Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 175 The Lynn Gross Discovery School

Elementary 28Q175

64-35 102 Street
Queens
NY 11374

Principal: Patricia Cooper

Dates of Review:
March 19, 2018 - March 20, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Luz Cortazzo
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. 175 The Lynn Gross Discovery School 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>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>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>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 Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</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>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>Area of Celebration</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: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

Teams of teachers meet on a consistent basis to systematically analyze their instructional practices and develop strategies for improving staff and student achievement. Distributive leadership structures facilitate teacher collaboration with school leaders to make critical decisions about teaching and learning across the school.

Impact

Through extensive teamwork, teachers regularly reflect on their pedagogy and play an integral role in key decisions that improve teacher capacity and student outcomes across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout the school, all teachers collaborate in professional teams during Monday and Tuesday sessions, as well as on their own, to develop and implement schoolwide instructional practices, embedding the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to continuously promote improved achievement for all learners. Teachers have a daily common planning period to meet and use this for inquiry work, vertically and horizontally. For example, teachers meet in cross-grade teams to engage in inquiry, analyze data, and share best practices around the curricula to ensure it meets the needs of their population and also to build coherence. The kindergarten team was observed discussing data results from a math assessment task to represent, count, and write 11-19. They compared overall results, determined problematic concepts, discussed possible solutions to promote success, and decided on modifications for the following chapter. As a team they made instructional decisions to adjust teaching practices and decided to have students use the *I can solve a problem using the strategy draw a picture* to show understanding of addition as putting together and adding to, and subtraction as taking apart and taking from as per the instructional shifts.

- During the Response to Intervention team (RTI) meeting, teacher leaders who represent each grade or discipline were observed looking at samples of informative writing pieces for the students they serve to determine if the students met their goal for this cycle. The goal is for all students to create an informative writing piece introducing a topic and group related information together, develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details, and use linking words and phrases to connect ideas. They use the analysis to inform grouping for the next cycle, identify students for more intensive interventions, and refine teacher practice. Each teacher has a target group of students who they track for progress. Mid-year assessment results show progress toward mastery of goals for groups of grade-3 students.

- Administrators and teacher leaders identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school’s day-to-day operations and articulate how they serve as a conduit for teacher input in strategic decisions that affect student achievement. For example, teachers serve as grade facilitators on grade-level teams and lead Professional Learning (PL) Monday sessions during the school year, as observed during the Quality Review. Teacher leaders were observed leading differentiated group work from k-5 to show how they teach fractions to their students, engaged in math discourse using a discourse rubric and math journaling. Teachers are also the ultimate decision makers for curriculum choices such as selecting the Open Court reading program in the lower grades when they noticed that learners needed phonemic awareness.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies reflect the school’s belief that students learn best when they have access to multiple entry points, manipulatives, scaffolds and tiered questioning that support student learning. While practices consistently reflect multiple entry points, the deepening of learning through extensions into curricula and tasks for diverse learners was not typically evident.

Impact

Consistent application of scaffolds and multiple entry points result in students being engaged in rigorous tasks across grades and content areas. However, instructional practices illustrated missed opportunities to further extend learning for all students, via tasks that elevate their thinking and promote ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Clear scaffolds and entry points, such as purposeful groupings, vocabulary prompts, graphic organizers, visual cues, and student-centered work stations allowed all learners a variety of pathways to complete tasks and demonstrate their thinking. For example, in a second-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, students engaged in various student-centered work stations to promote learning about specific features of a rural community. In one station, students were observed exploring the architecture of a rural community. In a second station, they investigated rural transportation. At a third station, above-level students worked independently using a tree map to break apart the different components and wrote a detailed paragraph describing rural communities based the specific features of architecture, population, and transportation covered at that station.

- Across classrooms, there was clear evidence of teaching points that are aligned to curricula, such as asking students to solve word problems involving dollar bills, quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies. Students worked in differentiated groups to complete their math investigations and engaged in a gallery walk, using a success-criteria checklist to take ownership of their learning. However, in some classrooms, teaching strategies, and planned activities did not yield student work products for a variety of learners reflective of the expectations and rigor of the curricula. For example, in one science classroom all students were only asked, “How can you measure density matter?” Similarly, in another science class students were asked to describe objects by their properties such as size, shape, color weight, and texture create their own bubble maps, name one property of matter, and list the word to describe the property.

