Quality Review Report

2017-2018

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Principal: Frederick Wright

Dates of Review:
January 3, 2018 and January 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
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


### School Quality Ratings

#### Instructional Core

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The use of high-quality teacher- and student self-assessment practices across all subjects and grades offers a clear portrait of student mastery. In addition, teachers’ practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in student groupings that are differentiated by content and all students' needs, and are flexible and change in response to current classroom assessment data.

Supporting Evidence

- Common learning progressions and rubrics are used across grades and content areas to create a clear picture of student mastery. Teachers provide students with targeted feedback about each student’s strengths and areas of growth based on the learning progressions. One student stated, and all agreed that teacher feedback is helpful and improves their work. For example, one student shared that she received feedback to include more text-based examples to support her topic. She further explained that since receiving that feedback, she has used the learning progression provided as a tool and always checks that she has enough text-based evidence in her writing. Examples of feedback include, “I love how you thought about craft moves that are important. Next time, think about how you can explain your analysis of the quote in the conclusion,” “Make your question even more specific by asking exactly what you want the reader to find and using words like in total or all together,” and “Include points on the number line when showing your work.” Thus, there is evidence that actionable and meaningful feedback is provided to students across the school.

- Across the school, students use learning progressions, checklists, as self-assessment tools during the completion of work. Examples of completed checklists and learning progressions were posted on classroom walls, hallway bulletin boards, and in student work folders. Students in first grade use a checklist to assess “Did I do it like a first grader?” for various tasks, including writing a how-to book. Grade-seven information writing checklists were used for students to self-assess their on-demand writing assessment and create goals based on those checklists. The consistent use of student checklists and learning progressions has resulted in students being aware of their next learning steps.

- Across all classes, students were grouped based on ongoing classroom assessment data. Teachers make transparent the groups to which students belong in reading, writing, and math through wall postings that evidence the shifting nature of students’ placement in those groups based on checks for understanding. During a grade-five math class, one student moved his name to another group after working in a small group with the teacher. Student groups during a grade-eight math class were based on the previous day’s lesson. While one group was focused on an extension of the lesson for students who already met or exceeded the lesson’s expectations, the other groups were devoted to meeting the stated objective. After conducting a check for understanding, one teacher said, “Remember, when you decide on the slope check if you are going up or down the mountain to determine if it is positive or negative.” In addition, students are provided with individual learning progressions that align to a skill or strategy they are learning. Teachers then create weekly conference calendars to assess student progress toward those skills. This practice allows students to be aware of their next learning steps and provides teachers with more opportunities to check for understanding.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when provided with small-group instruction. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula; however, there are missed opportunities to provide strategic extensions.

Impact

Students across classrooms produce meaningful work products. Additionally, the design and delivery of instruction to include scaffolds for groups of students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities allows students to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade-six Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English Language Arts (ELA) class, teachers utilized a parallel teaching model so that each teacher provided instruction for one of the two groups in the class. One teacher provided reading instruction while the other teacher provided writing instruction. Students in the reading instruction group engaged in a turn and talk about how characters are affected by their environment. One student explained that the main character starts a new school and that makes him feel isolated. Another student added to the conversation by stating, “I agree. He was used to dominating in his old school but doesn’t know anyone in the new school.” In the writing group, students reviewed a mentor text of a literary essay against the rubric to identify strong examples of thesis statements and conclusions. Students were then instructed to create a goal sheet and identify what was still needed in their literary essays. In a grade-two classroom, students worked in pairs to solve a math problem using two different strategies. Students worked collaboratively to support each other’s learning. For example, one student explained to her partner that it was important to underline keywords, so you know what the problem is asking you to do. However, students were not provided with a task to complete while waiting for their partner to solve the problem. After both students completed the task, they provided each other feedback following a protocol. Therefore, across classrooms, there is evidence of small group instruction leading to meaningful student work products.

- Students are consistently provided with supports to access challenging tasks. For example, in a grade-four ELA class, a small group of English Language Learners (ELLs) was provided with a color-coded mentor text that aligned to the learning progression on analyzing perspectives in narrative writing. Students were observed using the color-coded text as they wrote their reading responses. In a grade-eight algebra class, students were finding the slope of a line using the rise over run formula. Students were placed in groups to support each other’s learning. One group of students had already demonstrated mastery and was completing an extension activity. In a grade-three ELA class, students were provided with learning progressions and differentiated mentor texts to support them in writing the main idea and supporting details. After the mini-lesson, a small group of students was provided with an additional mini-lesson designed to extend their writing. While scaffolds were consistently provided, extension activities were not evident across the school.

