Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. /M.S. 147 Ronald McNair
K-8 29Q147
218-01 116 Avenue
Queens
NY 11411

Principal: Afua Hill

Dates of Review:
March 1, 2018 - March 2, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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. /M.S. 147 Ronald McNair serves students in grade PK through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<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>Area of Focus</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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</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>Area of Celebration</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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<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>Additional Finding</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>
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</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Weekly social emotional lessons and restorative circles ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult. The school community aligns professional development, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports to create a positive learning environment.

Impact

Students have access to social-emotional learning and supports that align with their learning needs and promote the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- Elementary grades participate in social emotional lessons and middle school students participate in Restorative Circles each week. One lesson plan focused on celebrating student diversity. Students discussed with their partner how they were similar and different comparing their favorite toys, favorite foods, and best vacations and students used a Venn diagram to record their responses. Student work samples from another lesson illustrated student responses to sentence frames. Some examples of responses included, “Scooter taken away makes me sad, lightening makes me scared, and sliding makes me happy.” During the large student meeting, a student stated that in Restorative Circles, “We can express anger and feelings; they are family members to us.” During an observation of a seventh grade Restorative Circle, the lesson focused on learning how to pay better attention. Students took turns talk with their partner and in the larger circle, one student stated, “When people actually listen, they appreciate you, they care about you.” Students responded that through these structures they feel well known by at least one adult. Students and parents report that the school provides a positive learning community where students are well known.

- Students participate in a variety of clubs and activities during and after school including tennis, basketball, performing arts, science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) activities, student council, and the step team. The school also partners with a community based organization to develop virtues of the month, which include honesty, discipline, and tolerance, perseverance, self-esteem, and grace, sportsmanship, understanding, empathy, and citizenship. Virtues are reinforced each month with student-organized assemblies, monthly student recognition and opportunities for students to earn and redeem positive behavior points for school prizes. An observation of a performance by the school’s step team and a review of progress reports demonstrates that students have a positive connection with the school environment and are motivated academically. The school community uses a variety of learning experiences and an emphasis on monthly virtues to promote the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

- The staff participates in professional development in social – emotional learning, restorative practices, and behavior interventions and works with a restorative circles coach. The staff developed a positive behavior matrix that supports the school’s mantra, “Rockets are Respectful, Responsible Role Models!” and students can earn incentives through an online class platform that records positive behavior. The school reaches out to families through school newsletters, email, phone calls, progress reports and an online parent portal that monitors attendance, and the academic and social emotional progress of students. As part of Parent Teacher Conferences, the school developed a protocol for Student Led Conferences where students present their work to their families and reflect on their academic and social emotional progress.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that align to the school's curricula, and provide opportunities for students to self-assess via checklists and reflection. However, these practices do not yet offer a clear portrait of student mastery.

Impact

Although most teachers provide actionable feedback to students, and assessment practices in most classrooms reflect adjustments to meet the learning needs of students, meaningful feedback was inconsistent across subject areas and grade levels hindering some students' awareness of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The schoolwide grading policy applies to all grades and subject areas. The three main categories include exams, classwork, and homework with identified percentages. Student work samples include the use of rubrics to provide feedback to students. An example of teacher feedback from an English assignment includes, “You had a good concise start to your essay. Keeping with a good structure, do not stray away by going into a retell instead of an analysis.” Teacher feedback on a math sample states, “You have answered all the questions from the task showing all steps and written arguments are evident.” A scoring rubric in science lists categories including, science content, vocabulary, contributes to the class, quality of work, time management, scientific drawings, details, attitude, and teamwork. A review of student work and speaking with students reveals that students receive feedback on their work most of the time, but sometimes do not see the rubric until they have turned the assignment in for grading. Although student feedback allows students to revise individual tasks, limited access to rubrics hinders students from making meaning across subjects and tasks.

- In a fourth grade science class, students used a science checklist and reflection handout to write down their responses to the lesson. Some of the self-check questions included, “Did I understand the science concept and can I explain in my own words? Did I understand and use the vocabulary? Did I participate in the group? Did I use my time well? Did I do my drawings completely and are they scientifically labeled? Did I give in my highest quality of work? Did I always have a positive attitude when working with my teammates? Did I try to make sure my team is on the right track?” In response to teacher feedback on an English essay, the student wrote, “Next time, I will continue to support with text evidence and more research. I will remember to use a larger font so it’s easier to read.” Across most classrooms, students are provided opportunities to self-assess their progress and identify next steps. However, students report that while they have opportunities to reflect on their work and next steps, those opportunities occur most often in their English Language Arts (ELA) classes and less often in other subjects.

