Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 11 Thomas Dongan School
Elementary 31R011
50 Jefferson Street
Staten Island
NY 10304

Principal: Erica Mattera

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

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 11 Thomas Dongan School 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>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</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>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 Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
Faculty use New York State assessments and Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) data to identify priority Common Core Learning Standards, track student progress, and create a clear picture of student learning. The vast majority of teachers use medial summaries, questioning, and student self-assessment checklists to check for understanding.

Impact
Teachers’ curricular and instructional decisions meet students’ learning needs, resulting in increased mastery levels for all students. Teacher’s use of I can statements and success criteria make students aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Faculty use New York State math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessment data, as well as New York City performance assessments and curriculum based math and ELA benchmark and unit test data to identify standards and skills mastered and not yet mastered. Faculty uses this information to identify schoolwide and grade specific priority standards. Priority standards for this year fall under three targeted skills that include main idea, text evidence and problem solving. A review of data analysis sheets for the 2016–2017 and 2017–2018 school years demonstrate that teachers and administrators track these skills for individual students and classes at least three times each month. Teachers use data from these assessments to assign students to red, yellow and green coded instructional groups for students identified as below, approaching and at or above grade level, respectively. Across the vast majority of classrooms visited, teachers modified tasks for students assigned to each of these performance groups.

- The tracking of targeted standards and analyses of common assessment data provide teachers with a clear picture of student progress toward goals and their achievement of priority standards. Teachers use the data to create new teaching points and problems of the day to provide students with additional instruction and practice in priority skills. Administration and faculty note that all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have demonstrated increased mastery levels based on a comparison of October, 2016 and October, 2017 data. A review of the schoolwide tracking sheets demonstrates that there has been a schoolwide increase in the percentage of students approaching and mastering the priority standards. This data reveals a 12 percent increase in main idea, an 11 percent increase in text evidence and a seven percent increase in problem solving.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms visited, teachers checked for understanding by conducting medial summaries of learning objectives during the lessons. Teachers stopped to highlight noticings from groups and to clear up misconceptions. Teachers reviewed I can statements with students and distributed self-assessment checklists aligned to the success criteria that students used to assess their achievement. Students across classrooms were able to make adjustments to improve their performance and were aware of their next learning steps. In a math classroom, one student shared his errors in solving a word problem before showing his classmates how he achieved the correct answer. This student and others were aware of their learning, could articulate their misconceptions, and clarify misunderstandings for their classmates.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Most teachers provide scaffolds for students via visual supports and graphic organizers and across the majority of classrooms students engage in teacher directed discussions using high-level questions and prompts. Teachers in some classrooms have begun to incorporate high quality supports and extensions into activities and tasks.

Impact

Exposure to high-level supports in some classrooms allows students to take ownership of their learning and share unsolicited questions and ideas with their peers; however, this level of support is not evident across classrooms. Limited access to these supports in other classrooms hinders some students from engaging in challenging tasks and demonstrating higher order thinking in their discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provide scaffolded tasks for red, green and yellow instructional groups. In most classrooms, students work in assigned groups to complete tasks using identified task cards. Teachers in these classrooms differentiate tasks by providing students with must do tasks and targeted graphic organizers. In an ELA classroom, the teachers provided student groups with specific task cards that varied in the number of steps required, as well as the font size in which the steps were printed. In this lesson, one group reviewed illustrations and key words to determine what a text was “mostly about”, while another group used text-based evidence to identify the main idea of a text, and the final group reviewed several statements about a text to determine the main idea and provide justification for their response. In this class, must do tasks and expected products were clearly articulated for each group, as well as may do extension activities. This level of clarity and high quality support was not evident in some classrooms in which the tasks and expected products were not clearly articulated.

- In a social studies classroom, the teacher exposed all students to a video on Veterans Day in preparation for a Veterans Day class presentation. After the video and a discussion of key vocabulary, the teacher assigned students to play and poster groups. In this class, the teacher worked with the play group to review their roles and lines for the class performance and the poster groups worked independently to create posters. Students in poster groups did not receive task cards and had difficulty selecting slogans and completing their posters without support. Some students quickly completed posters with simple slogans that did not align to the learning objective, “I can tell why we celebrate veterans.” Completed posters said, “Thank you Veterans” with simple drawings of hearts. A lack of high quality supports and extensions in this classroom prevented students from demonstrating higher-order thinking in their work products.

- Across classrooms, teachers prompt whole class and small group discussions using medial summaries and checks for understanding. In a math class, the teacher asked students to share why it is important to align decimals when solving equations. In this class, a student shared how important it is if you are calculating money and used a real-life example in which one might pay a cashier too much. In a few classrooms, teachers provided students with the prompts and high level supports so that students initiated their own discussions and took ownership of their learning. Independent task cards, manipulatives, and tools in these classrooms supported students in questioning one another and guided the learning of their peers. In a math class, student groups reviewed each other’s work and questioned their processes and solutions to reach consensus. This level of ownership in discussions was not yet present across all classes.
### Additional Finding

#### Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Well Developed

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that lessons and unit plans are aligned to the Common Core and strategically integrate complex text and real world applications. Curricula and tasks are planned and revised using student work and data.

