Quality Review Report

2017-2018

J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 28Q190
68-17 Austin Street
Queens
NY 11375

Principal: John Greggo

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

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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

J.H.S. 190 Russell Sage serves students in grade 6 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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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Additional Finding</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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<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>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<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>Area of Focus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

School leaders convey high expectations to the school community for instruction through professional development workshops, weekly newsletters, and the staff handbook that reflects the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Staff consistently conveys high expectations for learning to all students.

#### Impact

School leaders consistently provide training and a system of accountability to ensure their high expectations are met. Staff offer ongoing and detailed feedback, guidance, and advisement through Regents exam level courses that prepare students for the next level.

#### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and their goals through weekly newsletters to the school community and the staff handbook. The weekly newsletter apprises teachers of the Comprehensive Education Plan goals, the instructional focus, and topics being covered across the content areas. The newsletter also delineates the Common Core Learning Standards of focus in math and English Language Arts (ELA) that are to be implemented in each department across the grades. The staff handbook articulates suggested elements to be included in lesson planning. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process and in the facilitation of professional development to the staff.

- The instructional support plan articulates opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development that supports the school’s goals and instructional focus that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Professional development offerings such as, “How to write a highly effective objective,” writing “I can” statements, “Writing highly effective language objectives for current and former English Language Learner (ELL) students,” and curriculum mapping, are opportunities that support teachers in achieving the instructional focus of rigorous, standards aligned curriculum and mapping. Teachers attested to the professional development offerings and that students are clear of what the goals are and how it is aligned to the State standards. Clear learning targets and learning objectives in the form of “I can” statements were evidenced during classroom visits.

- Teachers and staff have set clear structures for articulating high expectations and share information with students leading to college and career readiness opportunities. The high school articulation process starts in the sixth grade and is combined with eighth graders during assemblies on the process to enter high school. At the end of the seventh grade, guidance counselors visit classes to discuss the importance of grades and attendance in factoring high school acceptances. Teachers offer three sections of specialized high school preparatory classes in preparation for the Specialized High School Test (SHSAT), and students are afforded the opportunity to tour a specialized high school. Since its inception in 2013 to the present, the number of students accepted to specialized high schools has steadily rose from 25 percent to currently 40 percent.

- Students have opportunities to extend their learning through clubs such as Codester, Lego Robotics, and the Debate team. As an Algebra for All school, students in grade six are introduced to Common Core Algebra I but all eighth graders are programmed for the course. All eighth grade students are programmed for Regents Living Environment and United States History courses. Although the impact of this is not yet evident, for both the 2017 Common Core Algebra I and Living Environment Regents exam data showed a 99 passing rate and a 98 percent mastery rate.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of regularly evaluating the quality of school culture, professional development, use of organizational resources, and quality and effectiveness of teacher team work through the use of surveys.

Impact

Inconsistent regular evaluation of the school culture means the work of teacher teams are yet to effectively provide guidance of best teaching practices to promote student achievement of the Common Core Learning Standards or increase the coherence of practices across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders are developing a process to monitor and assess the success of school culture improvement initiatives and the ways high expectations are developed and shared among constituents. School leaders use sections sheets for targeted students to monitor their non-academic behaviors in their classes. Sections sheets showed the classes and descriptions of student behavior based on a rating scale of excellent to unsatisfactory. Although school leaders have a process in place to monitor the effectiveness of student non-academic behaviors, the impact of this tool is not yet evident on how it evaluates the quality of school culture. School leaders also expressed that they are in the process of evaluating school culture by administering Google surveys to students that mimic the Learning Environment Survey; however, this process has yet to increase the coherence of practices across the school.

- The instructional lead team administers surveys to teachers after a culminating professional development session as well as a needs survey to inform future professional development opportunities. Teachers have provided input on the efficacy of professional development and noted suggestions for future workshops and the potential for facilitating a session. Although structures are in place to monitor the professional development practices through the use of surveys, evidence of making adjustments to support the quality of professional development are not yet evident as well as the impact of these practices in increasing the coherence of practices across the school.

- Administrators are developing a process to regularly evaluate and adjust the quality of teacher team work. School leaders stated that administrators sit in on teacher team meetings and provide teams with feedback as they adjust their curriculum maps. A review of curriculum maps revealed administrators leaving comments on their curriculum maps such to include “I can” statements and learning objectives to address the needs of a variety of learners including ELLs and students with disabilities. Lesson plans and learning targets showed the incorporation of the “I can” statements; however, additional evaluation on the efficacy of teacher teams and adjustments to teacher teams was not yet evident. Structures to assess the effectiveness of teacher teams in building school wide coherence in policies and practices beyond the “I Can” statements has not yet been evident.
### 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**

Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits for all learners, and are planned and refined, through the use of scaffolds and translated texts.

