Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 182 Samantha Smith
Elementary 28Q182
153-27 88Th Avenue
Queens
NY 11432

Principal: Andrew Topol

Dates of Review:
November 8, 2017 - November 9, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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. 182 Samantha Smith 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>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
<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>Additional Finding</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>Additional Finding</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness with families.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists around instructional expectations and feedback to teachers. Information sharing and communication with families through online platforms support students in their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are shared with staff through a variety of tools, including a faculty handbook. The faculty handbook covers homework assignment design guidelines, including the requirement that homework must be explicitly linked to classroom learning, based in curricula, and include clear instructions for students. In addition, expectations related to sending monthly newsletters to parents, lesson design, and maintenance of a positive learning environment are also covered. Weekly letters from the principal to faculty also serve as a venue for the sharing of high expectations. Topics include communication with families, teacher teams and their respective responsibilities, teachers' assessment practices, as well as upcoming professional development (PD) sessions that are designed to further teachers’ understanding of these high expectations.

- The *Instructional and Learning Look-Fors* is a document that was created by teachers and school leaders that details their collective high expectations related to instruction. The *Look-Fors* document details the different practices and expected resulting impacts for reading, writing, and math instruction for each grade. A culture of mutual accountability is also evident in a system designed to ensure that the PD offerings are addressing teachers’ needs. Teachers took a survey at the beginning of the school year in which they identified professional topics they would like school leadership to program into the weekly Monday teacher study groups. Teachers reported that there was a great demand for PD related to technology and its possible instructional applications and reported that they look forward to the launch of study groups so that they can begin this work. Additionally, one teacher reported and all present agreed that they expect feedback from school leaders to always be prompt. One teacher reported, “After each classroom observation, I get immediate feedback. It’s always been that way here. I can’t see it being done any other way.”

- Expectations are effectively communicated with families through newsletters, the school website, as well as through mobile device apps used for the sharing of assignments, information, photos, and communication. One parent reported that she was able to help her daughter with a science research project because the teacher had sent a copy of the assignment directly to parents through the mobile app. She added, “Without that help, my daughter would have had such a hard time finishing the project!” Parents also spoke about being able to visit the school once a month during Family Morning events, which involve parents being able to observe their child’s class, one adding “I can help my child because of Family Mornings.” Another parent shared that she is unable to attend Family Morning events, but since teachers share the information with all parents through the mobile app, she has also been able to help her child as well. Another parent then praised the school for conducting a survey of parents’ ideas for workshops as well as selection of possible days and times when attendance at workshops would be easier for parents.
Findings
Curricular documents include academic tasks that consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills. While curricula are planned and refined using student work and data, they do not consistently require students to demonstrate their thinking.

Impact
Lessons plans enable all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to have access to the curricula. However, since the planning documents do not consistently require students to demonstrate their thinking, they do not ensure that students are all cognitively challenged.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, lesson plans emphasize high-level questions. In a grade-three reading lesson plan, students are to keep notes on their noticings while reading a text, and focus on character trait development. Students are to then determine how the story’s characters are developed over the course of the plot’s development and share within their groups how their growing understanding of the story is connected to their individual reading goals. A kindergarten lesson plan includes a reading activity during which students are to preview a book by examining the cover photo and use it to predict the book’s contents. Students would then revisit their predictions once the story has been read through and reflect on the definitions of three key vocabulary words. A grade-five social studies lesson plan includes an assignment tasking students with annotating an article about westward expansion. Students would then reflect on their thought processes in the acts of reading and annotating, as well as address their findings as to the reasons behind westward expansion and its effects on individuals and the nation.

- Although students are tasked with using relationships in multiplication problems to solve other problems by using known facts and variables and work backwards on a ratio table in a grade-four math lesson plan, those students are not required to demonstrate their thinking. A grade-five math lesson plan details an activity in which students are to circulate throughout the classroom and visit fellow student groups’ presentations on determining the volume of a cube. Some student groups will present a “Status Poster” on which they will share the steps taken thus far, accompanied with predictions as to the next steps they will need to take. Others will present an “Explanation Poster” that will describe the work completed thus far. Students are to visit these stations and ask clarifying questions about the presentations, comment on those explanations, and provide constructive feedback. At the close of this activity, students are to share the big ideas that they learned from their fellow students and return to their partnerships, where they are tasked with purposefully editing their presentations using a different color marker to reveal where new learnings were applied. While some students are required to demonstrate their thinking given their group’s presentation, not all presentations are required to include that level of reflection.