### Impact

Alignment to the Common Core and a focus on priority standards result in curricular coherence across content areas and promote college and career readiness skills for all students. Planning enables access to the curriculum and tasks that are cognitively engaging for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

1. The vast majority of lessons and unit plans reviewed follow a common template and teachers across all content areas identify the primary Common Core standards aligned to the teaching points. An ELA lesson with the teaching point, “Students will be able to determine the main idea of an article and explain how it is supported by key details,” identifies two reading standards and one speaking and listening standard that require students to determine the main idea, refer to key details, and engage in an effective collaborative discussion. A math lesson with the teaching point, “We can organize and interpret data in a bar graph,” identifies two math content standards that require students to draw a scaled bar graph to represent data and solve two-step word problems using four operations.

2. Lesson plans across all content areas engage students with complex text and ask students to make real-world applications. A science unit on Scientists Who Made an Impact integrates non-fiction texts, including Tarantula Scientist and The Boy Who Drew Birds, as well as, fables and folktales such as Anansi the Spider. An ELA unit on The Importance of Family and Friends, requires students to read Stellaluna and identify the connections and relationships between characters. This unit also requires students to make real-world connections to the relationships they have with their own families and friends, by putting themselves in the character’s place and integrating their customs and traditions into personal projects, such as a family tree. In a physical education lesson, the essential question asks students, “Why are locomotor skills important not only in school but in our home lives?” This lesson requires students to engage in a discussion of why locomotor skills are important in their daily lives.

3. Across the vast majority of lessons reviewed, teachers assign students to different instructional groups based on their performance data. Across all content areas, lessons and units include revisions to adapt lessons and provide access for individual and groups of students. A physical education lesson includes plans for adaptive activities for students with limited mobility. An ELA lesson on main idea using text details includes leveled articles for each learning station, as well as targeted vocabulary words and visual and audio supports for ELL’s and students with disabilities. A science lesson on food chains and webs plans for a preview of vocabulary and photos, language partners, and translated text.
### Additional Finding

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

#### Findings

School leaders consistently provide training and communicate high expectations to all staff via handbooks, inquiry reflections, observation feedback, and emails. Faculty effectively communicates learning expectations with families through report cards, workshops, and content-based syllabi.

#### Impact

Leaders and staff hold each other accountable for student learning expectations, the achievement of learning goals, and progress on priority standards. Faculty and staff successfully partner with families to design parent workshops, and family events that support student progress toward meeting those expectations.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Leadership clearly outlines plans for professional development in the *Public School 11 Professional Development Plan for September 2017 through June 2018*. This plan identifies the goals, topics, facilitators, participants, and dates for all planned sessions. Topics align with the school’s instructional focus on taking a creative approach to standards based instruction. Topics for the 2017-2018 school year include all staff item skills analyses of New York State ELA and math data to identify priority standards, modeling of the problem of the week with accountable talk, and an overview of problem based learning. Professional development for this year also includes paraprofessional training sessions such as the *role of a paraprofessional in special education* conducted in October 2017. Administrators and a variety of teachers lead professional development sessions and hold each other accountable for the implementation of learning through inter-visitation, feedback, and email follow-up.

- Leadership effectively communicates high expectations via handbooks distributed to all staff at the beginning of the year, observation feedback, and inquiry reflections shared with staff after the submission of inquiry team notes. Leadership reviews inquiry notes and shares reflections on the trends across teams, as well as highlights of exemplary practices demonstrated by individual teams. In an October 2017 inquiry reflection, school leadership congratulated all teams for completing their first inquiry around the *problem of the day* and highlighted the data team for creating high-level math problems for use across the grades. In this reflection, leadership also shared inquiry notes from the grade one team as an exemplar start to inquiry work across the school, noting that the team clearly identified the selected *problem of the day* and shared strategies to support student achievement for a variety of learners.

- Faculty effectively communicates high expectations for learning to families and successfully partners with families to develop workshops and tools that help families support student progress toward learning expectations. Teachers share student progress with families via report cards and progress reports and outline learning expectations in grade level syllabi. A grade four syllabus outlines class schedules and the instructional focus for math, reading, science, social studies, theater, and physical education. Parents shared that the school communicates frequently by phone and has provided workshops based on parent survey requests. A review of workshop agendas reveals that parents participate in workshops at high levels, including sessions entitled *Preparing for Common Core Testing* in January 2017 and *Understanding the Common Core Language* in November 2017. Parents also shared that they play an active role in the school community by hosting fundraisers, chaperoning events, and volunteering in classrooms.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers using frequent cycles of effective feedback with next steps from lesson observations and through the analyses of teacher and student work. Leaders have an effective system to align professional development with teacher observation data and make informed decisions to create professional paths for teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff members.