- Students in a grade-one special education class used individual checklists to work independently on their writing task. For example, in a grade-one special education class, each student had an individual checklist. The teacher asked a student what he was doing to revise his writing. The student referred to his checklist and said, “I’m revising by asking questions. Then I will read it over.” Therefore, the use of individual checklists provided to students allowed all students, including students with disabilities, access to the curricula.
**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, with a focus on balancing informational and literary texts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work such as exit tickets and assessments.

**Impact**

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. Staff adjusts materials and provides scaffolds that make tasks accessible to ELLs and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and integration of the math instructional shifts. A review of curriculum maps and unit plans in math revealed coherence across grades. For example, a grade four-unit plan focuses on deepening students’ understanding of whole number algorithms, including the development of algorithms for multiplication. Additionally, a grade five-unit plan focuses on fluently multiplying multi-digit whole numbers using powers of ten, estimation, and problem-solving. A grade-two math task included students solving an opened-ended math problem using two different strategies to demonstrate a deep understanding of subtraction. Therefore, across grades, the instructional shifts have been integrated in math.

- A review of curricular documents such as unit plans and lessons plans reveals the integration of the ELA instructional shifts. For example, a grade six-unit plan includes tasks requiring students to write literary essays in which students write arguments to support claims. A grade seven-unit plan includes tasks requiring students to cite textual evidence to support the analysis of primary and secondary sources related to the American Revolution. A review of a grade five-unit plan reveals students will read a variety of informational texts to build knowledge about European exploration. The unit ends with students writing an essay in which they explain how issues of power, wealth, and morality influence exploration and colonization. Thus, the instructional shifts are integrated across grades and content areas, and there is a focus on balancing information and literary texts.

Unit plans and lesson plans are planned and refined based on student work to ensure ELLs and students with disabilities have access to the curricula. A grade-four lesson plan reveals ELLs are provided with a color-coded mentor text and additional graphic organizer. A grade-two math lesson plan includes homogeneous student partnerships based on assessment data and two different versions of tasks for students. Additionally, a review of grades six and seven science unit plans revealed that general supports would be provided to ELLs and students with disabilities such as checklists, science glossary, varied entry levels for instruction, and a variety of different leveled science books. However, there was no evidence of the ways in which different instructional strategies would be utilized. Additionally, there is some evidence of planning for the highest-achieving students. For example, a grade-four math unit plan includes specific tasks for the highest-achieving students such as, multiplying three factors instead of two factors and explaining patterns they find. However, this level of planning was not evident across curricular documents. For example, a grade-five math lesson plan indicates some students will only complete the odd problems and some students will complete all the problems.
Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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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.

Impact

School leaders provide professional learning connected to schoolwide expectations and there is a culture of mutual accountability connected to observation feedback. Information sharing and communicating through verbal and written reports with families results in supporting students in their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations, both evaluative and non-evaluative, and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Feedback is normed among school leaders and every written observation report contains feedback connected back to progress toward the instructional focus. Teachers frequently invite school leaders to their classrooms to observe progress toward feedback that had been provided and receive additional feedback. The instructional focus, “Outcomes of professional learning teams will result in students engaging in the productive struggle of content in data-driven small groups,” was developed with feedback from teachers. Additionally, school leaders provide differentiated professional learning based on teacher capacity toward data-driven small groups. Thus, a culture of mutual accountability exists between school leaders and teachers that is supported with professional learning.

- School administrators share high expectations with teachers via a procedural and instructional handbook. The instructional handbook includes teaching best practices for both the elementary and middle school settings such as the optimal flow of the day, examples of teaching points, and components of the workshop model. Additionally, the handbook includes a classroom environment checklist that aligns components of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Nest program essentials with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, such as how to organize the classroom environment, and classroom structures and routines to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). One teacher stated, and all agreed that the expectations are clear and high. In addition, teachers came to the quick consensus that professional learning supports their understanding and progress toward meeting schoolwide expectations. Therefore, this level of communication and support allows teachers to meet those expectations.