- A grade-four Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math plan indicates that student groups identified as needing additional support in using multiplication would receive a copy of the ratio table used during the previous day’s lesson as a scaffolded support tool. Each of the five lesson plans of a grade-four literacy unit includes leveled assignments for student groups based on their demonstrated levels of support in reaching mastery, including the adjustments and scaffolds provided for ELLs, given their English acquisition levels. Similarly, a grade-two math lesson plan details the vocabulary supports provided for ELLs, as well as differentiated activities for student groups as per their common demonstrated needs. For example, one group is tasked with forming geometric shapes using rubber bands while another uses words to describe the process of constructing rectangles.
## Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

Students work in purposefully designed small groups across classrooms. Additionally, teachers’ use of multiple entry points results in appropriately leveled work for diverse learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- Students are seated in groups that will sometimes change to reflect either the task or students’ needs. During a grade-three writing lesson, students were seated in small groups, two of which worked with a teacher in addressing areas of need demonstrated during the previous day’s lesson. Students were seated in groups during a grade-four math lesson, focused on determining the cost of ingredients for a Thanksgiving holiday meal. After the teacher modeled how to support a claim with textual evidence in a grade-four writing lesson, students were instructed to report to their small groups, where they would utilize that skill while four students were directed to form a new group. This new group received targeted assistance to help them to identify a claim. In addition to these classes, students across all grades were observed within small groups during classroom visits.

- During a grade-three reading lesson, ELLs listened to a narrator read a story aloud using headphones while they read along on a tablet screen. All other students, including those with disabilities, were grouped according to their reading levels. While one teacher sat with the student group needing the greatest assistance, the other teacher circulated throughout the room, checking in with students. In a grade-four class, students worked to deconstruct a complex sentence into its component clauses in order to understand the author’s purpose. While ELLs were supported by an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, another teacher facilitated students’ demonstration of sentence deconstruction through the use of sentence strips in front of the class. Additionally, during a grade-five social studies lesson, students were grouped according to reading level.

- Students were tasked with using geometric language to identify three-dimensional shapes during a grade-two math lesson. One student group was constructing rectangles with grid paper while another group created rectangles of varying sizes on a board. A third group was engaged in a reteaching session with the teacher. In a grade-four math lesson, students were working within one of three groups to examine the relationships between multiplication problems. Students were determining the different prices they would need to pay for the ingredients of a Thanksgiving dinner given a variety of variables, including prices of turkey per pound. The student group that had already evidenced mastery in this standard worked on prices that included dollar and cent amounts whereas the other groups were working with only whole dollar amounts.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments as tools for giving clear feedback to students that they then actively use toward improving their achievement. In addition, teachers’ practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective adjustments during classroom instruction and in modifications to subsequent lessons that meet all students’ needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, examples of feedback evidence clear portraits of student mastery and feedback to students that they can use for increased achievement. For example, feedback offered to grade-three students on a math assignment advises them to show their thinking while building an array, use multiplication to solve division problems, and label categories with their data sources. Written comments to students also capture strengths such as one student’s key created for a graph that included both full and half amounts and another student’s success in representing number data in picture form. Similarly, work posted in a grade-five social studies class evidenced comments celebrating students’ organization of paragraphs. Examples of feedback in a grade-five social studies class include advice on adding additional details as well as avoiding the statement of opinion to support an argument. Additionally, other examples of feedback draw students’ attention to the importance of ending sentences with a period, making sure that the first word of each sentence begins with a capital letter, re-reading written assignments prior to turning them in to check for grammar and mechanics, as well as ensuring that claims are completely supported by text-based details.

- Students came to a quick consensus when reporting on the value of their teachers’ written feedback. One student reported that his teacher advised him to add more dialogue to his characters and make sure that they “do things that bring them to life” in his writings. This student also added that he always makes sure to write in this way now. Another student discussed feedback from a teacher that reminded the student to only include information that will help prove her claim in a lesson on journalistic writing. This student further stated, “I started to remove useless information in my draft. My teacher also taught me to be a word detective and learn how to find the definitions of words. My drafts have become so much better!”

