Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 163 Flushing Heights
Elementary 25Q163
159-01 59 Avenue
Queens
NY 11365

Principal: Francine Marsaggi

Dates of Review:
October 18, 2017 - October 19, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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. 163 Flushing Heights 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<thead>
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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

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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

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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

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4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

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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

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### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.3 Leveraging Resources</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

The school leader’s uses resources that are well-aligned to the school’s instructional goals and schoolwide goals and action plans. Teacher time is purposefully structured to improve instructional capacity.

#### Impact

The alignment of resources to the work of teacher teams has resulted in meaningful student work products and improved instruction that engages all students in rigorous academic tasks.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The use of resources and other organizational decisions are well-aligned to and support the school’s instructional goals and long-range action plans. In its Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), the school leader identifies access for all learners in engaging and challenging curricula that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards as a prioritized goal. To ensure accessibility and in support of its substantial percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs), the school leader provided a significant amount of per session compensation for teachers to align the GO Math! curriculum to the Common Core. Teachers also translated curricula documents and student materials into Mandarin Chinese. As a result, the percentage of ELLs in grades three through five that met proficiency on the 2017 New York State math assessment was 68 percent, as compared to the citywide average of 42 percent for all students.

- One of the CEP goals clearly states that by the end of the 2017 school year, “90 percent of classroom teachers will increase levels of differentiation within small groups, promote student led discussions and infuse higher-order thinking questions in daily lessons in order to more effectively meet students’ needs,” as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. To accomplish this leadership added one additional preparatory period per day to provide teachers with the opportunity to meet on grade levels for common planning and collaborative inquiry teams. This allows the inquiry teams to meet twice a month to support curricula refinement and revisions. Teacher teams use the additional planning time to add high level questions, scaffolds, rubrics, and checklists intended to engage students in challenging tasks. Across the vast majority of classrooms visited, teachers elicited high levels of student discourse by utilizing effective questioning techniques and the provision of scaffolds such as discussion stems. Students exhibited high levels of participation through the use of participation rubrics and checklists to self-monitor their progress. Additionally, Advance data indicates that 95 percent of the teachers were rated effective or highly effective.

- A review of meeting minutes and agendas indicate that teachers’ inquiry work is focused on improving pedagogical practice and increasing levels of engagement and cognitive challenge for all students, which aligns to the CEP’s instructional goals. To facilitate the sharing of information on and across teams, leadership invested in an online platform that requires teachers to capture meeting minutes and agendas on the school’s shared drive. The online drive allows the School Leadership Team (SLT) to inform next steps in teacher support. Similarly, curricula materials and teacher created resources are organized and stored in digital folders so that they can be accessed by all faculty and staff to improve efficacy in instructional planning. A fourth grade inquiry team was observed analyzing Measure Of Student Learning (MOSL) data and student constructed responses to determine next steps in instructional planning to further challenge students and improve their work products. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) literacy class, students were observed working in leveled groups on differentiated tasks with the teachers and paraprofessionals facilitating the groups. While all students were responsible for creating thinking maps to identify critical elements to retell a story they read, the groups were provided graphic organizers within their reading levels. Furthermore, an accelerated group worked independently to identify a potential problem in the story and how the outcome might have changed if the main character had not rectified it.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The school has established structures and routines to promote positive behaviors among students and staff. Although there are provisions in place to support students’ development however, there is no formal theory of action is in place that systemically supports the social emotional needs of students.

Impact

The school’s approach to culture building results in positive interactions among students and staff. All students are known well by a least one adult leading to the academic and personal growth of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff have adopted an approach to culture building which emphasizes positive, respectful interactions among students and staff members, and promotes the a positive learning environment through the adoption of the “Three B’s” motto (Be responsible, Be respectful, Be kind). Principal-selected students share the schoolwide expectations for students via motivational messages read over the school’s public address system to start the school day. The messages are intended to embody the school’s approach to culture building: recognize emotions and actions, control actions, demonstrate heart, or REACH.

- The school leader’s philosophy of respect and good citizenship is communicated to students and their families through the established schoolwide behavioral expectations outlined in the School Charter. Structured routines include clearly articulated behaviors for student participation in the classroom and guidelines for completion of academic tasks and homework assignments. Families are kept informed through individual progress reports and via an online academic and behavior reporting system that allows parents to monitor their child’s attendance and behavior in real time. However, the system is not used by all teachers. Although some parents reported that they routinely login to get updates on their child’s academic progress as well as to see how they are behaving and if they are fully participating in class, they reported that it is not utilized across all classes. Parents reported receiving regular correspondence from the school and invitations to meet with staff to discuss their child’s social emotional or academic progress in person.

