Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 134 Hollis
Elementary 29Q134
203-02 109 Avenue
Queens
NY 11412

Principal: Randi Posner Marino

Dates of Review:
March 28, 2018 - March 29, 2018

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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

P.S. 134 Hollis serves students in grade PK through grade 5. 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</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 Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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<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 with effective, accurate, and timely feedback through cycles of observations aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Instructional practices of increasing both students’ discourse and their engagement with questioning are promoted and implemented through the clear articulation of expectations via observation feedback and during goal setting meetings.

Supporting Evidence

- A cycle of observations supports elevating schoolwide instructional practices targeting selected components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders provide feedback and specific evidence from classroom observations on Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) teacher observation forms for each evaluated component. Suggestions to maintain or promote the observed component rating are included with the lesson-specific evidence for each component. For example, an APPR teacher observation form rated as developing for the component using questioning and discussion techniques, suggested that in order to receive a rating of effective in this area, use higher-order questioning to promote student discussion. Another APPR teacher observation report suggested to maintain an effective rating, have students engage in peer or self-assessment when using assessment during instruction.

- Staff value the feedback they receive from observations to push their instructional development including the promoting of higher-order thinking and student-to-student discussions. Conversations between school administration and teachers connected to instruction and review of student work serve as the basis for Initial Planning Conference (IPC) goal setting. School leadership provides feedback regarding the classroom environment and instruction to inform teacher goals at the IPCs. Teachers develop a goal that will promote their professional growth. One teacher created a goal to embed more critical thinking questions into her lesson planning based on the fact that questioning and discussion techniques was the lowest rated component most frequently in her observation reports.

- Communication of clear expectations to teachers support their growth and professional development. Teachers are informed to read their feedback and next steps carefully so implementation of next steps can be observed at the subsequent observation. In one case, the subsequent observation commends a teacher’s follow through and attention to “carefully put much effort into co-planning and students’ engagement,” as was suggested in a previous observation report. Similarly, another teacher shared how prior observation feedback guided her adoption of the Positive Behavior Intervention System and resulted in an improved learning environment, thus enabling students to remain more focused on student-to-student discussions. Another teacher expressed that written feedback from observations has improved her questioning technique.
Area of Focus

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

Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning by teachers with department peers, although the level of rigor planned through differentiated tasks is inconsistent.

Impact

A variety of learners are not provided targeted access through rigorous instruction and well-planned scaffolds to cognitively engage them in the curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade two English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan included scaffolded summary planning sheets for groups of students to present their thinking critically and remain engaged with the task appropriately. Students needing the most support to engage in the task will be provided a foldable recording sheet with guiding questions such as “What did the character want?” and “How was the character’s problem solved?” Students requiring less support will be provided a graphic organizer with several word prompts, including somebody, wanted, but, so, and then. Students requiring minimal support to remain engaged in the task at a rigorous level were to be provided a blank template summary page with lines for their response. Although these scaffolds provided the grade two students with an ability to demonstrate their higher-order skills regarding the importance of character traits, the majority of planning documents lacked similar scaffolds that consistently promote rigorous habits and opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills.

- Differentiated instruction, scaffolds, and/or accommodations for diverse learners to ensure they have access to learning are beginning to be included in most lesson planning documents, especially for students with disabilities. Although most lesson plans align with the schoolwide curricular expectation of designing instructional experiences with two tasks, the first tasks are designed to be completed by all and have limited differentiation. The second task is often an extension activity for those who complete the first task. For example, a grade three ELA lesson plan first tasks students to collaborate on highlighting information from articles using a compare and contrast graphic organizer. The second task is for students to independently complete two choice cards. However, on a grade two math lesson plan, task one requires students to complete several problems in their workbook, while task two is one additional problem.

- Teachers use their common planning times to track student weaknesses and plan curricula based on noticing from student work. However, revisions and next steps do not reflect specific opportunities for a diverse group of learners to remain cognitively engaged with access to the learning. For example, science teachers recognized students were struggling with sequencing, yet a review of curricular resources does not demonstrate strategic planning to engage students in sequencing, although laboratory investigations require a progression of steps.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating: Developing</th>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, student work products and high levels of thinking are inconsistently supported by multiple entry points and efforts to engage all students in discussions and differentiated tasks, especially for students with disabilities.