- Teachers use Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), and pre and post on demand writing tasks throughout the year. For example, teacher analysis of the beginning of the year assessments in math identified that most eighth grade students leave questions blank because of an inability to comprehend the concept of functions and how to represent an algebraic function. In response, teachers developed an action plan to “focus on students’ definition, evaluation, and description of functions and how they can represent functions in different ways.” Evidence in teacher notes and charts demonstrate the use of data to group students and plan multiple entry points such as the use of graphic organizers, flash cards, or collaborative groups. Teachers also utilize exit tickets and clarifying questions during classroom instruction to assess for student learning.
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 is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate text evidence and academic vocabulary. Lesson plans and academic tasks emphasize higher-order skills through targeted learning objectives across grades and subjects.

Impact

The curricula build coherence and promote the development of rigorous habits, higher-order thinking skills and college and career readiness for all students across subject areas and grade levels.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans demonstrate alignment to the Common Core and address the instructional shifts including the use of textual evidence to support student inferences and the use of academic vocabulary. The school adopted a new math curriculum and writing units based on an analysis of student performance on New York State assessments, beginning of the year Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), and on demand pre-assessment writing tasks. A science lesson plan includes higher order thinking questions to assess student understanding about the factors and qualities that make model airplanes fly well. An instructional outcome in an English unit stated, “Readers will learn that strong inferences are supported by textual evidence and enhance the comprehension of the central idea of an article.

- In an English lesson plan, the learning objective for students stated that, “Scholars will analyze relevant evidence and produce body paragraphs for an argument essay in response to the question, who is the most influential character in the book Wonder by filling out a graphic organizer and analyzing a mentor text.” The lesson plan identified the skills as “analyzing a mentor text to help raise the level of writing and create body paragraphs with relevant evidence.” In a science lesson plan, the objective is for students to design two different paper airplanes and modify one of their designed airplanes in an attempt to improve its flight. In a seventh grade social studies lesson plan, the objective stated, “Students will be able to state their position on who they felt should have won the American Revolution using supporting information from their graphic organizer.” Targeted skills highlighted in lesson objectives across contents emphasize rigorous habits for students including the use of evidence in the development of argumentative writing, dividing by ten using different strategies such as repeated subtraction or the number line, and describing how the water cycle helps people, plants, and animals survive.

- There is evidence in lesson plans across grades and content areas that teachers emphasize higher order skills such as, constructing arguments, developing inferences, and citing textual evidence for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. A fourth grade plan includes, “Students will show their understanding by describing the impact of the water cycle, as well as, answering text based questions.” Ann eighth grade plan includes, “Scholars will gather relevant evidence to support a claim about technology in the classroom by completing a close reading, marking up their text, and gathering enough evidence to create a claim.” In a math lesson plan, the teacher identified whole and small group lessons for targeted students to achieve the same learning objective. A science lesson includes reteach activities, small working groups and paraprofessional support to ensure that all students achieve the learning objective to design at least two model paper airplanes, modify the design to improve flight, and relate the model’s parts to a real airplane, as well as, record a hypothesis and background information on plane design.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices align to curricula and reflect the school's belief that students will communicate their knowledge of new learning by engaging in speaking, listening and writing tasks. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
Alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and instructional focus allow most students to provide evidence of their learning, engage in appropriately challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a fifth grade math class, students worked in pairs on the assigned word problem using the *Visualize, Hypothesize, Estimate, Compute and Check (VHECC)* strategy and a teacher created graphic organizer to record their thinking. Before completing their computations, students had to write down their plan. One student wrote, “What I’m going to do first is find one half of two and one fourth. Next, I’m going to multiply two and one fourth three times. Then after I get both my answers, I will add them together to get my final answer.” Students annotated the word problem by using the *CUBES (Circle, Underline, Box, Estimate, and Solve)* strategy. At the beginning of this class, students also wrote a question they had about the lesson. One student wrote, “One question I have about multi-step problems is do I have to add the numbers more than once?” In an ELA class, the teacher strategically placed students in groups based on reading level and selected different articles for each group aligned to their level. In a third grade math class, student teams discussed the different strategies to represent a target number and created posters that visually represented their targeted number based on student notes and discussion. Across classrooms, teachers used writing, organizational tools and strategic grouping to support student thinking and the production of meaningful work products.

- In a sixth grade ELA class, students sat in groups and annotated articles as they gathered evidence to support their claims around technology use in the classroom. In this classroom, there were two instructional outcomes written on the board, “Reading: Students will analyze non-fiction text by using close reading strategies and demonstrate their knowledge gained from the reading by creating divergent and convergent questions. Writing: Students will gather relevant evidence to support a claim about technology use in the classroom. Then students will complete a close reading, mark up their text and gather enough evidence to create a claim.” Students in this classroom used a graphic organizer to record their reasons and quotes that supported their argument. Across classrooms, students use writing tasks to explore new learning and record their thinking.

