Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S./I.S. 116 William C. Hughley
K-8 29Q116
107-25 Wren Place
Queens
NY 11433

Principal: Debra Farrow

Dates of Review:
March 23, 2018 and March 27, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 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>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Proficient |

Findings
School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective and actionable feedback from frequent cycles of classroom observations using student work and data. Feedback accurately denotes areas of strength and instructional goals, based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development to elevate classroom environment and instruction that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers includes areas of strength and improvement with next steps, aligned to the school’s instructional focus of planning and preparation and student engagement. Most observations provide positive feedback and areas to improve, as well as a deadline for these improvements to be made prior to another observation. For example, in an early childhood reading workshop observation the areas to improve included incorporating guided reading, along with a couple of examples of how to do so. Further, there is a timeline for the teacher to contact the school leaders regarding the implementation of the next step by the next visit. This format is consistent throughout the observations reviewed, across subjects and grades.

- Periodically, administrators set learning walks for the instructional team, which includes administrators and the instructional leads for literacy, math and special education. The purpose of one learning walk was to visit classes to focus on questioning and discussion, an area of school-wide focus from the Danielson Framework for Teaching. New teachers have a trained mentor who is an academic lead and provides support through conferences, communication, modeling, and opportunities for intervisitation and classroom support based on a review of student work and data. Teachers articulated during interviews that this approach has furthered their instructional practice.

- Cycles of frequent observations provide school leaders with a vehicle to support teachers’ implementation of high expectations. Administrators use the components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to determine areas of school-wide focus such as questioning and discussion, and ensure that Hess’ Depth of Knowledge used to plan questions. Additionally, administrators determine areas that need professional development (PD) support. For example, school leaders conducted numerous PD sessions to support staff in understanding the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers watched instructional videos and normed specific components as to whether the teaching was highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective. During the PD sessions, teachers shared that they have a better understanding of the components and levels of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers also visit colleagues’ classrooms to observe the implementation of particular instructional strategies or standards.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

While teaching practices and student work products are aligned to the curricula and reflect student discussion of complex topics, there are missed opportunities for self-directed learning in classrooms.

Impact

Students in most, but not all classrooms, produce meaningful work products and demonstrate high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders express that the incorporation of questions aligned to the curricula and evidenced-based discussions are being adapted on a school-wide basis to advance student-centered, self-directed learning. Math teachers examine the distinction between compliance and engagement in students and explore tasks to make thinking visible. English teachers work to integrate student-driven close reading at the center of their lessons. Across content, teachers explore ways to increase group and class discussions in lesson planning to promote student engagement. School leaders acknowledge the need for ongoing PD and discussions across the school and among teacher teams to extend student-centered experiences to the vast majority of classrooms.

- Across classrooms, facilitation of student engagement reflects student thinking and participation which elevates student voice in a number of classrooms. In a math class, students worked in groups to solve equations related to finding and evaluating the sum of an arithmetic series. Students collaborated to determine which problems to work on, asked questions of each other to find solutions, as well as compared and questioned their solutions. The teacher posed clarifying questions about the process to students or groups who needed help. In another math class students respond to the teacher during a lesson on division facts. Much time was spent on this part of the lesson, before students moved on to individual practice, and take ownership of their learning.

- In a science class, students worked in groups to analyze osmosis and brainstorm features that might illustrate a relationship between the diffusion of molecules. Students shared their observations, questioned each other's thinking and added to their understanding by pointing out the differences observed. The teacher circulated among groups, providing insights then allowing students to continue their investigations. In an English class, students turn and talk in groups, in response to a prompt. The teacher posed questions to the class, which hindered student-led conversations so that inspirations and different points of view could be shared. Across some classrooms, teacher elaboration on content rather than student expansion of concepts was also evident, further limiting opportunities for students to own their discourse and build on each other's ideas.
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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

The faculty builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students through rigorous curricula in all subjects that are meant to be cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff and administration have adopted Common Core-aligned texts. For English Language Arts (ELA) the school is using ReadyGen for reading and Teachers' College Writing Program for writing and GO Math! for math. Curriculum maps, units, and planning documents incorporate the instructional shifts of academic language, close reading, and annotation, which is embedded across grades and content. To support students in acquiring academic vocabulary, the staff create word walls across content areas. Teachers provide students with other opportunities to practice and learn math and ELA via computer intervention programs that are differentiated for ELLs. To support non-fiction reading, teachers use News ELA. In a grade six ELA unit, students needed to analyze textual evidence to draw inferences from the text.

