders communicate high expectations to staff through sharing data, goals, and priorities at the beginning of the year. This year, the leaders shared student performance data, Comprehensive Education Plan goals, the school's strategic priorities, and expectations for teacher planning and professional development time to support those priorities. Additionally, training was provided for faculty on new structures and systems to set clear expectations and ensure accountability, including the new mental health partnership. The staff requested that the principal send out a weekly newsletter to inform staff of important dates and deadlines, to reset expectations for school culture systems, and to share relevant data and reflections.

- School leaders and staff share a student and family handbook with families in order to explain expectations about a path to college and career readiness. This is presented to families through a workshop as well, along with clear expectations and requirements for promotion. Families contributed to setting expectations for students with the school leaders, including the uniform policy and behavioral expectations. A monthly newsletter is also sent home to families with important dates and reminders of events happening at the school. Families reported being a part of decision-making at the school and feeling well-informed and clear on expectations and requirements for promotion.

- Monthly awards ceremonies celebrate student success and support student progress toward meeting high expectations. Families reported seeing their children feel motivated, proud, and excited about their learning as a result of the monthly ceremonies. Families appreciate the ceremonies and awards, and high attendance supports this. Families also reported having monthly opportunities to eat with the principal and contribute ideas and feedback to the school. Additionally, parents reported an appreciation of Jupiter, the online application for staying informed about their child’s classwork and grades, and the student-led conferences, and that they understand what their children’s strengths and goals are by hearing directly from the children in addition to seeing the progress through the online system.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teachers meet weekly to engage in structured collaborative work to support student achievement. Distributed leadership structures are in place to support the instructional program and school focus areas.

Impact

Teacher teams promote the achievement of school goals, particularly on supporting the needs of ELLs through curriculum and assessment and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers through the sharing of practices and analysis of student work. Teachers have built leadership capacity and a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to review student work and data in order to inform instruction. The science team met to review student work from a recent activity and looked at trends seen in three levels of performance. The two teachers discussed what students needed to know and do in order to be successful with the task and identified strengths and areas for growth in the work. They analyzed specific skills related to the same topic from a recent quiz to further identify student needs. The teachers created plans and planned instructional adjustments to meet students’ needs. Teachers reported that their teacher team work has improved their instructional capacity through sharing practices and ideas to refine lessons and tasks. Content teams meet weekly, and the math team has an additional time to meet every other week to support planning for the school’s new math approach adopted this year. Advance data shows that 82 percent of teachers are rated as effective, and 18 percent are rated highly effective.

- Teachers lead professional learning through engaging with their content teams in Professional Learning Cycles (PLCs), where they have opportunities to write lessons together, observe instruction in each other’s classrooms, and debrief the impact of lessons through reviewing student work and the observing teacher’s notes. Teams have gone through one complete cycle and are now working on a second cycle. Teachers reported that the PLCs have had a significant impact on their professional growth related to the instructional foci for the school, including use of graphic organizers and partner work to support ELLs, and integration of academic vocabulary into lessons. Additionally, the leadership team observed that it has improved the level of feedback given to students and the sharing of best practices including strategic groupings and higher expectations for student work products.

- Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning through leadership of curriculum and professional development work. Two teachers work with the principal to develop professional development plans for the school and inform adjustments in response to teacher and student need throughout the year. Teachers attend external professional development and turnkey learning for other staff at the school. An ENL teacher takes the lead on running the IRLA administration and tracking in addition to supporting work using the Bridges curriculum in classrooms. Another teacher is working on her administrative license and takes the lead on building and revising schedules to accommodate the needs of students and school priorities, such as shifting the schedule to reflect changes in how math is being taught.