Quality Review Report

2017-2018

A.C.E. Academy For Scholars At The Geraldine Ferraro Campus
Elementary 24Q290
55-20 Metropolitan Avenue
Queens
NY 11385
Principal: Jose Jimenez

Dates of Review:
January 23, 2018 - January 24, 2018

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

A.C.E. Academy For Scholars At The Geraldine Ferraro Campus 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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### 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</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders and staff effectively communicate high expectations to families regarding college and career readiness through digital portals and events such as career day and their theme, “Journey to College.”

Impact
Families understand student progress toward high expectations by partnering with the school and students are prepared for the next level through enrichment activities.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff members provide clear lines of communication to families to apprise them of their scholar’s academic progress. The school has a tradition of referring to their students as scholars. Families receive a monthly progress report that details their scholar’s academic performance, social emotional and academic behaviors. Newsletters from teachers and the parent teacher association details what is happening in their scholar’s classes and provides suggestions to support learning at home. Weekly parent engagement meetings allow parents to gauge their scholar’s academic performance. Parents are also invited to publishing parties where the scholars present their writing pieces to their parents. Digital portals such as Class Dojo, Remind, the school’s website, and social media are used to keep parents abreast with their scholar’s progress and keep them aware of school events.

- The school orchestrates multiple ongoing events such as open school week that allows parents to visit their scholar’s classrooms to witness instruction. Parents are afforded opportunities to attend workshops such as, “The Parent Support Checklist” to support scholar learning at home, “Dial a Teacher”, “Understanding Child’s IEP (Individualized Educational Program), English as a New Language (ENL) Family S.T.E.A.M (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) day, and community health fairs. During the monthly breakfast meeting with the principal, the principal articulates the progress toward: meeting the school and district goals; communicating school initiatives and events; and updating students’ overall performance in math and English Language Arts (ELA). Parent workshops on the middle school admission process supports parents in understanding this process. During the parent meeting, parents discussed volunteering their time at the school to support the after school enrichment activities such as scrapbooking, architecture, theater, and parents collaborate with teachers on STEAM and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) projects.

- Teachers and other staff articulate high expectations that promote college and career readiness. The school provides three eight week enrichment activity sessions on topics such as but not limited to: creative writing, coding, graphic design and illustration. Parents and teachers collaborate in some instances on the delivery of the enrichment activities. During career day, adults in careers such as law enforcement, medicine, the arts, engineering, and education speak to classes across the school about the journey to their career as this is aligned to the school's theme of “Journey to College.” During the student meeting, a student mentioned that as a result of career day, he is aware of what is entailed in the job of a scientist and wants to pursue engineering as a career. During college awareness day, students engage in conversations with the teachers about the path to college, college and university regalia are adorned by staff and classrooms are decorated with college and university insignias.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

School leaders survey the school community to evaluate the quality of school culture and high expectations. School leaders observe teacher teams in order to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams.

Impact

Processes are in place to evaluate school culture, high expectations, and teacher teams; however, these processes have yet to build coherence across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Processes are in place to evaluate school culture such as analyzing the parent portion of the learning environment survey. Parents in the survey mentioned wanting to come into school to observe lessons; as a result, the school has opened teacher’s classrooms once this year known as open school week for parents to visit and there will be two more opportunities during the school year. Scholars were surveyed on their choice of enrichment for after school using student friendly documents. The data was compiled and showed the most requested activities by the students. Although some processes are in place, opportunities to further monitor school culture to build coherence across the school were not yet evident.

- Processes are in place to evaluate high expectations for professional development. Teachers were surveyed on professional development sessions on deeper learning and their approaches to incorporating deep understanding into instruction. Feedback from surveys were used to design project based learning units of study; however, systems to monitor high expectations to build coherence across the school were not evident.

- Structures are in place to assess the effectiveness of teacher teams. Administrators visit common planning and teacher team meetings to observe and assess the effectiveness of teacher teams. The feedback from the administrators cited ways to record teachers' best practices for all teachers to observe. Some teachers have created videos showcasing their best practices as a result; however, additional opportunities to assess and adjust teacher teams and the delivery of feedback to teacher teams to build coherence across the school has yet to be observed.
Findings
Curricular documents and tasks that demonstrate higher-order skills are embedded, planned and refined using beginning of year, pre and post-assessment data.

Impact
Academic tasks, lesson and unit plans are differentiated for all learners across grade and content areas so that all students are cognitively engaged and make their thinking visible.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use beginning of the year, pre and post-assessment data to plan and refine curricula in order to cognitively engage all scholars. A fifth grade math unit plan showed condensing and separation of whole number topics from decimal topics. Scholar work products showed a disconnection between whole numbers and decimals. The expected scholar outcomes noted on the plan included additional “look for” compared to the original unit plan. A second grade ELA unit two plan entitled, “Farm to School” was modified to include project based learning activities, additional text dependent writing prompts, and real world experiences such as a trip to a local farm. Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs) were further articulated in the area of voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. For each category, there were examples of strategies used such as scaffolded word ladders using pictures, including modeled revisions of scholar work, and a checklist supported with pictures.