- Units and lesson plans also reflect the content standards, such as a unit on Informational Inferencing which engaged students in reading both primary and secondary sources on the same topic. Students are exposed to academic vocabulary both in context and through the preview of specific vocabulary for each unit. For example, a grade seven math unit on equations and inequalities listed the terms distributive property and inverse operations. With a student population of approximately 39 percent ELLs and students with disabilities, teachers intentionally create curricular documents that emphasize higher-order skills for all students by incorporating differentiated strategies to make lessons accessible for all. Some lesson plans demonstrate this thought process. For example, an ELA lesson is to be used by both a general education teacher, a teacher for students with disabilities, as well as for students for whom English is a New language. This plan requires students to investigate a character and find evidence in order to make an inference using target language.

- Academic and curricular tasks consistently focus on rigorous habits. Some examples of this are tasks asking students to use close reading to look for bias in text, to analyze characters’ actions to determine point of view, or to synthesize evidence from the text to support a response. Additional activities showing rigor include looking for patterns in frequency charts and data tables in math to justify their answers or making observations and testing ideas to propose explanations for natural phenomena in science. Students are asked to express their thinking in essays. Along with these rigorous tasks, units contain scaffolds such as picture supports, graphic organizers, note catchers, and accountable talk stems and teaching supports such as guided practice.
Findings

Teachers and students use rubrics across classrooms and subjects to inform their work. Common assessments are used to determine student progress across grades, subjects and in classrooms.

Impact

The use of rubrics across the school allows students to receive actionable feedback about their performance and work products. Results from common assessments are used to adjust lessons and revise curriculum to meet student needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher feedback is positive, specific and provides clear next steps to support student progress and achievement. The writing rubric of a particular grade provides students with feedback on developing introductions, using supporting evidence, developing structure, and attending to grammar. The teacher feedback stated “You clearly understand the structure for formal writing. Our next step is to work on elaborating the meaning of the text evidence.” In a grade seven math rubric on adding integers, the teacher feedback was “Your work followed the 4-step problems, and you explained your plan well. Be careful with the signs - they go before the number.” An ELA writing rubric provides the following feedback, “Excellent claim; however, let’s work on finding relevant evidence to support the claim.”

- School leaders use a variety of common assessments to track student progress. Teachers use Go Math! common assessments: baseline, benchmark and unit assessments to identify gaps and create next steps. A data review from a performance task revealed that 24.7 percent of students in grades K-8 answered 50 percent or more of questions incorrectly on the 2016 End-of-Year New York City ELA performance task due to students’ writing. Teachers College Writing units of study and pre- and post-writing data are used to understand student progress. This assessment is based on the knowledge that the Common Core Learning Standards expect all students to use academic vocabulary, cite text-based evidence, summarize main idea, and demonstrate content knowledge in their content-based argument essays. The results of unit assessments showed that students had difficulty utilizing academic vocabulary. Teachers focused on vocabulary development in supplemental texts. As a result, students scored higher on their post-argument assessment on the writing units.

- The literacy assessments used are Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) for grades kindergarten through five, Degrees of Reading Power for grades six through eight, and Ready Common Core (ELA and Math). The data helps teachers level passages to ascertain reading habits, fluency, reading process and reading comprehension levels. Diagnostic running records were administered to the lowest performing students to determine specific and targeted interventions. Results from the DRP assessments revealed that most of the struggling readers can read the words, but lacked strategies to comprehend complex text. School leaders and teachers determined it was important to shift their teaching methods to engage students in thinking about text to comprehend, which led to training and implementation of reciprocal teaching and explicit instruction.
Findings
High expectations are consistently communicated to staff via the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, through training and through ongoing communication. The school communicates expectations to students and families and keeps them abreast of student progress toward college and career readiness.