- School leadership partnered with community based organizations (CBO) this school year to develop a more structured approach to supporting students’ social emotional wellbeing through self-esteem building. Additionally, school leaders surveyed teachers to identify needs to support them in student social emotional learning. School leaders and staff have established emotions, actions, and respect (EAR) time as an opportunity for staff to make personal connections with students and help foster their self-esteem. All staff check in with small groups of students during a dedicated period twice a month. Staff and students complete a “mood meter” to get a sense of how they are progressing emotionally. All students reported that they have more than one adult that they know well and trust at the school that they would feel comfortable talking with if they were experiencing emotional distress either inside or outside of school.
**Findings**

Curricula and academic tasks align to the school leaders’ pedagogical beliefs and instructional foci, and strategically integrate the shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are purposefully designed to emphasize rigorous habits and academic tasks that challenge all learners.

**Impact**

There is curricula alignment and coherence across grades and subject areas that promotes rigorous habits and cognitive challenge. All students demonstrate critical thinking in their academic tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers ensure that the curricula and academic tasks align to the Common Core Learning Standards and the school’s instructional foci by providing multiple opportunities for all learners to engage in high levels of discourse, challenging academic tasks and writing opportunities that require them to cite textual evidence to substantiate their arguments. A review of the curricula indicates that teachers strategically integrate the instructional shifts across disciplines through writing activities and student discussions that emphasize the use of evidence from the analysis of a variety of sources to make an argument. For example, a fourth grade science lesson requires students to work collaboratively in pairs to annotate texts on volcanoes and landslides and cite textual details in a Venn diagram that illustrates similarities and differences between them. An art lesson directs students to work in groups to analyze gesture drawings to make factual observations in order to evaluate whether the artist was successful in expressing their idea through a discussion between student groups. Each group was required to cite evidence drawn from observation of the artwork. Similarly, a social studies lesson requires students to cite evidence from a variety of documents and artifacts to make a substantiate claim.

- Cognitively challenging questions, writing prompts and problem solving activities are purposefully embedded into curriculum maps, unit plans and lesson plans resulting in coherence across grades and disciplines that promotes college and career readiness for all students. The level of rigor present in the units of study and lesson plans and the depth of the alignment to the Common Core are evaluated by instructional leaders and teacher teams using an online quality review process that utilizes a rubric derived from the Tri-State Rubric, thus providing staff with a quality rating on a zero to three scale. All curricula documents and supplemental resources are well organized in digital folders using online software so that teachers can access to plan cognitively engaging lessons that are accessible for all learners.

- In grades kindergarten through fifth grade, curriculum documents including lesson plans identify common best practices that teachers utilize to ensure coherence across grades and subject areas and foster high levels of student engagement such as restate, answer, cite evidence, and explain (RACE) evidence when participating in open discussion or completing a writing task that requires them to state a claim. Similarly, lessons require students to circle the numbers, underline the question, box the key words, evaluate, and solve (CUBES) math problems. Lesson plans across grades include the use of student checklists for writing, resulting in coherence in the writing process across disciplines, and planned student self-reflection across the curricula. Likewise, the inclusion of common group participation and problem solving checklists and rubrics in lessons across grades and subjects ensures that all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are cognitively challenged and must demonstrate their thinking with consistency.
Findings
Teaching strategies align to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best and teachers strategically provide entry points through the use of leveled grouping, differentiated tasks and scaffolds for all learners to participate in high level academic tasks and discussions. High quality extensions and supports are present across the vast majority of classrooms.

Impact
All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in high level discussions and tasks that results in the demonstration of higher order thinking skills. Across the vast majority of classrooms students participate at high levels, produce meaningful work products and take ownership of their work.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, teacher practices consistently reflect and support the schoolwide belief about how students learn best. One of the overarching beliefs is that the pedagogy must engage students in purposeful reading and writing with an emphasis on engaging students in high level academic tasks and discussions to promote the adoption of college and career ready skills. The school leaders and teachers identified utilization of a reading and writing workshop model as the best way to align instructional practices to the schoolwide goal and ensure that students are engaged in rigorous academic tasks and high levels of discourse. The workshop model was utilized across the vast majority of classrooms visited in which students were observed participating in high levels of group and partner discussions utilizing conversation and group work checklists to keep them focused and engaged in purposeful discussion.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teacher use strategies such as inquiry, collaborative learning, questioning, and discussions to promote high levels of cognitive challenge and engagement. Teachers embed rigorous activities and the strategic use of scaffolding techniques across contents to provide multiple entry points into lessons and academic tasks for all learners. Scaffolds observed during class visits include translated student resources, modeling, ability-based grouping, effective use of graphic organizers, visuals, and technology. In a mixed kindergarten/first grade English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom, the teachers required students to use a five senses sentence structure to describe their sensory images about the ocean to complete a writing task describing what they would see on a day at the beach. The teacher had students draw on the prior knowledge of the beach by singing along with a song about the beach. The teacher reminded students of the five senses protocol introduced in science. Students were then provided with several buckets containing various samples of beach and aquatic life such as seaweed, seashells and sand to use their five senses to create their sensory image prior to sharing what they discovered with a partner. Students transitioned to ability-based groups and provided with leveled worksheets to complete their writing task.