- School leaders and staff members use phone calls, in-person meetings, letters, and various online platforms to communicate with families. Families receive monthly newsletters detailing the expectations for current units of studies. These newsletters include checklists and rubrics to support both parents and students understanding of the expectations for the unit of study. In addition, families receive a monthly Home School Connection newsletter that includes strategies for all parents to try at home such as, using index cards to help children keep track of sources when writing essays. Parents also receive literacy performance reports three times a year that includes information on what they can do to support their child’s progress toward literacy goals. For example, one report suggested families could sort and match pictures and words according to the beginning sound. Therefore, school leaders and staff have created successful partnerships with families that support student progress.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from strategic cycles of observations. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback to teachers from classroom observations is used to elevate instructional practices and promote teachers’ professional growth. Additionally, feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development through differentiated professional learning, aligns with professional goals for teachers, and the instructional focus for the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Included at the end of each report are bright spots, and next steps that are aligned with teacher goals and the instructional focus. For example, one observation includes feedback to “provide groups of students with grade level expectations for the reading level that they are independently accessing.” Additionally, school leaders plan strategic cycles of observations and norm feedback to provide consistency. School leaders prioritize teacher need based on previous observations, and teacher growth aligned to the instructional focus. Additionally, new teachers are provided with a non-evaluative observation at the start of the year to support their growth as a teacher. Thus, these practices elevate instruction and promote the professional growth of teachers.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps so that teachers can improve their practice and impact on student success. Next steps are directly connected to the school’s instructional focus and teachers’ professional goals. For example, one observation report praised a teacher for her delivery of content that demonstrated a clear understanding of mysteries and text complexity and suggested using the learning progression so students could self-assess. The report ends stating the teacher will share her progress at the next professional development session. Another report stated, “I commend your desire to hold every student accountable to the same standard, but would like to further challenge you to incorporate scaffolds for struggling students or consider utilizing a station to accommodate students who need enrichment or intervention.” This report included a resource to support the teacher’s growth in this area, which is also one of his professional goals and ended by asking the teacher to email an update by a specified date. Taken together, feedback provided to teachers is consistently aligned with professional goals and supports teacher development.

- Teacher peers support the development of teachers through peer observations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, one peer observation report praised a teacher for making improvements in managing student behaviors and suggested having a flow of the day on the board to support students during transition times. Another peer observation report suggested using dry erase boards in groups to encourage collaboration and engage more students. One teacher stated, and all agreed that receiving peer feedback has provided an additional layer of support. Therefore, teacher peers support the development of teachers, along with school leaders.
## Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in various teacher teams, such as grade and vertical teams that use a schoolwide inquiry protocol for identifying students’ needs. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

### Impact

Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team-based collaborations. There is evidence of progress towards goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on a content-based team have incorporated additional strategies to ensure students can access material, as well as alternative strategies for students to demonstrate mastery of content or skills. One teacher shared that he now presents students with multiple ways to respond to a quote in social studies classes, such as creating a comic strip or written response. Additionally, teachers on the math team reviewed key indicators of rich math tasks and created a checklist to analyze tasks. Teachers then collaborated to ensure students are provided with rich, open-ended math tasks. Teachers came to a quick consensus regarding the positive impact that team-based collaborations have in their practice.

- Review of agendas and minutes revealed that across the school, teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations that include data analysis and implications for practice. At the beginning of the school year, all teachers analyzed state assessment data and developed a goal for the school year. For example, the math team used various data points to identify students in need of academic intervention. After identifying the needs of students and placing them in one of three tiers, teachers created toolkits to support students in each group. Additionally, teachers assigned differentiated math libraries to students via an online math program which has shown increased student achievement for some students. A similar practice occurred for the ELA team. While the impact of professional collaborations has strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers, this has not yet lead to increased student achievement for all learners.

- Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students on which they are focused. The kindergarten teacher team began the year by analyzing benchmark data for reading readiness, which lead to assessing students’ reading levels in November rather than in January. Based on this data, the team reviewed student reading behaviors across levels a, b, and c. The team identified a target group of students who were close to moving to level c as the focus. Teachers identified areas that are common blockers that may prevent a student from moving up to level c. The team also identified lack of vocabulary and not attempting the first sound of words as two possible blockers for students in the focus group. The team determined they would reteach the first sound lesson and front-load vocabulary to help students overcome these blockers. The team also agreed to provide students with a checklist of reading habits. It was also determined that the team would reassess progress at the next meeting. Thus, there is progress toward goals for students because of teacher teams analyzing assessment data.