- Across most classrooms, there was evidence that teachers are assessing students’ learning and making adjustments to instruction, as necessary. In a grade-three reading lesson, one of the two classroom teachers taught a targeted reteach session with a student group that was identified by data resulting from an assessment conducted at the beginning of the class. After circulating throughout the classroom and checking in with students during a grade-four math lesson, a teacher redirected students and reminded them to describe the steps they were taking in narrative form. Similarly, students in a grade-four writing lesson were regrouped based on the teacher’s determination that students were struggling with clearly stating a claim in writing during the prior day’s lesson. Additionally, during a gallery walk, the teacher spent time with each presenter, listened in and took notes while the students who were visiting each station assessed each presenter and made recommendations for the presentations they would make to other students during the same class period.
Findings
School leaders support teacher development for all teachers, including those new to the profession, with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Official and unofficial classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers in official observation reports and in emails sent to teachers that make clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

Supporting Evidence

- Each of the three school administrators directly supervises teachers from specific grades. Within their focus grades, administrators first observe teachers new to the profession, the school, or their current grade assignment. Then, all other teachers are observed. Once there have been two complete cycles of teacher observations, school administrators meet to determine how to schedule additional observations to ensure that a variety of school leaders conduct observations so that all teachers are helped by matching teachers’ needs with school administrators’ areas of expertise.

- Observation reports include feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and are accompanied by next steps that teachers should take in order for them to improve their practice and positively impact student success. For example, in one observation report, a teacher is praised for creating a strong exemplar writing piece and preparing students to promptly begin their own writing. This teacher is also advised to create strategy charts during the lesson that would include action and feeling words that students could use as they describe an object. The teacher is also encouraged to support students by requiring that they continually look at and hold the object they are describing while writing their descriptive pieces. In another observation report, a teacher’s sentence choice is praised while the school leader also takes note that the sentence deconstruction activity was not well facilitated. Feedback specifically identified the correct answer along with the corrective action the teacher should take. Another report praised a teacher for maintaining a positive classroom learning environment and advised the teacher to chart ideas throughout the math lesson. The teacher is also directed to consider how these charted ideas can serve as checks-for-understanding that would allow for data-based flexible student groupings.

- In addition to the reports resulting from official classroom observations are the emails sent by school leaders to teachers in which feedback resulting from unofficial classroom observations is shared. In one email, the teacher is advised to enable students to conduct their individual or group work earlier in the lesson. Other examples of feedback shared with teachers include advice on embedding checks for understanding into instruction, explicitly modeling the strategy that students would be expected to utilize, and purposefully referencing the anchor charts in the room so that students could use them as supports during the lesson.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

All teachers are engaged in teams that consistently analyze student work in cycles of inquiry that reveal targeted areas of student need and actively address them in their work toward fulfilling the school’s goals. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning through service as grade-team leaders, as well as through an open-door policy in sharing ideas for initiatives and professional development with school leaders.

Impact

Collaborations within vertical content and grade-based teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacities while data reveals increases in student achievement. Teachers’ voices are integral to decisions around programming and expectations that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Vertical teacher teams are designed around a content focus. Their data analyses result in the identification of trends in student performance for which they conduct inquiry-based sessions in order to improve student outcomes. The English Language Arts (ELA) team met to review student work to see how students have been able to integrate use of language frames into constructed written responses. Teachers found that while most students are successfully using the writing frame that is currently in use across classrooms, a majority of students are not using the writing frames that had been covered during previous units. Teachers then brainstormed ideas that they could implement in classrooms that might promote students’ use of writing frames previously covered. The ideas included listing of these frames in a binder available to all students and the posting of anchor charts that could be referred to during instruction as possible frames to be used during specific writing assignments. Additionally, teachers decided that they would conduct a book study of the text Learning to Learn in a Second Language, by Pauline Gibbons, in order to explore strategies that are geared toward supporting ELLs that may also support native ELA speakers.

- A review of agendas and action plans from other teams revealed their decisions regarding implementation of strategies to improve student performance. The math vertical team explored scaffolded supports to assist students with their ability to understand and answer multi-step word problems. Students were taught how to use a protocol that required them to break apart and paraphrase word problems in order to build clarity as to the specific questions being asked and the relevant information embedded within the word problem. Reading horizontal teams identified areas of struggle for each grade and worked on implementing model read-aloud sessions, using thinking maps, guiding students through choral and echo reading activities, using adapted readings to meet students’ specific needs, and role playing. Similarly, the science vertical team is exploring strategies to improve students’ use of texts for background information while the visual arts team is considering how to present model works of art in small parts.

- Each vertical teacher team is led by a grade team leader who presents the vertical team’s findings to grade teams so that they can be meaningfully integrated into curricular and instructional planning. Additionally, teachers played an integral role in the decision to modify the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) program employed at the school and in changing students’ programming to reflect the call for grade-five students to receive instruction during a block of time dedicated to literacy instruction. The Look-Fors document, which details the instructional expectations to which all teachers are held across the school, was designed, edited, and subsequently approved by a committee in which teachers’ votes held the same weight as that of school leaders.