**Impact**

Curricula and academic tasks incorporate higher-order thinking skills, and are modified to ensure access and cognitive engagement for a variety of learners.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Tasks exemplify rigor and higher-order skills, are refined so that all learners have access to curricula and are cognitively engaged. A social studies task required students to read and annotate assigned sections of the Monroe Doctrine. Students were required to analyze a political cartoon and look for textual evidence that answered the guiding question, “Does the Monroe Doctrine continue more of the American Neutrality policy or desires to expand territory?” with the support of a graphic organizer that deconstruct passages from the Monroe Doctrine. Students with disabilities and ELLs graphic organizers contained guided questions for each section, to further support them in the gathering of evidence in their reading. A social studies lesson plan outlined a Socratic seminar whose learning objective stated, “I can evaluate Federalists’ and the Anti-Federalists’ positions by analyzing primary and secondary sources and engaging in a Socratic seminar. The lesson plans showed the rationale for grouping in the seminar based on students’ linguistic needs of paring stronger ELLs with those that demonstrate challenges. In addition, ELLs are provided with vocabulary banks, images related to the content, translated materials, and sentence starters. Students with disabilities are provided with graphic organizers entitled, “Historical Thinking Skills” sentence starters for those in need and bolding and underlining key vocabulary in their materials. Tasks exemplify rigorous habits and are modified using appropriate scaffold to all learners in the content.

- A math problem of the week task required students to compare the functions in an assigned problem. The problem and supporting scaffolds were translated to Spanish, incorporated visuals, and an annotation of key vocabulary words, and sentence starters to support students in writing about the results depicted in their graphs. A sixth grade science lesson plan required students to distinguish the different types of simple machines. The lesson plan noted general rather than explicit strategies for diverse learners such as differentiated handouts, guided notes, and a simplified activity. General rather than explicit strategies to differentiate tasks and lessons for all diverse learners were evidenced in curricula tasks and lesson plans.

- An ELA lesson plan required students to engage in a quick write activity based on the anchor text, Inside Out and Back Again and ancillary texts such as poems. The prompt required students to produce a quick right about the main character, the decisions the family made, and whether the decisions were challenging for the family. Diverse learners were provided with a scaffold entitled, “Quick Write Organization Outline”, and a transition word and vocabulary word visuals. A sixth grade ELA curriculum map noted modifications for diverse learners such as graphic organizers, scaffolds for roles during literature discussions, Webb’s Depth of Knowledge sentence starters, and additional graphic organizers to support students in citing textual evidence in their writing. Lesson plans and curricular maps in ELA cite modification and supports for diverse learners.
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, student work products, discussions, and teaching practices reflect the school leader’s and faculty’s mantra on how students learn through learning targets written as “I can” statements.

Impact

Student discourse reflect high levels of thinking and participation as demonstrated in student work products, as informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and instructional shifts.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices consistently reflected the school leader’s espoused belief about how students learn best through engaging curriculum, inclusion of scaffolds when necessary, and learning targets and objectives written as “I can” statements. In an ELA Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, the learning objective stated, “I can analyze an image by determining its juxtaposition.” Students analyzed different photographs, were asked what was similar or different in the pictures, and lastly, posed the question, “What two images are being juxtaposed?” The students in the diverse groups were observed using a Venn diagram to organize the similarities and differences in the photographs. The scaffold was also written in the students’ native language of Spanish in some cases. In a social studies class, students cited evidence from the novel, Inside and Out and Back Again to support their answers to questions on an informational text entitled, “Refugees and Immigrant Children: A Comparison.” All students received a vocabulary word, a reading passage that highlighted key vocabulary words, and summarized each paragraph of the reading, as opposed to this scaffold being provided when necessary.

- Students engaged in ample student-to-student discussions that reflected high levels and student engagement and was visible through the students’ work products. In an ICT math class, the learning target stated, “I can interpret key features of functions in the problem of the week.” Sitting in groups, students were assigned a problem of the week and collectively devised a plan solving the problem. Students were observed using an equation of a line student created scaffold and a slope graphic organizer. Students in their groups were overheard stating the need to start a plan and questioning each other by stating, “What are we looking for?” Student work products articulated their thinking by requiring learners to write their plans, brainstorm a solution, and explain why a specific strategy was selected.

- In an ELA class, the learning target stated, “I can effectively engage in a collaborative discussion about my literature circle novel by referring to evidence gathered.” Students who read the same book sat together and had to select evidence that resonated with text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world. Each group has specific roles such as diction detective and reporter. Students asked each other vocabulary words and the author’s purpose for including the words. Students also asked each other how certain characters are the same and different by creating text-to-text comparisons on characters in their books. Students had access to scaffolds such as diction detective, discussion leader, and bridge builder to support them in making connections text-to-self connections. Student work products made student thinking visible evidenced in their written reflections of textual connections. In a social studies class, students were engaged in a Socratic seminar and debated, “Which foreign policy served national interests the most, the Proclamation Neutrality 1793, the Louisiana Purchase 1803, or the War of 1812?” Students were engaged in a debate on this topic, responded to one another and cited evidence from the text about the purpose of the Proclamation Neutrality. Students justified their answers from an economic, social, and political perspective as evidenced in student work products.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers’ use of rubrics and assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding as well as student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students. Teachers make adjustments to meet the needs of all learners as a result of checks for understanding.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitor student understanding during classes such as conferencing with students while using conference notes, and using hand signals to make in-the-moment adjustments to instruction. In an ICT math class, as students were devising their plan to solve the problem the week, the teacher walked around and noticed that students were demonstrating difficulty in devising their plan. The teacher conferenced with a small group of students and asked specific questions such as, “Where are you finding that there are multiple points in this journey?” “What is your starting point?” “Keep this in mind as you write your plan.” Students had an opportunity to reflect, self, and peer-assess their work using a rubric. In a science class, in preparation of a DNA extraction from strawberry laboratory experiment, the teacher conducted a checks for understanding by posing multiple questions on the topic and students had to “shake, shake, show” their choice of an answer with their fingers. If a student answered incorrectly, the teacher asked the student to explain their thinking for the selection made, however no in-the-moment adjustment was made by the teacher in instruction. Students assessed their results and were responsible for writing up a formal laboratory report.

