Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 143 Louis Armstrong
Elementary 24Q143
34-74 113 Street
Queens
NY 11368

Principal: Jerry Brito

Dates of Review:
December 5, 2017 - December 6, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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. 143 Louis Armstrong serves students in grade K 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>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 Quality Ratings continued

### 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>
</tr>
</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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

There is a theory of action that informs all building culture and socioemotional supports for all students and staff. Structures, such as The Leader in Me and Beautiful Me, are in place that allows all teachers and staff multiple opportunities to build relationships with students.

Impact

A safe and inclusive school environment welcomes and supports student’s voice and affects students both academically and socially.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has implemented a schoolwide enrichment model that allows students to take a course in an area of their choosing and allows teachers to teach something other than their normal teaching assignment. School leaders surveyed teachers to find out what areas they would like to teach other than their normal duties. Every Friday during fifth period, students and teachers are engaged in a variety of programs such as creating podcasts, book making, American Sign Language, script writing and development, Beautiful Me, and coding. Students have an opportunity to engage in an area that they either want to explore or are passionate about. All of the students shared how much they truly enjoy the enrichment program, one student stating, “It is one of the reasons I love coming to school.” Teachers also expressed their content by stating, “It allows us to be teachers and leaders in areas other than what the students normally see us in.” As a result of all of these programs, the school has seen an improvement in student behaviors and more student collaboration.

- The school staff was trained through The Leader in Me program and follow the Seven Habits of Happy Kids, which has been implemented schoolwide. Throughout the school, the interactions between staff and students were respectful and extremely positive. During the student meeting, students were very vocal about how positive and welcoming the school is. All students shared how supportive their teachers are, and how they are consistently encouraging them to do better. Students are celebrated monthly for attendance, behavior and academics through the student(s) of the month program. Several students shared how being selected student of the month was very exciting because their parents came to see them during the ceremony. While others stated how they are trying hard to become a student of the month. Teachers and school leaders shared how they try their best to celebrate every student in the school at least once throughout the year.

- Programs and clubs support the socioemotional needs of students and student voice is meaningfully involved in the decision making process. The Beautiful Me program, which was student-initiated, educates young girls of all ages regarding self-esteem and other ways in order to make young girls better sisters, daughters and friends. English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities are involved in the Building Bridges by Building Bikes program. The programs allows students in grades three through five, to take part in the hands-on design and engineering principles of bicycles. This enrichment program uses English as a New Language (ENL) strategies to incorporate the four disciplines of Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education. Students also participate in a large amount of fund raising activities where they are the ones who select where the proceeds will be going to, most notably creating a two-mile race at Flushing Meadow Park and sending all proceeds to the victims of the recent hurricane.
Findings

Across some classrooms but not all, teaching practices are aligned to the school's belief in how students learn best, most notably by engaging students in group and/or partner discussions. Teaching strategies offer all students including ELLs and students with disabilities access to all lessons.

Impact

Many, but not the vast majority of students, are engaged and producing meaningful work products that demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- One of the beliefs in the school is that students learn best when engaged in rigorous group and or partner discussions. During an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students were actively engaged in group and partner discussions centered on summarizing and analyzing themes from the book *Lunch Money*. During the conversation, students used academic vocabulary, accountable talk stems, and cited evidence from the text using the page, paragraph and line. During a first grade math class, the teacher utilized turn and talk discussion protocols in order to engage students in understanding the meaning of key vocabulary words. For example, the teacher asked the students to turn and talk to a neighbor and discuss what the word difference meant. Students were overheard saying, “It means to take away” and “I think it means the same as subtraction.” However, in other lessons such as a third grade math lesson, there was very little opportunities for students to engage in any sort of discussions.

- Many of the lessons observed displayed a variety of ways that allowed all students including ELLs and students with disabilities access to the lesson. Teacher modeling was one way that was prominent throughout the classes visited. In addition, other lessons grouped students based on ability and/or the prior lessons exit assessment. A math lesson allowed students to use counters as manipulatives and lapboards as a way to allow students to solve math problems and display their work in order to be assessed by a peer or the teacher. However, other classes did not have any visible ways that evidenced multiple entry points for all students. During a reading lesson, students were in groups and asked to generate questions using text-based evidence from a prior reading passage, but no additional entry points such as a graphic organizer was offered to students.

