Quality Review Report
2017-2018

P.S. 360
Elementary 29Q360
199-10 112 Avenue
Queens
NY 11412

Principal: Rachel Thomas

Dates of Review:
February 8, 2018 - February 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell
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. 360 serves students in grade PK through grade 2. 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>To what extent does the school...</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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<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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</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</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>
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<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>
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<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>
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching though a staff handbook, a newsletter, walkthroughs, and content specialists who provide training for the expectations. School leaders and the staff effectively shares high expectations with all families through progress reports, the school’s website, newsletters, backpack information, and workshops.

Impact
Teachers state that they share mutual accountability for maintaining high expectations. Families understand how to support the school in building college and career readiness skills for their children at home.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year, the school leadership meets with the staff to share instructional and administrative expectations aligned to the school goals and the Danielson Framework for Teaching. All staff are provided a handbook highlighting administrative procedures that are expected to be followed. A staff newsletter framed the school’s goal of building problem solving skills for all students through class discussions and implementing the circle, underline, box, explain, solve (CUBES) strategy for solving math problems. Some expectations reviewed in the newsletter highlights the use of accountable talk and the integration of music, art, and technology within the classroom. In addition, hands on activities, with appropriate vocabulary posted in classrooms, support building content knowledge across science, social studies, and math. The administration conducts informal walkthroughs and engages in discussions with staff about instructional expectations.

- The leadership has identified teachers to be content specialists in math, literacy, social studies, and science. These teachers attend workshops outside of the school on strategies to support best practices and increase student achievement. The specialists turn-key information from the workshops or provide videos to the staff during the extended day on Mondays. Currently, the focus has been on increasing student achievement in math, which is also a districtwide goal. Teachers shared that they engage in classroom intervisitation to support each other in the implementation of best practices across the school.

- Parents and guardians shared that they are informed of the school’s goals during the “Back-to-School” Curriculum Night. They have participated in workshops conducted by teachers and the administration, such as “Getting Your Child Ready for College” as well as a schoolwide College and Career Day, in which guests shared with students information about the colleges they attended and/or how they prepared for their careers. Teachers provide families with three progress reports in addition to the regular report cards to keep them abreast of their children’s progress. Parents shared that they can access Engrade, an online grading system which lets them know how their children have performed on quizzes, projects, and unit tests. A monthly school newsletter informs them of trips and special programs. The principal meets with parents monthly for “Time with Thomas,” where parents have an opportunity to ask any questions. The school website provides a host of information about the curriculum, staff, and special programs such as the “360News,” where students share information about programs at the school. Students take home a yellow folder with homework and a blue folder with other communication. Parents shared that they are well-informed and can help their children at home.
Findings

The majority of teachers participate in content-specific professional collaborations and inquiry-based grade band teams to support school goals. Some teachers meet with the principal to share information about grading policies, curriculum adjustments, and professional development.

Impact

Teachers share best practices, which strengthens their instructional capacity. While identified teachers have leadership roles, structures are not yet embedded so that most teachers have an integral role in key shared leadership decisions that improve student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in cycles of professional learning collaborations (PLCs) around specific content areas. School leaders conduct instructional walkthroughs to select teachers with strengths in math, literacy, science, and social studies to attend professional development (PD) outside of the school. This PD involves topics such as students self-editing of their writing, using the CUBES strategy for math, and developing an understanding of personal character traits using social studies content to further their writing skills. The selected teachers lead PLC workshops with teachers from other grades during the extended day on Mondays, sharing best classroom practices. The workshops are conducted in two month cycles, after which teachers transition to a different content area in order to strengthen their instructional capacity in implementing school goals.

- Teachers on each grade meet as a team to discuss instructional practices, the implementation of the inquiry process, and supporting school goals, such as math problem solving and informational writing. Teachers engage in identifying targeted students from data, implementing a protocol around looking at student work in alignment to a grade-specific rubric. Teachers make suggestions about instructional practices to support increased student achievement, such as using a sight word list or the word wall to improve spelling or a graphic organizer to improve organization and detail in student writing products.

- The principal shared that teachers designed a schoolwide grading policy, specific to each grade, as well as an optional lesson plan template that incorporates essential questions. The content specialist teachers turn-key strategies from workshops to the PLCs. The second grade teachers meet with the principal to share adjustments they are proposing to the third grade math curriculum. While many teachers meet with the administration, an embedded timeframe in which teachers across grades meet together with the instructional cabinet is lacking. Thus, opportunities for all teachers to play integral roles in key decisions that affect student learning across the school are limited.
**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**

School leaders and faculty ensure the integration of the instructional shifts into the curricula by designing units of study that align with the Common Core Learning Standards, including informational writing, academic word walls, and problem solving skills. Teachers use a unit revision protocol to make refinements to the curricula.