### Impact

There are uneven levels of engagement with appropriately challenging tasks and an uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products as reflected by student thinking and participation across classes, although student to student discussions and an intentional focus on higher-order questions are an instructional focus.

### Supporting Evidence

- A kindergarten class engaged in demonstrating their understanding of counting to twenty from a given number. Students were challenged to answer questions while referring to a number line. The teacher further challenged her students to explain the number found one higher and one lower than that number. The teacher modeled how to show the steps while students also discussed them successfully with a partner during a turn and talk. Furthermore, manipulative plastic cubes engaged students’ visual understanding of the topic. All students were appropriately challenged during the lesson. However, similar high levels of student engagement and thinking were not consistently observed throughout the majority of other classes.

- A science lesson challenged students to understand which beverage is best for consumers’ health. Students were directed to answer the do now questions in their notebook first. The questions did not support high levels of thinking or allow for engagement, as some students were unable to base their answers on any concrete information. For example, when questioned “What is the main ingredient (after water)?” students did not demonstrate having content knowledge of information pertaining to the order of ingredients on a label. Students in a twelve-to-one class continued to annotate their copy of a story after the teacher had modeled annotation on the interactive white board in front of the class. Students were compliant in following the task and underlined important details based on the teachers’ directions. However, students struggled to make connections when prompted to pull out key information on their own. They also were questioned to define some supportive vocabulary words in the reading, although not provided with the space needed to write the definition accordingly. As such, students limited access to scaffolds to support their understanding stymied their ability to engage in appropriately challenging tasks consistently.

- Students engaged in a conversation during a grade two ELA lesson to determine how characters’ traits are conveyed in their story. They questioned each other’s thinking and added some personal thought, although only a few supported their answers with evidence found in the text. For example, one boy said the character is very happy but another student challenged him quoting a line from the story. Opportunities for students to discuss and demonstrate thinking exist, although teachers tend to dominate most of the discussions. Grade five students were asked to explain the differences between prefixes and suffixes, but the teacher interjected and gave examples to clarify, limiting students’ thinking.
### 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 use or create common assessments across grade levels that align with the school's curricula and use diagnostic online assessments to determine student progress towards achievement of grade level standards and content in math and ELA.

#### Impact

Actionable feedback, usually written on a sticky note, provides students with their achievement level to guide next steps. Additionally, teachers use student achievement and assessment results to adjust grouping and interventions during instruction and to plan curricula.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Provision of feedback on rubrics and written notes to students regarding their work indicates highlights and next steps for growth. During a meeting with students, they shared work samples and explained how they receive and understand the feedback to improve their work. For example, a students’ feedback on a rubric about writing persuasive essays indicated they had mastered all details of the assignment excluding organization. Organization was marked as a skill requiring more attention to develop a stronger introduction, body, and conclusion. Additionally, written feedback attached to the essay on a sticky note highlighted “excellent word choices to create a tone,' while next steps reiterated, “Organize major events in separate paragraphs.” Students in the early grades also receive feedback to support their learning. Another student shared a math assignment with a small-attached rubric indicating performance level and additional teacher comments suggesting they use more details in their explanation. The comments align with the rubric ratings.

- Teachers track student progress toward goals on common writing assessments providing written feedback and next steps aligned to rubric ratings leading to curricular and instructional adjustments. Students revisit identified misconceptions on subsequent writing tasks incorporating the next steps leading to improved achievement evident on rubrics and progress monitoring performance trackers. For example, several kindergarten students received a level one on their initial writing task and feedback included “choose only one event to write about in detail and manage time better.” Additional writing samples demonstrated that students used a variety of punctuation and transition phrases along with additional details to explain their reasoning. Review of student samples resulted in their work improving to level four, including details reflecting strong conclusions.

- Diagnostic online assessments are administered to all students in ELA and math. Teachers track student progress on those assessments and use the information to group students in classes for differentiated reading and math. Trackers capture students’ level of understanding from baseline assessments noting gains and declines as either significant or not based on expected growth. Reading and math groups sit together during instruction so teachers can strategically support students who performed at comparable levels. Furthermore, benchmark data guides student grouping. Additionally, results are used to assign additional differentiated online work to support student achievement.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Schools leaders communicate high expectations for staff to engage students in rigorous instruction and engagement while striving for academic achievement. Expectations are also communicated to families regarding their children’s path to the next level of their education.