- In a third grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teacher used purposeful grouping to prompt students to work collaboratively to determine how a character’s actions contribute to the sequence of events in a story and how an author builds characterization by using details from the text to support their responses. Prior to starting the group work, the teacher used the interactive white board to model how to determine which textual evidence would support an exemplary answer. Students then transitioned to collaborative groups to determine which evidence best supported their claims about their character’s to how an author’s choice of words builds characterization. Students were provided with a team task in which they had to self-monitor their level teamwork and progress to completion of the task by utilizing group checklists and red, yellow, green participation charts. Students were provided with chart paper to record their responses to share their findings with the rest of the class.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 2.2 Assessment  
**Rating:** Well Developed

**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers use or create assessments and rubrics that align to the curricula to monitor student progress toward mastery. Teachers use analyses of assessment data to monitor student progress, make instructional decisions and adjust curricula and academic tasks.

**Impact**

Teachers’ use of common rubrics and assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers. Teachers make informed adjustments to curriculum and instruction so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The vast majority of teachers use assessments that are aligned to the Common Core and the schoolwide curricula. They consistently provide timely and accurate data on student progress that teachers use to make instructional decisions. The instructional cabinet, which represents teachers in kindergarten through fifth grade, meets regularly to ensure that assessments are aligned to the curricula and are effective in monitoring student progress. Prior to the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the cabinet met to review ELA assessments for redundancy and efficacy in providing information for teachers’ instructional decisions. As a result, the team vetted several assessments and decided to test each grade level weekly to provide teachers and teacher teams with timely data. For example, teachers analyzed data from end of unit and benchmark assessments from *Reading Wonders*, the formal ELA program. Teachers disaggregated the data by ability range and assigned students to On, Approaching, or Above grade level groups that provide actionable and meaningful feedback to teachers regarding student progress toward mastery in ELA.

- The teachers use a variety of assessments to create a clear picture of student progress across grades and subjects. Tracked data identifies students that are performing at, below, and above grade level, and to develop interventions that accelerate learning for all students. Grade level teams analyze *Reading Wonders* assessment data to determine instructional groupings and provide the student groups with leveled books that are deemed to be within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This also allows teachers to plan Tier I interventions that are provided via small group instruction with the classroom teacher. Likewise, a purposeful decision was made to utilize end of unit assessments approximately every six weeks to determine the effectiveness of the dedicated Academic Intervention Services (AIS). Tier II intervention time that occurs twice per week. Data is used to determine AIS groups and the targeted instruction that students will receive during the AIS instructional block.

- Teachers and teacher teams use a variety of assessments to adjust curricula and plan scaffolds and activities that support all learners, including ELLs and student with disabilities. Teachers’ analysis of math data led to the decision to collaboratively revise the *GO Math!* curricula and translate student resources into Mandarin Chinese to allow access to the math curriculum and supplemental materials for these students. Similarly, based on the analysis of data for these students, school leaders are implementing a side-by-side Mandarin dual language program to provide additional language support for newcomer students and their families. A fourth grade teacher team was observed analyzing students’ short constructed responses on a MOSL assessment to identify patterns and trends among student responses and next steps for instruction. In order to have students better justify how their choice of textual evidence justified their argumentative writing, the team decided to add scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities, while having students performing above grade level construct their own higher level questions.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based collaborations and analysis of student assessments and work products.

Impact

Increased instructional planning and collaboration have strengthened and improved teacher practices, positively affecting student learning across grade levels.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers engage in professional collaboration to promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and promote the adoption of identified instructional best practices schoolwide. The need for a stronger literacy curriculum across content areas led teachers and school leaders to adopt the Reading Wonders program as the foundation to implement a reading and writing workshop model schoolwide, while addressing the instructional shifts of the Common Core. The instructional cabinet and teacher teams identified the workshop model as the most effective way to increase guided reading, student discourse, and writing opportunities. They also provide teachers with the ability to target specific students in need of intervention or acceleration. The workshop model was observed across classrooms during classroom visitations.

- Grade level teacher teams meet weekly to analyze student assessment data and student work products to identify patterns and trends and devise strategies to help close identified achievement gaps. Every six weeks, teacher teams determine if changes to student groups should be made for in-class Tier I targeted instruction for students in need of academic support to meet the benchmark or acceleration for those that are achieving at or above grade level. Data is color coded and disaggregated for teachers to plan scaffolds and decide how to level classroom groups for additional supports such as texts that are in students’ lexile range. Similarly, the data is used to determine targeted instruction during an additional dedicated academic intervention period each week.

- The fourth grade teacher team employed the looking at student work (LASW) protocol to analyze students’ ability to write accurate, concise short constructed responses from a writing prompt. Analysis revealed students were able to accurately annotate textual evidence; however, the quality of evidence to justify and support their arguments was not consistent. Consequently, the team decided to have students use leveled texts and write down their thinking as they annotate when they are selecting evidence from texts. Teachers opted to continue teaching exemplary annotation through strategies such as modeling and think alouds since half of the students had met proficiency on the assessment. The team also agreed to revisit whether additional time should be allotted for the unit of study and adjustments made in the curriculum map to reflect the change in allotted instructional time.