- In a social studies class, student groups used a graphic organizer to plan their argument on the factors that contributed to the American Revolution. The teachers reviewed group *pro and con* charts and students referred to their charts and notes to argue and provide evidence to support their claims. Students used their notes, graphic organizers and a rubric to create a written response. In a kindergarten science class, students compared the characteristics of living and non-living things, provided examples, determined if objects were living or non-living and explained their reasoning. Across classrooms, teachers provide students opportunities to record their thinking and communicate new learning in small group and whole class discussions so that all learners engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate high-order thinking.
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

High expectations are consistently conveyed to staff through a staff handbook, emails, observation feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams have established a cultured for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

A system of accountability for high expectations is in place for all staff. Teacher teams and staff offer ongoing guidance and supports that prepare students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership holds teachers accountable through observation feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Written observations include actionable feedback and clear expectations for next steps. For example, feedback in one observation states, “The next steps identified are: be sure that learning activities represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for different groups of students and varied used of instructional groups.” In another example of written feedback the leader states, “Next steps: Ensure activities are standards based to make the best use of instructional time. Incorporate strategies that allow all students including ENL’s to complete planned tasks. Plan and incorporate strategies which allow all students to engage in discussions.” The principal and assistant principal rotate their visitation to observe teachers across grades and subjects. Agendas and low inference observation notes from school leadership provide evidence of the calibration of classroom observations in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching to hold staff accountable to clearly identified expectations for teaching and learning.

- Leadership holds teams accountable through an inquiry team model that expects all teachers to present learning tasks using a tuning protocol and established group norms. Leadership reviews team norms, agendas and presented tasks. A review of recorded group norms provides evidence that leadership requires each team member to sign off on the norms as a sign of agreement. An examples of groups norms include, “Each person has a role and is responsible for the planning and preparation. Notify the team ahead of time if you run into challenges, so we can see how we are able to support you before the next meeting.” Leaders communicate the school’s instructional focus and high expectations to all faculty and staff through professional development. Faculty and staff understand and can speak to the school’s instructional focus. This year, all staff is participating in a yearlong book study of *Rigor is Not a Four Letter Word* with sessions led by members of the professional development committee.

- Teacher teams and staff share the instructional focus and high expectations with students via the school’s common grading policy, newsletters, and daily morning announcements. Students meet with the guidance counselor throughout the year and all seventh graders participate in lessons that outline the requirements and behaviors needed for high school and college. Restorative Circle lessons focus on the academic and social behaviors needed to be a thoughtful listener during instruction. Instructional focus posters adorn classrooms and offices. Teachers shared that students, teachers and parents refer to posters on a regular basis. Posters read, “Students will communicate their knowledge of new learning by engaging in speaking, listening, and writing tasks in all subject areas. Students will appropriately use content-specific vocabulary in order to provide evidence of their learning in discussions and various written tasks.”
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 focusing on the examination of student work. Distributive leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and result in improvements in teacher’s practices. Across the school, teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During an observation of the weekly, combined ELA and social science inquiry teams, teachers reviewed student work presented by a team member while another member served as facilitator. The combined team created norms at the beginning of the school year, which were posted and reviewed at the beginning of the meeting. Some of the group norms included, “no cell phones or grading papers during team meetings, we will share information and collaborate without being competitive, and problems will be presented that promote mutual discussion and resolution.” The team followed an agenda, and completed a sign in sheet and graphic organizer. Each member of the team examined copies of the student work and identified what the student could do, areas of weakness, and implications for teaching. One teacher identified the student’s use of evidence and ability to infer conclusions from the text as areas of strength and helping the student develop their personal voice and logical reasoning as a next step. During this meeting, teachers analyzed student work, and helped the presenter to identify next steps for the student and specific teaching strategies to incorporate into future lessons and unit planning. A review of team notes demonstrates that teachers across teams use inquiry to identify next steps for students and enhance their planning.

- Teachers serve as leaders of grade level and vertical teams that meet each week. Teachers in grades Kindergarten through five share weekly common planning time and teachers in grades six through eight meet in ELA and math and science departmental meetings. Teachers also serve as members of key schoolwide teams including interventions and support, data and professional development teams. Teacher members of the professional development committee assist in planning the schoolwide professional development calendar, as well as, facilitate learning sessions during the year. A review of professional development topics and intervention plans demonstrate that teachers use data to plan interventions and professional development that target areas of need for teachers and students across the school.

- A review of assessment team agendas and minutes show evidence of teachers leading the development of the schoolwide grading policy and rubrics used in ELA and math schoolwide. The assessment team includes representation across grade levels and subject areas. Agendas and minutes also provide evidence of the development of math and ELA student portfolios and content requirements. Teacher leaders conduct an item skills and standard analysis of MOSL baselines and state assessment data at the beginning of each school year to identify one reading and one writing focus standard for each grade level. Teachers across grades design lessons and strategies to support progress toward mastery for students in each grade level, as evidenced in a review of student performance data and improvement in student writing samples.