- A second grade math unit plan on numbers to a thousand cited modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities such as, visual supports of new vocabulary words, extended time for activities, and pre-teaching content in small groups, a word wall, use of manipulatives, anchor charts on mental math, and buddy support for reading number sentences and directions. A second grade math lesson plan on creating arrays cited adjustments through student groupings and their tasks. Students in need of support were in a guided group with a teacher and utilized a scaffold that required students to create equal groups by drawing and using repeated addition. Whereas, scholars with no adult support created arrays using repeated addition or repeated addition and/or multiplication. Differentiated scaffolds were used to demonstrate scholar models of their arrays. An extension activity required students to create their own money problem for purchasing an item in a grocery store.

- Curricula and tasks across grades and subjects challenge all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to think critically, ensuring that students can demonstrate their thinking through the work products they are asked to create. A fourth grade social studies lesson plan required scholars to plan a short response paragraph citing evidence from the text about schools, homes, towns, and natural resources during colonial times. Students were in differentiated groups based on their proficiency levels and utilized differentiated scaffolds to plan their writing. A science task for the lower grades required scholars to draw a Rube Goldberg machine that is designed to move an object, center activities on friction and force were differentiated through the use of literacy, engineering, investigation, and technology. An extension activity required students to find two facts about friction and motion from the text. A kindergarten ELA lesson plan required students to make text-to-self connections using story elements from the text, A Letter to Amy. Using differentiated graphic organizers based on students reading levels, scholars identified a part of the story they made a text-to-self connection with. An extension activity required students to write a sentence explaining their text-to-self connection.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

Rating: Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, student work products and discussions, articulate how students learn best by doing, and are active participants in their learning.

Impact

Student work products reflected high levels of student thinking and participation and demonstrated ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Students across the vast majority of classrooms engaged in discussions that reflect critical thinking and problem solving, and ownership of the learning process. In a second grade math class, students were responsible for explaining and creating an array by making a model. The teacher flashed a series of arrays on the interactive whiteboard and students engaged in a turn-and-talk to discuss the strategies used to solve the arrays. In their groups, students were overheard stating the strategies used such as the skip count and repeated addition. A student went to the interactive whiteboard to explain how skip counting was used to solve the array. Afterwards, the students were provided with differentiated graphic organizers to make a model of an array. The graphic organizer had varied guiding questions to support the students in making their array models. Similarly in a fourth grade Integrated Co-teaching math class, students were required to add fractions with like denominators using varied strategies such as using models. The students were engaged in a school wide practice of completing the Steps to Success portion of the lesson such as choosing a strategy (model, addition, subtraction), and math talk only. During the lesson, the teacher purposely made a mistake in the lesson known as a rookie mistake by erroneously adding the denominators when adding fractions. Students in their groups discussed the error of adding the denominators and are only supposed to add the numerators, thus making their thinking visible during the problem solving process.

- The school has an articulated belief that scholars learn best by doing and are active participants in their own learning. The school leader implemented an instructional initiative known as “inclusion revolution.” The school has partnered with its co-located school, The Riverview School, to have scholars teach students from the Riverview School. A math class of fifth grade scholars was observed teaching second and third graders on parts of a whole during a station activity. Stations included making ten, and a fraction puzzle. At the fraction station, a fifth grader identified a fraction and the second grader identified the equivalent fraction making a whole. Positive reinforcement in the form of a “fist bump” was observed each time the second grader was correct. In a kindergarten class, scholars and Riverview students in station activities focused on behaviors such as “my turn” and “your turn.” Scholars were seen modeling behavior “Can I please have a turn?”

- In a fifth grade guided reading class, students were tasked with identifying cause and effect relationships in the text Heart and Soul. The students engaged in a turn-and-talk to respond to the prompt to discuss one of the causes and its effect found in the text. An extension activity required the early finishers to a choice of answering one of three questions about an event in the text and using two text details to support their answer. In a kindergarten class, students were tasked with describing and sorting shapes. Student-to-student discourse was observed when students described why the teacher put two shapes together. Students were heard using academic vocabulary such as the shape having the same number of vertices. Students in other groups were observed explaining how they sorted their shapes. Student scaffolds made their thinking visible.
Additional Finding

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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers, students, and peers use rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect varied methods to check for understanding such as quick check and Steps to Success.