### Impact

The alignment of teacher feedback and professional development to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and student learning outcomes supports the elevation of school-wide instructional practices, promotes professional growth, reflection for faculty and staff, and the development of succession plans.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use low inference evidence of observed teacher practices and student performance to guide instructional improvement. Across most observation reports, feedback includes a narrative description of the leader’s observations of instruction as they align to the specific Danielson *Framework for Teaching* domains. In one report, leadership rated a teacher as proficient in engaging students in learning and shared that the observed learning tasks and activities fully aligned to planned instructional outcomes and challenged students to make their thinking visible. In this observation, the leader included a list of observed evidence to support the rating, including that students showed their work in notebooks and on the board, the teacher clarified two misconceptions during board work, and students in groups supported one another with reminders and step-by-step instructions. The use of low inference evidence provides teachers with clear examples that promote teacher growth and reflection on their practices.

- Across most observation reports reviewed, leadership included next steps for instructional practices as they aligned to each rated domain. Leaders identified next steps within rated domains and summarized next steps at the end of the report. In one report, leadership shared next steps for a teacher to move to highly effective practices such as by providing extensions for advanced learners. Leadership then clarified the next step and aligned it to particular domains at the end of the report, recommending that the teacher plan extensions for students in the green group, who were able to complete problems and explain them to their classmates. In another report, leadership recommended that the teacher use higher leveled text and extensions when planning for higher achievers. This format and the alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* domains was present across observation reports and teachers shared that leadership provides teachers with actionable feedback that they use to improve their teaching practice.

- Professional development is informed by teacher observation data, with newer and developing teachers receiving more cycles of support and higher performing teachers taking on roles as facilitators of learning. A review of the *Public School 11 Professional Development Plan* demonstrated that teachers lead professional development for faculty based on demonstrated strengths in their practice. In addition, teacher data informs succession plans and opportunities for leadership development. Succession plans have supported paraprofessionals to move to teaching positions, teachers to coaching and administrative positions, as well as parent coordinator and administrator participation in collaborative partnerships with leaders from other schools.
Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry on impact teams. Teacher teams systematically analyze instructional practices, assessment data, and student work samples from diverse learners.

Impact
Collaboration and analysis of teacher and student work lead to strengthened teacher practices and instructional coherence, mastery of goals for groups of students, and increased achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- Impact teams utilize a schoolwide inquiry protocol to analyze student work and data that requires teams to follow a four-step process that begins with a follow up discussion of previous inquiry meetings and advance selection of an inquiry focus. Teachers use this focus to examine student work and data and create or revise data-driven lessons and curriculum maps. A review of inquiry notes demonstrated that impact teams across the grades follow this format and submit their inquiry notes to leadership. A review of grade four notes from October 2017 revealed that teachers adhered to this format and reviewed student work from red, green and yellow instructional groups. Team notes identified percentages of students whose performance fell into each group and group trends in learning across the grade. Across all impact teams, teachers use the inquiry focus to identify new teaching points that align to ELA and math Common Core standards, as well as priority standards identified for this year.

- Teachers shared that teacher collaboration on inquiry teams have led to shared instructional practices and increased achievement levels on priority standards based on their common assessments across the grades. A review of teacher performance data revealed that teachers have made shared improvements in engaging students in learning based on a comparison of September 2016 and September 2017 data with 69 percent of teachers rated effective or highly effective in 2016 and 82 percent rated effective or highly effective in 2017. A comparison of 2016 and 2017 average performance on priority standards across the school reveals an increase of students at or above grade level performance, with an 11 percent increase for understanding main idea, a 14 percent increase for citing text evidence, and a seven percent increase in problem solving.

- All impact teams choose a skill or strategy to serve as the lens for analysis of teacher and student work. Teachers review student work samples, and the accompanying lesson and unit plans to identify possible improvements in teacher practice. Teachers translate recommended improvements in teacher practice into additional teaching points and student supports and add them to unit plans and future lessons. A revised science unit incorporated revisions based on inquiry work. Revisions included the use of additional graphic organizers and visuals to support ELLs and students with disabilities, and extension opportunities for advanced learners. In addition, opportunities for all students to engage with non-fiction and fiction text and peer assess for misconceptions were included. Systematic analysis of teacher work has resulted in increased mastery on priority standards for groups of students across the school, with groups of students moving from below to approaching to meeting or exceeding standards. For example, 19 percent of all students were assigned to meeting or exceeding groups for problem solving in September 2016 and 54 percent of students were so assigned in May 2017 based on their performance data.