- During a third grade writing lesson, students discussed in groups how a writer teaches a reader about an important word in their story. One student was overheard stating, “A writer can use bold words to show that the word is important”, and “A bold word shows extra feeling in a certain word.” During a first grade math lesson, students were engaged in turn and talk discussions where they discussed with a partner what certain vocabulary words such as difference meant. During a math lesson students sat in groups and discussed the various ways that they could show 6x7 using math manipulatives such as blocks. Students were able to discuss the various ways they arranged the blocks and why they selected a particular way. However, opportunities like these were not seen across the vast majority of classes visited thus not giving all students opportunities to engage in rigorous discourse.
Findings

School leaders and teachers assure that curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) integrate instructional shifts such as writing across the curriculum and empathize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills for all students.

Impact

There is coherence across curricula that is challenging students and promoting college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Challenging tasks for all students including ELLs and students with disabilities was seen across curriculum documents reviewed. When speaking to teachers and school leaders, both stressed how rigor is never compromised, but rather entry points and supports are given to all students during lessons in a variety of ways. Many of the lesson plans reviewed give students “accountable talk starters” that give all students ways to begin their responses when engaged in group and partner discussions. In addition, planning documents also reveal time for explicit teacher modeling which gives support especially for those students who are visual learners. Additionally, planning that includes grouping students based on skill and assessment results was also seen throughout the curriculum documents reviewed. This type of planning supporting all students’ abilities to engage in rigorous and meaningful classroom discussions.

- Lesson plans reviewed evidenced alignment to the Common Core and integrated specific instructional shifts. A fourth grade ELA lesson plan started with an objective that had students referring to details and examples from the prior days excerpts so that they can summarize the main idea and identify the theme of the passage they read. A fourth grade math lesson plan included how students would apply properties of operations as strategies to multiply and divide. The lesson also clearly outlined and identified the academic language, particular words/phrases, and structures essential to understanding the content of this lesson. Those included were; factors, product, multiply, and property. Coherence in curriculum is built through the teacher team inquiry cycles that allows teachers through grade and subject area meeting assure that there is alignment throughout all grades and content areas.

- Rigorous habits and higher order skills are part of the curricula. A fourth grade math lesson connected the various ways to interpret a remainder to real life situations that student may be familiar with. For example, having a birthday cake that feeds eight people and asking students to figure out how many birthday cakes they will need if they have 35 people coming to their party. A first grade literacy lesson used several ways to have students tap out three letter words so that they can then practice their reading and spelling. This lesson divides students into three literacy centers, “Alphabet sounds, sight word game, and working with the teacher.” These strategies are practiced during the initial part of the lesson and then students would read a selection designated by the teacher.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

Teachers use grading policies, rubrics and common assessments such as the Fountas and Pinnell leveled reading assessment program that help to track student progress across all grades.

**Impact**

Teachers provide students with feedback that is actionable and adjust curricula as needed based on students outcomes.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has a standard grading policy that is known by all school leaders, teachers, students and parents. The grading policy was visible in many of the classrooms visited in places where students had full access to it. Feedback on many of the assignments reviewed was actionable and gave students their strengths from the assignment along with specific next steps. In many cases, the feedback offered to students was written on the assignment rubric and incorporated rubric language. For example, feedback on a student's math assignment included commending the student for successfully solving the order of operation and offered next steps that involved adding more details such as numbers to the student's final explanation of the problem.

- The school uses progress monitor binders that include individual student goals for all students. During the meeting with students, they shared how they are regularly talking to their teachers about all of the “work and grades that are in” their data binders. One student shared, “Because of my talks with my teacher about the grades in my data binder, I always know how I am doing in every subject.” During the visit to classrooms, students could be seen accessing their data binders and reviewing the information inside of them. In addition, teachers are constantly monitoring the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for all of the students with disabilities. Teachers shared how they do this in collaboration with the students and strongly believe that it builds “accountability and ownership” over their progress. In addition, the school uses the Fountas and Pinnell leveled reading assessment program that helps to track student reading progress across all grades levels.