Impact

Staff members’ engagement in professional learning supports their understanding of the expectations for students and themselves. Additionally, families understand their children's progress toward learning expectations via the parent portal, an online grading system.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate expectations aligned to rigorous instruction and increased student engagement. Teachers have embraced the administration's expectation to include at least two differentiated tasks when designing lessons. Staff communicates the purpose of the two tasks is to begin building a wider variety of differentiated lessons and extensions. Opportunities for staff to share and review strategies to effectively design tasks are reviewed during professional development time and reiterated in the principal's week at a glance memo. The memo also reminds staff of professional responsibilities aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A recent weekly memo reminded staff “Discussions among students should be a common practice in your classrooms. Rich student discussion is active student engagement and leads to a more conceptual understanding of content. This aspect of learning should be a focus when planning your lessons. Model what this looks like for students and have a system in place for refocusing student attention for quick checks for understanding.”

- Staff expressed that school leadership effectively communicates clear expectations related to their professionalism and instruction. One teacher highlighted how school leadership supports professional development and frequents their classrooms to monitor implementation of the learned skill and how it can be further supported systemically. Additionally, teachers appreciate the opportunity to attend and turn-key outside professional learning experiences for their colleagues. Support staff noted several opportunities they have turn-keyed their learning with colleagues connected to social-emotional development, speech, and proper compliance with Individual Education Plans. Overall, teachers regularly receive consistent messages aligned to improving instruction and curricula so all students can meet high expectations, while also fostering their own personal well-being.

- Students' families are aware of their child's progress and what is expected to move on to the next level of their education via report cards and personal conversations with teachers and staff. Families are kept informed of students’ academic and behavioral progress through an online progress-monitoring website. Families appreciate the communication and information they receive from all school community members, which includes workshops designed to help them support their child at home. Several parents noted that workshops on autism, homework, and critical thinking “give us strength” and help us “persevere...and educate our child.” Additionally, “Coffee, Cake, and Conversation,” with the principal is another forum for parents to understand their child’s progress and communicate general school related concerns.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote student achievement, especially toward the school goal of improved writing. Additionally, distributed leadership structures are in place for teachers to support improved student learning.

Impact

Grade-level inquiry work has strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers while also providing the opportunity to voice their ideas to impact key decisions that affect student learning across the school and their own professional experiences.

Supporting Evidence

- Inquiry teams meet weekly to engage in protocols by looking at student work products, identify student misconceptions, and reflect on instructional practices to improve. Teachers also use this time to ensure that the Common Core Learning Standards are taught with fidelity and coherence across grades. Teachers stated they discuss information to “implement things, look for growth, and talk to each other [regarding] if instruction worked across the board.” Teachers have adopted writing strategies that have impacted student writing so that there are better introductions and elaboration with structured and detailed paragraphs. Data collected from writing on demand prompts support growth for the majority of students in these areas because of inquiry work. For example, student data based on non-fiction unit writing, indicates students mastered how to develop a lead while also significantly improving on writing to author’s purpose. Teachers’ inquiry work has also led to shared best practices and resources.

- Inquiry work provides teachers an opportunity to share differentiated tools and scaffolds that enhance their instructional delivery, while also providing more resources to increase student achievement. During an observation of a grade two team, teachers shared patterns and trends they noted from students improved use of transition words based on previous inquiry work. Additionally, the team developed strategies to support their students’ development of good conclusions. Suggestions included, having student partners engage in the revision process using a genre specific tool created by students, having students refer to the anchor charts around the classroom, and promote critical thinking by asking higher order questions of students to foster dialogue.

- Teachers support one another through leadership roles that provide opportunities to improve learning across the school. The speech teacher has established a relationship with a regional university who screens all students on-site for services needed. Beginning in kindergarten, students are evaluated on their phonological awareness. This allows service providers to target areas in need of improvement at a younger age, which is timelier, thus aiding students learning and academic success. Additionally, a committee of teachers developed the academic and behavioral expectations posters located throughout specific areas of the school. The team also generated a series of lesson plans to support teachers’ instruction of these expectations throughout the school.