**Impact**

All students have access to curricula and tasks that build coherence, support cognitive engagement, and promote college and career readiness skills.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing curriculum to provide students with content in organization, editing, and adding details. In addition, Fundations is used to support letter formation and phonics. Students engage in informational writing tasks and have academic words walls posted in classrooms. All students also use the *GO Math!* program, which is approved by the Department of Education and supports the Common Core and instructional shifts for math. The *Passport* program is used for social studies. Pre-Kindergarten teachers designed a science unit on light which includes academic language, literature such as *Good Night Moon*, *Little Owl’s Night* and *Can’t You Sleep Little Bear?*, and interdisciplinary tasks for the learning centers. The curricula provide all students with access to college and career readiness skills.

- Certified music and physical education teachers use the New York State literacy curricula in these disciplines to support the instructional shifts. The school also secured a grant which provided keyboards for students to learn how to play musical notes, which supports the music curriculum. The school also has a partnership with a music and performing arts company which provides an afterschool music program for students in kindergarten through grade two. The *360News* is a teacher designed newscast published on the school’s website that supplements the social studies curricula. Students provide weekly reports on events within the school as well as asking trivia questions, providing information on the local weather, and reporting on character development traits that support a positive school climate.

- Teacher teams review data and student work to determine adjustments to the curricula and instruction. The unit revision protocol is used for this process, in which teachers must state the data used and the reason for the revision. An example of a kindergarten refinement to the *GO Math!* program was to move shapes to an earlier time in the pacing chart to allow for more time with number fluency and computation. After reviewing writing samples, the second grade teachers noticed that many students did not include a lead or conclusion in their published written work. The teachers provided more time for students to revisit writing an introduction with details and descriptive language and a conclusion with a summary. Grade two teachers are currently working on the math curriculum to prepare for grade three Common Core standards. They reviewed the New York State Math Assessment data and noticed that many students had difficulty with word problems involving fractions. As a result, they have revised the *GO Math!* pacing chart for grade three by introducing fractions at the beginning of the year with an emphasis on using CUBES to solve word problems.
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 reflect the shared belief that students learn best with meaningful, hands-on tasks. Students engage in turn-and-talk partner discussions across classrooms, facilitated by teachers.

Impact

The use of manipulatives supports concrete comprehension of math concepts. Student discussions reflect thinking and provide justification for their conclusions.

Supporting Evidence

- Students in a pre-kindergarten classroom were observed using playdough to build a birthday cake for a student celebrating his birthday. The students added five candles on the “cake,” which represented the age of the student. Another student in the same center was observed making large circles for the eyes of an owl in the story the teacher had just read, “Little Owl’s Night.” In the block area, two students were building a “house” (garage) for their cars, which was related to a unit on transportation from the previous week. These activities reflected schoolwide beliefs about hand-on learning and supported students’ cognitive understanding of numbers, shapes, and transportation (how cars can be protected).

- During a whole class lesson in a kindergarten classroom, students used magnetic white boards and counters to solve subtraction problems, such as \(5 - \boxed{\_\_\_} = 3\). In a grade one classroom, students are using editing strips to show their partner what needed to be done to correct their writing. These hands-on activities support the belief that students learn best when they interact in meaningful tasks.

- The school currently houses students in pre-kindergarten through grade two, with plans to expand to grade five in the coming years. Across all classrooms, students were observed participating in turn-and-talk discussions. In an integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) class for grade one, the students conducted partnership discussions on how to identify related addition and subtraction facts. Each partnership had to create a problem and discuss with the partner the facts related to the problem. A student was heard explaining that for the problem “\(\_\_\_ + 5 = 12\),” she “called herself 12” and subtracted 5, which left 7. She then was able to use the three “magic” numbers (7, 5, and 12) to create four related fact problems. In a second pre-k classroom, students in the literacy center were discussing the word “nocturnal” and animals that come out at night. When asked, “What animals come out at night?” one student replied, “bats, owls, and raccoons.” The student was able to articulate that these animals sleep in the daylight and hunt for food at night. The student repeated that the word “nocturnal” means “night.” The students participated in a share out with the whole class in which they had to tell what they learned about nocturnal animals, demonstrating their understanding of this concept.