- Students shared that they receive “a lot of feedback” on their assignments and verbally in class. Students were able to articulate how feedback has affected them. One student shared how feedback has helped him by allowing him to take what the teacher suggested on one assignment and using it in a similar assignment in the future. In addition to receiving feedback from their teachers, many students also shared that they receive feedback from their peers as well. Students also shared how rubrics are used regularly in their classes. One fifth grade student shared how rubrics are helpful because it can be used in order to make their work “as close to a four as possible.” Other students also expressed the value in rubrics as a tool that allows them to know what is needed in a particular assignment in order to get as close to mastery as possible.
### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations connected to all areas of instruction to staff as well as collaborating with families towards a path to college and career readiness for their children.

### Impact

School leaders support and provide training to all staff and support all families in tracking students' progress toward all expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- A clear elevated level of high expectations is communicated by leadership on a daily basis through a variety of means. It begins with having the instructional focus of the school written on the bottom of all communications from school leaders. Letters to staff, parents, and students all have the instructional focus clearly displayed as a way to constantly remind every one of the expectations associated with instruction. The school principal regularly sends out electronic communications to staff in order to hold them accountable for a variety of items. An email sent to staff in October, reminded them of the expectations associated with bulletin boards which includes the student work to be displayed, the amount of student writing that is expected, and the date that all is expected to be addressed by. Teachers shared how there is no confusing exactly what is expected of them and how they "hold themselves accountable as teachers and leaders for everything that takes place in our school." A mutual accountability such as this for all expectations was evident throughout the school.

- Families overwhelmingly shared how one of the things that they most like about the school is the communication from teachers and school leaders. According to all parents interviewed, teachers and administrators are always putting together workshops and programs that support them and their abilities to help their children at home. For example, in addition to training all students and staff, parents were also invited and trained in The Leader in Me program, which according to parents is extremely helpful and allows them to help their children “Become leaders at home.” In addition, parents also spoke about the workshop that they recently attended for the upcoming math unit that was very helpful in supporting their children with math strategies at home. All written communication to parents always go out in English and in Spanish. In addition, according to parents, teachers go out of their way to learn how to say things like “hello and how are you” in their native language. According to parents, they just don’t feel like ordinary parents, they feel like “partners with the school.”

- High expectations directly connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching is communicated through the feedback in observation reports and direct communication from school leaders to teachers. In addition, school leaders are consistently present during curriculum planning meetings where teachers are analyzing and adjusting curriculum. School leaders meet on a regular basis with instructional coaches to discuss the support that they are supplying to teachers and school leaders use the instructional coaches as a venue to disseminate instructional and curricular expectations on a regular basis. Teachers shared how the feedback they regularly receive is a good way to be reminded about leadership’s exceptions. School leaders also provide teachers with PD that is aligned to schoolwide instructional and curricular expectations.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

Teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based team meetings that analyze student work products, assessment data and promote the achievement of school goals.

**Impact**

As a result of the teacher team work, teacher’s instructional capacity is strengthened and has shown improvement based on recent teacher observation data.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Although this school is currently divided into three campuses (while their new school is being constructed) teacher teams still engage in structured professional inquiry-based collaborations that allow teachers to look at student data and pedagogical practices. The school makes effective use of technology as teachers meet via teleconference in order to have all teachers across three campuses meet regularly. There is common planning times within each grade and subject area that allows teachers to meet multiple times per week. Instructional coaches and consultants are part of teacher team meetings. During the teacher interview, one teacher shared how in this school, although teachers are split up among three campuses, they meet more regularly than the school they came from previously that was housed in one building. Teachers also shared how they “Want to meet together regularly, it’s part of the culture here.”

- Teacher’s track and target student assessment data through system generated reports that paint a picture of student progress and if needed, make adjustments. For example, during the teacher team meeting, the fifth grade curriculum planning team focused on looking at recent student data. During the meeting teachers discussed student progress thus far and decided that the current unit’s pacing needed to be adjusted, as some students were not keeping up with the material. Teachers agreed that they needed to develop specific strategies to be used in order to help students understand the material while at the same time adjusting the pacing of the unit.

- Teachers believe that as a result of their regular collaborations, they have built a stronger instructional capacity and a culture for learning amongst peers. There has been a growth in teacher’s instructional capacity as teachers continuously learn curricular and pedagogical best practices. Teachers have developed and implemented a teacher intervisitation process that allows teachers to visit each other’s classrooms regularly. Teachers are well supported not only by school leaders, but by their colleagues as well, as a result of the teacher team process found throughout the school. As a result, school leaders report an increase in teacher practice based on the ratings in teacher observation reports this year in the areas of planning and questioning.