Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S./M.S 042 R. Vernam
K-8 27Q042
488 Beach 66 Street
Queens
NY 11692

Principal: Patricia Finn

Dates of Review:
May 23, 2018 - May 24, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Rosemary Stuart
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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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</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>Additional Finding</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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, Proficient</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, Proficient</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
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<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, Proficient</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>Area of Focus, Developing</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, 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>Additional Finding, 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>Additional Finding, Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders identify resources, including grants from local elected officials and partnerships, to implement programs aligned to school goals. Staff time is utilized to address the instructional needs of the students.

Impact
Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Many students benefit from a multi-year partnership with Broadway Junior to perform the musical, *Once on this Island Jr.* One student explained that being part of this production has made him more social and increased his confidence. Another student explained that she has developed leadership skills by teaching other students the choreography of the dances. In a discussion about the play, students expressed that they realize that love is a theme in literature that this play is similar to many love stories, such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Beauty and the Beast.* One student said, “Love is like the main thing, most people are longing to find that special someone.”

- The school received a grant to upgrade technology in the classrooms. Students use technology in all grades to access learning, conduct research, and prepare presentations. In one class, students competed for the most points solving math problems using an online program on a tablet computer. In another class, students published their own poems, modeled after famous writers, using graphics and artwork to illustrate the poetry. One student wrote a poem describing her mother as a survivor who “never gave up on us / That’s why I admire her” inspired by “Dear Mama” by Tupac Shakur. The principal has adopted an online program to track and manage administrative time to maximize and focus her time on instruction. The data from the beginning of the year indicate the principal spent 35 percent of her time on instruction. In May, the data show the principal spent over 60 percent of her time on instructional leadership.

- The principal utilizes a wide variety of programs and partnerships to meet the needs of the students in the school and to help achieve school goals. To promote progress toward the goal of improving the social-emotional development of students, the school partnered with Safe Public Spaces to implement strategies to address safe transitions between periods, with particular attention to the cafeteria. School leaders implemented a program of Emotionally Responsive Teddy Bears to help students learn to self-regulate their behavior. Another program is the grant-funded Peer Group Connect, which trains eighth-grade students to mentor sixth-grade students to increase the development of leadership skills. During one class, students were working together to describe the positive attributes of the peers they admire. They were relating these attributes to one of the nine styles of leadership, such as describing one student in her class as the rock, who “may not talk a lot, but is always there for you,” or the negotiator who is “good at solving conflicts between people.”

- Improving teacher performance in questioning and discussion is one of the school’s goals. School leaders program teachers for common meeting times to enable them to meet in grade-level teams and for professional learning time to meet in cross-grade content meetings. Teachers were observed in a grade-level team comparing data from a mid-year math assessment in second grade to data from the third grade on similar tasks and determined that there were strategies they could implement now so that students would summarize information in word problems to prepare for success next year.
# Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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## Findings

School goals outlined in the Renewal School Comprehensive Education Plan are not consistently tracked and adjusted for progress. School leaders and community members do not always communicate effectively about school improvement efforts.

## Impact

Efforts to achieve goals do not always accelerate student learning and are not always known and understood by the school community.

## Supporting Evidence

- School goals outlined in the Renewal School Comprehensive Education Plan reflect the academic and social-emotional needs of the students and teachers aimed at promoting school improvement. The action plans implemented to achieve these goals are designed to be measurable, and some of the goals, such as improving student performance on writing assessments, are tracked for progress. However, these goals are not always adjusted to meet the changing needs of the students and not all aspects of the action plans, such as the implementation of social-emotional support programs, are monitored.

- School goals are developed with some involvement of the school community. Parents indicated that initiatives about school improvement are often discussed at meetings with parents and teachers. For example, parents indicated that they have expressed concerns about some curricular programs and that teachers have helped them to understand how math is being taught. However, school stakeholders indicated that parents do not always feel they are consistently informed about school improvement efforts.

- Minutes of a School Leadership Team meeting that was held in March reflect discussion about how to encourage meaningful feedback from parents around setting and revising goals. The minutes indicate that the team discussed the progress being made in the reduction of incidents and suspensions and that the results of the Developmental Assets Profile administered in June would show this improvement. This same level of consideration of school goals is not evident in the notes from other meetings.
### Additional Finding

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

Teachers consistently plan to engage all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, in challenging tasks. Teachers conduct surveys to determine the learning modality for each student in order to design and refine lessons to address those needs.

#### Impact

Lesson plans coherently address skills needed for success in the next grade level and are accessible for a variety of learners.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Unit and lesson plans for general education students as well as students with disabilities reflect planning to engage them in challenging tasks. For example, a unit of study in earth science addresses the central focus on understanding the rock cycle and the characteristics of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks. The plan identifies content vocabulary words such as, *deposition, extrusive, and compaction*. A lesson on characterization focuses on the text, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, and requires students, including students with disabilities, to analyze character through the common expression that says appearances can be deceiving. After analyzing one of two characters, the teacher plans for the students to use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two characters.

- Plans for a geometry lesson include stations at which students, both general education and students with disabilities, are expected to explore the properties of quadrilaterals with a variety of different entry points. Students assigned to one station are given the area and some information about a trapezoid and are asked to find the dimensions of the bases. At another station, the students are given a description of the formula for the area of a trapezoid and are required to determine if the description is correct. At a third station, students are asked to create and find the area of their own quadrilaterals and are challenged to use “mixed numbers and decimals for your dimensions.”

- Lessons are planned to address a variety of reading levels by using the online resource, Newsela, so that all students can access the content. One recent task includes an article, provided in two reading levels and in Spanish, about the increasing popularity of online video gaming and the concern of parents about the popularity of such pastimes.