- In a general education ELA class, students had to evaluate topics that enabled them to devise thick questions using an anchor chart for their literature circle group. Thick questions require in-depth answers beyond “yes” or “no” as opposed to thin questions. After explaining the task, the teacher adjusted the lesson by forming a small group in the rear of the classroom to further explain to the group their responsibilities in conducting the task. The teacher continued to adjust the pacing of the lesson by providing more time to complete the task. Students were provided with a literature circle group rubric. In a social studies lesson, during the Socratic seminar, the teacher checked for understanding by stating good job on synthesizing the policies. The teacher tracked the student responses using a tracking tool and checked for understanding by asking the question, “If you were the President, what solution would you have for 1803?” During the lesson, students were observed evaluating their classmates during the seminar using a rubric that assessed, conduct, reasoning, reading/preparation, and historical thinking skills. Students also evaluated the seminar using white boards and noted “glows” and “grows” on what they learned during the seminar to prepare them to write their thematic essays, thus meeting the needs of all learners through checking for understanding and student self-assessment.

- Teachers assess learning outcomes through the use of rubrics that are aligned to the curricula and provide actionable next steps for students. Students’ feedback includes peer and self-evaluations. In an ELA sample of student work, the teacher commended the student for their organization and the variety of narrative techniques used in their writing. The next steps cited the student’s need to use more descriptive details in their writing. The student’s self-evaluation mentioned the use of higher level vocabulary in their writing. The peer feedback mentioned to use more feeling in their writing. Additional samples of student work in math, and foreign language showed student work assessed with rubrics and actionable next steps; however, the feedback was not always meaningful for each individual student.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

Rating: Proficient

Findings

Teachers on vertical teams are engaged in structured and inquiry based collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are in place, such as Dean’s team, and the instructional and teacher leadership teams.

Impact

Distributed leadership practices are in place so that teachers have a key voice in decision making that affect student learning across the school. Teacher teamwork promotes the school’s goals.

Supporting Evidence

- A math vertical team was observed analyzing pre- and post-assessment data disaggregated by class and mathematical standards. While analyzing the data, the teachers discussed their noticings based on low performance within a standard, and the need to spiral topics into the curriculum. The teachers then segued by looking at student work and observed the feedback provided to the students. After reviewing the student work, the teachers determined that student needed support on what meaningful feedback looks like when providing peer evaluations. Examples of next steps discussed were, such as provide the staff with professional development about meaningful feedback to students, teachers modeling good peer reflection and that “glows” and “grows” should connect to the standard. Teachers mentioned that as a result of looking at student data from the previous year, they have added an extra period of math per day into the schedule resulting in eight periods of per week. This change has resulted in improvements in student learning outcomes based on pre and post assessment data reviewed. However, it is unclear how this work is strengthening teacher capacity or how the next steps would be implemented to further promote the achievement of school leaders’ goals or strengthen teacher capacity.

- A review of teacher team notes revealed an ELA vertical and social studies grade team conducted a series of meetings engaged in curriculum mapping and used data from pre- and post-assessments to work on curriculum maps. There was a schoolwide focus to include “I can” statements into lesson targets and learning objectives. As a result of the teachers meeting professionally and looking at curricula, “I can” statements have been added to curriculum maps and lesson plans. In addition, social studies teachers noted high frequency Regents exam vocabulary terms and topics to be added to the curriculum. ELA teachers stated that their classes are looped ensuring that they really get to know their students. As a department, teachers meet and make adjustments to the curriculum. There is currently a focus on intervisitation with teachers mentioning visiting their colleagues’ classes on their own. This is impactful as the 2016-17 Learning Environment survey cited that 46 percent of the teachers trusted one another in relation to the district average of 78 percent.

- Distributive leadership practices are in place such as a Teacher Leadership and Instructional Support team, and the Dean’s team. The Teacher Leadership and Instructional Support Team attends off-site professional development and turnkeys the information to the staff through onsite professional development. The Instructional Support Team has conducted schoolwide professional development on incorporating “I can” statements into learning objectives evidenced on curricula documents. The Dean’s team rolled out Respect for All, and made amendments to student programs so that sixth and eighth graders have community meetings to foster community outreach and a Dean’s Council. Distributive leadership practices are impacting student learning across the school via the adjustments to curricula and lesson plans by incorporating the “I can” statements as part of the learning targets and learning objectives.