- The use of extension of tasks to deepen student engagement in challenging work was evident in some math classrooms, including a grade-two math lessons where students engaged in whole-class discussions in which students talk about mathematics in such a way that they reveal their understanding of concepts. The tasks were differentiated, as well as constant support for ELLs. Students shared findings with a peer and then with the whole class. The teacher followed up by posing additional questions that challenged students to show their work and engage mathematical reasoning and debate. Students explained their work by writing in their math journals. A similar extension of tasks was not evident in other classrooms visited, including classrooms with advance learners.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

All curricula are strategically aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Higher-order thinking skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and subjects.

Impact

All students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, have ready access to curricula designed to promote college and career readiness. Academic tasks provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate high levels of thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- All units of study reflect alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and include big ideas, essential questions, embedded assessments, academic vocabulary, skills, and strategies for guided and independent practice. Each unit includes a culminating performance task and a Common Core aligned rubric for assessing levels of student mastery of content and skills taught. For example, a social studies research unit for grade-four showed a plan for students to learn about early inhabitants of the Americas, their physical environment, and how their interaction with the environment led to various innovations and to the development of cultures, as per the ELA instructional shifts of “Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts” and “Reading and writing grounded in evidence from text.” The task required them to read, analyze, and interpret information about Early Native American groups, research information and write a five-paragraph essay utilizing their class comparison sheet, and various thinking maps. The unit included a four-level task-specific rubric as a measure of student proficiency on the task.

- Grade-level curricula in science and social studies are aligned to match texts in the ELA curriculum, with a focus on using thinking maps and strategy charts to solidify coherence and provide access for diverse learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, a grade-two writing lesson plan incorporated social studies by asking students to read and answer questions related to specific features of urban, rural, and suburban communities. Students are required to demonstrate a deep understanding in reading and writing grounded in evidence from texts. Similarly, in a kindergarten ICT class, students are tasked with researching weather patterns by analyzing and predicting March’s past, present, and future weather conditions. Students engaged in asking and answering questions related to, how weather forecasts are helpful in our everyday lives.

- The school’s curricula provide students with GOMath! which supports the instructional shifts. In addition, school leaders have enhanced the curricula by providing the use of research-based math program to support students with math problem-solving skills. Specifically, the kindergarten math curriculum requires students to represent addition and subtraction and be able to solve problems using drawings and equations, as well as to build fluency with factors to the number twenty. In a grade-two math unit plan, students are required to solve word problems using money. These opportunities support students’ problem-solving and build college and career readiness skills.
**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 are provided with a grading policy and use rubrics and running records aligned to the school’s curricula to provide actionable feedback to students. Common grade-level unit assessments are used to measure students’ progress towards goals.

**Impact**

In response to an analysis of unit assessments and a review of student work samples, teachers are providing students with actionable feedback that is supporting students towards meeting their goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the school, teachers consistently analyze multiple forms of data from assessments such as Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), running records, performance based assessments (PBA), ReadyGen, and GOMath! assessments. For example, an analysis of math data revealed that operations, algebraic measurements, and data, were areas of concern. This information led the school to implement I-Ready, which provides practice problems that increase in complexity as students master different skills. Current results show progress from fall to winter, as evidenced by reviewed school data.

- Teachers use normed rubrics to grade students’ work and individual conference notes to determine next steps for their students. Rubrics and running records are used to determine students’ writing proficiency and reading level. Student writing samples have actionable feedback in the form of glows and grows to support next steps for progress. For example, feedback on a writing sample for an ELL stated, “I noticed you zoomed in your life and made your story come to life through using action and dialogue.” The next step for this student stated, “Next time, use figurative language to help the reader get a sense of the character’s thoughts and feelings.” Similarly, the feedback for a grade-five student stated, “Your response shows a thorough and insightful understanding of the text. You included a strong introduction and conclusion.” The next step for this student stated, “Continue to include complex level vocabulary.” Students stated that the feedback helps them to move toward their next level. One student stated that his goal is to increase his Lexile level. Another student stated that her goal is to add more details to her writing. Students also stated that they use checklists to help them understand their next steps, inform their instructional strategies, and to provide feedback to their peers.

- Teachers regularly analyze information about individual student performance on common assessments to determine if students are making progress and to identify skills that need extra attention. Across grades and content areas, they form small instructional groups according to need. Students are also identified for targeted cycles of interventions. Teacher intervention using Response to Intervention (RtI) is built into the schedule to allow classroom personnel to provide support for at-risk students. Teachers maintain intensive supports for students within the classroom while additional support is also provided by cluster teachers during assigned periods. Teachers share their class-level information from pre- and post-assessments using an online document-sharing program.
**Additional Finding**

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**

School leaders communicate high expectations to the staff through the use of handbooks, walkthroughs aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and PL. The administration and teachers communicate with parents to support them in preparing their children to meet high expectations.