- In a grade two classroom, students worked in partnerships using the CUBE strategy as they discussed how to find the number of the day after applying specific operations to the number 458. Some of the operations included subtracting 2 from 458 and then subtracting 20 from that difference, then subtracting 200 more. Students discussed placing the number 2 in the correct place value each time and regrouping as they worked toward writing their subtraction number sentence.
Additional Finding

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

Teachers use and create rubrics aligned to the curricula along with beginning, middle, and end-of-year assessments and a grading policy. Students use checklists to self-assess their work, and teachers use clipboards to monitor students’ learning during lessons and make adjustments.

Impact

Analysis of data from assessments and student work samples informs teachers’ decision-making for making curricular adjustments and providing actionable feedback to students for next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have designed a grading policy that is specific for each grade. Students are assigned grades on a four point scale, with a level four being above level and a level three on grade. Students receiving a level two are approaching grade level standards, and a level one indicates that the student is below grade level. Students receive progress reports in October, January, and May. The grading policy aligns to the school’s curricula and provides feedback to teachers and students on their progress toward the next grade.

- Teachers use and create rubrics aligned to the curricula in order to assess students’ achievement. For example, kindergarten teachers created a three-level writing rubric to measure students’ skill in using details in their pictures, spacing of their words, correctly using capital and lower case letters, coloring within defined lines, and using sight words in their sentences. At the top of each level were one, two, or three stars with pictures and writing indicating the level of the work. Teachers circled the level of the work and wrote a next step, such as, “add more details to your pictures.” In addition, across the school students are assessed using the Developmental Reading Assessment Second Edition Plus (DRA-2+) and GO Math! unit assessments, as well as teachers’ ongoing assessments of students’ writing samples. The GO Math! mid-year assessment reflected that the majority of students had moved up by one level or more.

- Across classrooms, students are using checklists to self-assess their work. A review of second-grade students’ work folders revealed that students used an informational writing checklist. They self-assessed their writing for the introduction or “lead” and for the use of transition words, such as “and” and “also,” as a way to add more details. The checklist also required the students to check for an “ending” and to review their work to make sure the writing had information on different topics. Most student writing samples have improved since the beginning of the year.

- During classroom visits, most teachers were observed rotating among groups of students, making notes on a clipboard. A review of student work samples provides feedback to teachers on editing lessons before publication. Math notebooks identify students who need support in using the CUBES strategy to explain their work. The principal shared that the teachers have designated days for a double-period of math each week. During the second period, teachers adjust their lessons to provide individual or small group hand-on instruction to “at risk” or struggling students. During a visit to an ICT class, as the students were working on finding related fact families, one teacher noted that some students’ work was incorrect. She stopped the lesson and retaught how to identify common numbers in related fact families. The re-teaching resulted in the students’ being able to complete the independent task correctly.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders conduct ongoing formal and informal classroom observations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The Advance teacher rating system is used to inform decision-making for professional development and to identify teachers to turn-key information to the staff.

Impact

Feedback to teachers promotes professional growth and reflection. Professional development provides teachers with strategies for best practices.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year, teachers meet with the principal to select their options regarding the formal and informal observations they will receive. All official observations are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, which are conducted throughout the school year after teachers have had their initial planning conferences (IPC) with the administration. The principal shared that she also conducts unofficial classroom observations to provide teachers with feedback prior to official observations so that they understand what her expectations are. For example, official feedback to one teacher captured the question, “What notes can you identify in this song?” as an area for growth. A next step was to increase higher level questioning based on Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix by moving away from basic recall to the next level on the DOK. Teachers use feedback to strengthen their professional growth and improve student outcomes.

- Adjusting the pacing of the lesson in order to allow students to write their own word problems and displaying a word wall to support language development are examples of feedback given to strengthen instructional practices. In addition to discussing next steps, teachers are asked to bring samples of students’ work to the debrief conference to assess student understanding. During observations, administrators talk to students to determine if they understand the task they are doing, which also informs feedback to promote best practices across the school and individual teacher professional growth.

- To identify teachers to participate in outside professional development, the principal reviewed teacher observation data in Advance, the system for teacher evaluations, in addition to conducting her own observations. These “content specialist” teachers then share their learning with the staff during the extended day on Mondays. An area the school has focused on is providing strategies for students to improve their problem solving skills. One of the teachers identified as a content specialist attended outside professional development on implementing the CUBE method to provide teachers with best practices to strengthen their professional resources for improving math reasoning by students. Teachers are using the strategy with their students, and teacher reflection notes indicate that teachers are pushing students to explain how they got their answers to support critical thinking. Teachers use reflection sheets to provide feedback on professional development sessions, which the principal reviews to make decisions about next steps for professional development.