- Early in the year, teachers administer a survey to determine the learning styles of all students. They use the results of this survey to determine groupings for tasks and projects in many lessons. One lesson plan for writing a newscast outlines how students could visualize their newscast before recording it. The plan includes scaffolds for visual learners, such as index cards to remind students about the essential journalistic questions of *who, what, when, where, why, and how.*
Findings
Teachers consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula for students as well as opportunities for them to produce work that matches their own learning styles.

Impact
All learners engage in challenging tasks that require higher-order thinking and participation in group and individual activities.

Supporting Evidence

- In a writing lesson, groups of students explored the author's perspective as they planned to write small-moment narratives in the style of historical fiction. Students chose to write from the perspective of the patriots, the loyalists, or the redcoats using research they had previously conducted. To make a group poster, most students referred to the model the teacher had created during the mini-lesson, but some used a graphic organizer that outlined the need to identify the setting, the main characters, and the events to guide their storyboard poster.

- Work in progress displayed in one classroom showed that a few students in the class were working on an extension activity that involved more complex calculations of surface area that were illustrated by the depiction of a three-dimensional shoe box as a two-dimensional surface. This practice was not observed in all classrooms.

- Students in one third-grade class researched animals and presented their research on posters. One student described an elephant as having big ears and wrinkled skin. Another student conjectured that elephants eat plants because they cannot chew meat. In the same class, a student shared, “I learned that mother penguins regurgitate food for the baby chicks.” When asked to explain what that means, the student accurately described the process in more detail.

- In a science class for students with disabilities, students worked in groups with support from a teacher or paraprofessional to learn about electrical safety. Students in one group were struggling with writing sentences until prompted by an adult to refer to a poster on the wall that outlined a strategy to restate the question, answer the question, include three facts, and “tie it up” with a conclusion.
### Additional Finding

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

Teachers provide feedback to students on work products, using rubrics and written comments aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers use a variety of common assessments, such as *iReady* and *Fry* words, and track the results of these assessments schoolwide.

**Impact**

Feedback to students, including glows and grows, is actionable and teachers analyze assessment results to effectively adjust curriculum and instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Feedback to one student on a math chapter test praised her for double checking her work. In a glow, another student was advised, “You applied procedures accurately to correctly solve the problem.” One teacher urged a student to check work for complete information, such as remembering to find all missing values in a table and noted that he was showing progress in calculating exponents. Another piece of student work was assessed using a rubric that emphasized the use of problem solving strategies.

- Teachers use rubrics aligned to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to assess and provide feedback on specific grade-level writing performance. After complimenting a student for organizing ideas and supporting the claim, the teacher encouraged the student to incorporate a counterclaim in order to go from a sixth to a seventh-grade level.

- Teacher and students monitor their progress toward improvement. In one class, students were celebrated for success by noting their improvement as measured by *iReady* diagnostic assessments. For example, one student increased 100 points on her growth monitoring and another increased 94 points. In addition, students are celebrated for completing the most lessons on reading for comprehension or for increasing their time on task. Teachers reflect on curriculum planning as a result of analyzing assessment results. One reflection noted that students had grasped the concept of using addition and subtraction to solve word problems and suggested incorporating a project around fact families the next time the unit is taught.

- One tracking document identifies which students fall into groups that can be pushed to the next higher performance level and those that must be monitored to avoid slipping into a lower level. The data used includes the performance on the *iReady* assessments and the students are identified for extended learning time groups. Teachers track progress toward vocabulary and language acquisition by assessing the number of Fry words mastered over time. One analysis indicated that students with disabilities in one first grade class had increased their recognition of Fry vocabulary words from 10 to 15 from the beginning to the middle of the year.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

All teachers engage in regularly scheduled inquiry-based collaborative meetings using Data Wise protocols to consistently analyze performance and assessment data for their students in grade-level and cross-grade teams.

### Impact

Collaborations strengthen the capacity of teachers by promoting shared practices and focusing on the progress students make toward grade-level achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on one collaborative team examined student work to determine trends in student performance. Using an item analysis from a mid-year math assessment, they identified a need to focus on developing skills related to base ten, word problems, and measurement. The grade-level team members noticed that students in one class had performed significantly better than the students in the rest of the grade on word problems. The teacher of that class explained that her students had been creating their own word problems and annotating them since the beginning of the year. In the subsequent discussion, the teachers discussed how they could increase the use of annotation strategies to help their students be more successful in understanding and solving word problems. Data analyzed from iReady assessments show that students are improving performance in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math. From baseline to middle-of-year, ELA performance at level one decreased, while levels two, three and four all increased. In math, the number of students in levels one and two decreased, while the number in level three increased from 67 to 151.

- Teachers in all grades use Data Wise protocols to isolate a learner-center problem and associated teacher practices. Teams regularly use a common agenda template to prepare for effective meetings. The agendas consistently include meeting objectives, such as setting student learning goals, and outline how participants can prepare for the meeting, such as using performance data to identify students who are poised to perform at the next level.

- In a recent presentation to the community, the principal outlined the various ways that teachers work collaboratively to improve instruction and performance for students. For example, the principal highlighted the practices of model and peer collaborative teachers as part of the professional learning program at the school. Teachers conduct intervisitations to provide peer feedback as part of the school improvement cycle. One peer intervisitation reflection noted that the focus teacher had provided models for a group of lower performing students. The advice from the peer teacher was to provide more time for students to turn and talk to minimize the teacher talk and enable students to “expand more on their ideas.”