**Impact**

All constituents are well supported towards meeting school’s expectations. Families feel supported and understand the school’s expectations for their children.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct ongoing walkthroughs in classrooms and provide feedback to teachers to improve instructional practices in alignment with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers and the principal state that there is a focus on rigorous instruction by incorporating academic vocabulary, differentiation, small-group instruction, and developing critical thinking questions. At the beginning of the year, all staff receive a handbook that covers Comprehensive Educational Plan, homework guidelines, vertical committees, and technology support. Additionally, teachers reflect on practices from the previous year and how they could improve their work. Consequently, there are more expectations of teachers engaging in best practices by learning from outside sources, as well as from each other. For example, the Monday Professional Learning Community Sessions are facilitated by teachers for teachers, as evidenced during the Quality Review. Prior to each session, two or more teachers attend a Field Support Center Learning opportunity with the assistant principal. Targeted topics include mathematics investigations, literacy, student agency, and success criteria, as evidenced by documents reviewed.

- During the meeting with families, parents stated that they are invited to participate in frequent sessions where they learn about expectations for their children. Some stated that they were invited to come out to Curriculum Night in September, which offered an overview of curricula. Furthermore, parents receive a parent handbook with information on conferences, homework guidelines, attendance, and parent involvement opportunities. In addition, school leaders provide a monthly school calendar that highlights school wide events and special programs for students. Moreover, a monthly newsletter is provided by grade, highlighting curriculum for the month, reminders, and a Home to School Connection. Parents expressed appreciation for the ongoing communication via emails and phone calls to families to inform them of their children’s academic progress and social development. Additionally, a mobile phone app is used by teachers and parents to communicate progress, missed homework, and other school related events.

- Engaging students in higher-order discussions is a goal the principal has set for all staff to push students’ higher order thinking skills and provide students with essential knowledge and skills to meet the real-world demands of college and career readiness. During PL on Mondays, teachers work cohesively in horizontal and vertical teams with a focus on multiple entry points. Teachers use a planning for instruction template to determine what students need to learn and determine how they will teach through teaching strategies such as thinking maps, open tasks, academic discourse and rigorous individual and group work.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development, and aligns with schoolwide goals and Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- Administrators start the year by implementing initial planning conferences (IPC’s) with teachers to discuss schoolwide goals, revisiting their prior year Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP), as well as New York State results. Ongoing teacher observations are strategically conducted to provide feedback on math strategies and developing critical thinking. Teachers are evaluated on the Danielson Framework for Teaching components. A review of next steps for a teacher required creating a teaching target aligned with the intended outcome for the students. For example, in order to build language development and critical thinking in math, the feedback to the teacher stated that students should engage in discussions with their peers throughout the lesson and prepare questions that require higher-order thinking such as analyzing, synthesizing or evaluating. In addition, the teacher was provided next steps for challenging students’ critical thinking by providing them with discussion questions. Resources provided during PL aligned to developing critical thinking could be accessed on the google drive folder. The teacher was also given a timeframe to implement the suggested strategies. Prior to the post-observation conference, all teachers complete a school wide self-reflection form which they bring to the feedback meeting, along with samples of student work, for analysis. This process allows teachers to actively engage in their professional growth with strategies to support student learning.

- During the teacher meeting, several teachers indicated that next steps received in observation reports consistently align with schoolwide goals which all teachers are focused on and are resulting in improved teacher practice. For example, next steps received by an effective teacher in an observation report regarding engaging students in learning read, “Thank you for your reflection and contribution to our feedback meeting. As per our discussion, challenge students to explain their thinking by planning learning tasks that require high-levels of student thinking.”

- A review of the school’s PL plan indicates that throughout the school year PL is organized around cycles. Administrators and teacher leaders lead Monday sessions on topics aligned to school goals in math and ELA. The principal stated that through reviews of student work and observations they can monitor teacher progress in implementing school goals, as well as the impact on student achievement. Throughout the school year, administrators revisit data sources, including student work to determine improvement and identify gaps in learning to inform and refine PL and pedagogical practices. The year concludes with end-of-year conferences discussing teacher practice related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and next steps for professional support both individually, as well as schoolwide.