Impact

Students design success criteria and teachers make adjustments so that all learners are aware of their next learning steps. Feedback to scholars from teacher and peer is meaningful regarding student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- A variety of feedback to students from both teachers and peers is specific and advances learning. In a third grade ELA class, students identified the main idea of an informational text about the Amazon rainforest. During the lesson, the students devised their own criteria for a checklist to be used to provide peer feedback and observed students providing one another with feedback during student presentations. Student work reviewed contained feedback from the teacher, the student and peers. A sample of feedback from student work commended the student for using an area model and the standard algorithm. The teacher recommended the student to use multiplication by three numbers. The scholar feedback recommended neatness in their writing to see the product, and the self-evaluation cited the need to add units to their work. Writing sample of a scholar’s work commended its peer for their use of transition words and recommended using evidence from the text. Additionally, during the student meeting, students were able to articulate the feedback on their work and knew what was needed to improve for their next assignments.

- Teacher monitoring of scholar understanding during lessons is visibly active and continuous. During a fifth grade guided reading class, while the teacher conducted small group instruction in the rear of the class, the teacher paused the lesson and announced to the class to use the “say something” protocol with their partner to note a wondering or connection they had with the text regarding cause and effect. A student was queried on the next steps in the lesson and stated that he needed to use text evidence to find an action in the text. In a third grade writing class, student were working on an opinion writing piece when the teacher did a stop and check and told the class to write an example of call people to action statement in their graphic organizer. Afterwards a student shared out a statement for a call to action on saving the rainforest, thus students being aware of their next steps.

- Students monitor their own understanding and progress while teachers adjust the lesson for learners. In a first grade ELA class, students were engaged in an independent reading exercise that required them to analyze a character from their text. A student was queried about the next step in the lesson. The student stated that she would have a choice of easy, medium, or a hard graphic organizer to analyze her character from the text. The student selected the medium graphic organizer for she felt comfortable with using this graphic organizer. When another student was queried, the student stated that he will use his graphic organizer to write what his character is doing in the text. The teacher also adjusted the lesson for one student who demonstrated improper behavior. In a fourth grade inclusion math class, students were tasked with finding sums involving fractions using varied strategies. During the lesson, the students devised their Steps to Success criteria for the lesson. Students cited the need to prove their strategy, and use math talk. The teacher reviewed a question and some students were unclear. The teacher adjusted the lesson by conducting small group instruction via a re-teach for the group of students. When the whole group reconvened, the teacher posed a stop and check question asking the students what strategy they were going to use and asked the students what was the rookie mistake in the problem assigned.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Teachers in professional learning groups engage in inquiry practices using the “Asset Based Student Work Analysis” protocol. Distributed leadership practices such as Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) team are in place.

Impact

The work of teacher team promotes school goals, strengthens teacher capacity and affects student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A fourth grade team was observed engaging in inquiry work using the “Asset Based Student Work Analysis” protocol. Four samples of student work in mathematics were analyzed for strengths, misconceptions; clarify of understanding and implications for instruction. One question that aligned to the standard, operations and algebraic thinking was analyzed. Teachers reviewed the work and noted trends and patterns in the student work such as, most scholars labeled their units, no computational errors, and circling key facts. A misconception observed was scholars were not checking their addition work. Implications for instruction included, providing the scholar with more steps in a word problem by pushing towards a fifth grade standard such as double digit divisors, providing an enrichment center. Additional supports such as sentence starters and guiding questions with pictorial supports for English Language Learners and students with disabilities were also considered. Teachers stated that the impact on team work on their instructional capacity has been the opportunity to identify trends and patterns from their colleagues and the sharing of best practices on ideas used in their classrooms.

- Grade teams meet monthly conducting four week cycles as a data driven instruction team to analyze scholar work and data. A fifth grade teams’ notes revealed a problem of practice that scholars were having difficulty using equivalent fractions to solve word problems involving adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators based on pre and post-test data. Teachers set short term goals to create visual models for the identified areas of difficulty. Teachers monitored student progress through exit slips on finding common denominators as well as problems on adding and subtracting fractions with mixed numbers. End of unit assessment data showed proficiency in student performance. A fourth grade teams’ problem of practice indicated that the scholars were having difficulty with solving multi-step addition and subtraction word problems. Short term goals were identified such as, supporting scholars in understanding key vocabulary words that cues them when to add or subtract, and use at least one strategy to solve multi-step word problems. Exit slips were analyzed; intervention and enrichment center time was incorporated into future lessons. Students initially scored level one and twos on the beginning of cycle assessments. Now, students for the end of cycle assessments scored level threes and fours.

- Distributed leadership structures are in place at the school and teachers have a voice in decisions that affect student learning around the school. The MOSL committee met and discussed that they wanted student performance tasks to be considered as their MOSL for evaluation because it is a more rigorous assessment. As a result of the team voice, the principal honored their request and now performance tasks are part of a teacher’s MOSL. Members of the United Federation of Teacher (UFT) consultative team shared that adjustments to the school schedule and program be modified so that cluster teachers do not lose transition time for the next period. As a result of their voice, the principal has adjusted the schedule to allow cluster teachers more time for transitioning to the next period.