Impact
The school maintains a system of accountability, through an online grading platform, toward expectations amongst staff and helps families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared the support they receive for the middle school selection process through workshops, fairs and tours, and the completion of the applications via the parent coordinator. Students shared during their meeting that the school helps to prepare them for college and career through college and career week, where classes adopt a college, research and celebrate it. Students spoke about attending college trips, such as a visit to Morgan State University.

- Beyond the weekly parent engagement contact via phone, email, or in-person meetings, staff also communicates with the home through an online grade book, which includes a parent and student portal, and provides a clear understanding of progress and expectations. Most parents stated that they are pleased with the level of communication from the teachers and administration. Parents agreed that they are aware of school happenings and events via the parent newsletter and Parent Teacher Association, which sends notifications to parents about assignment due dates and events. Additionally, parents also shared that they receive a monthly grade-level newsletter from teachers, informing them of upcoming themes, topics, and projects. Parents stated that they would reach out to staff if they have a concern, and found results addressed in a timely manner. Students stated that they know how they are doing in school in multiple ways, such as through the online platform as well as recognition during an assembly.

- Administration provides consistent messages regarding high expectations which informs staff of the instructional focus, best practice strategies and staff members who use them in their classrooms, professional readings, and upcoming events. Administration delineates school goals, action plans, and next steps during the opening day professional learning session, setting the tone for the year. The school has a professional learning committee, where teachers create and present PD to their peers, conduct intervisitations, and share best practices. Teachers and other staff attend PD outside the school and turnkey it to their colleagues. Administration couples professional learning cycles with frequent classroom observations and actionable feedback to ensure that staff is working toward the school's goals for student achievement.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

Impact

Professional collaborations promote the achievement of writing goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers who have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have time built into their schedule to engage on a weekly basis in multiple team meetings, including grade and subject team meetings. There is evidence of teacher team notes and agendas across courses and grades of teacher teams looking at student data. Teachers have common planning time built into their schedules to meet two times in a seven-day cycle, for collaborative work during the school day and to engage in professional learning, which strengthens instructional capacity and provides opportunities to exchange ideas. Teachers shared that they learn from each other through the team process. One teacher shared that students were struggling in math because they were skimming the directions so teachers started to ask students to show their work. The teachers shared they have seen improvement as a result of the team’s collaborative suggestions and strategies.

- One of the teacher teams demonstrated the protocol for analyzing student work and data, from which they determined the areas of need, created an action plan, discussed next instructional steps, and set a check-in date to review student performance. Team members stated that this protocol has helped them to positively affect student achievement. Staff stated that their instructional practices have improved, as a result of collaboration, and one teacher explained how working together has supported teachers’ practice school-wide, whether new or veteran. One new teacher stated, “I learn ways to implement assessment in class to tell if students are learning and it’s really helpful for me.” A veteran teacher stated that it helps because “I was not used to technology and working with colleagues. I now use a lot of technology in my lessons.” Department and grade meetings focus on horizontal and vertical alignment through aligning content specific tasks, tests, and process writing. A teacher agreed that during content meetings, “It really helps me to bounce ideas off each other especially in ELA, when we share lessons and feedback.”

- Teachers have time built into their schedule to engage on a weekly basis in multiple team meetings, including grade and subject team meetings. Teachers facilitate the team meetings with the support and collaboration of its members and instructional leads. Teachers are empowered to make decisions that support student achievement. For example, in the first grade staff noticed that many students had very low scores on the benchmark scores on DRA, developmental reading assessment. Staff determined the need for a program to address students’ needs in phonics, decoding, and comprehension. To this end, the team decided that the Fundations program would best support students’ needs resulting in scores increasing.