Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 21 Margaret Emery-Elm Park
Elementary 31R021
168 Hooker Place
Staten Island
NY 10303

Principal: Anthony Cosentino

Dates of Review:
December 19, 2017 - December 20, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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. 21 Margaret Emery-Elm Park serves students in grade K 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

### 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>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>
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</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>
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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>Area of Celebration</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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.3 Leveraging Resources | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
The strategic use of long-term partnerships, allocation of resources, and effective placement of staff and students and programming are well aligned to the school’s mission and goals.

Impact
Staff members hold themselves accountable for promoting learning opportunities leading to college and career readiness and effectively using resources to support student progress as evident in meaningful student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have allocated resources to develop sustainable year-to-year partnerships to support teachers’ professional growth and instructional capacity, clearly aligned to the school’s goals on improving teaching and learning and impacting student achievement. Resources have been allocated for teachers to work with coaches from a professional development organization to improve students’ sense of math fluency, number sense, and problem solving and develop teachers’ math leadership capacity. A review of math work indicates a daily utilization of the study, organize, line, verify, and examine (SOLVE) strategy. During an interview, students indicated ways in which they have used the strategy, with one student stating, “It helps me break down each step so I can read the problem more carefully and do better in math.” An additional partnership with another organization for the past two years has supported curricula refinement and improvement in planning and teacher team practices leading to teacher efficacy and exposure of students to success criteria to develop student metacognition skills.

- To provide long-term support towards increasing student literacy levels, school leaders have partnered with a non-profit organization from Port Richmond High School that provides one-to-one tutoring services for kindergarten and first graders who are having difficulty in reading. On average students who started at Fountas and Pinnell's reading level A have increased to level G, showing a grade level improvement of 1.45 average of improvement, bypassing the school's goal of 1.25. Another literacy-based program which partners fifth and second graders via a buddy system has led to increases in reading levels for twenty-two out of thirty targeted students, constituting 73 percent of students demonstrating progress towards the school’s goals on increasing literacy skills.

- Collectively, school leaders and staff combine their thinking to ensure student services, including during school and after-school programming, effective hiring practices to acquire skilled staff to meet students’ needs, and data-based student groupings as they strive towards increased progress. When programming classes, teachers indicated ways they can contribute to the school to include taking a lead on teacher teams, assisting in the development of the self-sustained after school program and offering suggestions for re-programming the school. These suggestions and a review of data has led to new classroom program openings and blended learning models in the school. Teachers report a sense of ownership as stakeholders in ensuring these programs are efficient and increasing student outcomes.

- As part of the school’s mission on Innovation, Collaboration, Community, Accountability, Rigor, and Empowerment, (ICCARE), a technology grant led to the formation of an additional teacher team. During the first year, long-term planning includes training and piloting new software and hardware programs, and next year teacher leaders will be training their colleagues in order to build capacity across the school. One blended learning pilot program has been instituted successfully in some classes and involves student grouping and a station teaching approach. A review of math formative data demonstrates increased progress in math number sense in these pilot classes.
### Findings

Teacher pedagogy has yet to reflect a coherent set of beliefs informed by school and team level discussions on the instructional shifts in English Language Arts (ELA), math and across subject areas, and the embedding of strategic scaffolds, high-quality supports and extensions in lessons.

### Impact

High-order thinking and meaningful work products have yet to be observed in few classes.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school’s core belief on how students learn best related to pedagogy focuses on teacher practices that make purposeful, explicit connections between learning targets, questioning and discussion for clarity and empowering students in discussion techniques. The use of the gradual release model and purposeful questioning and discussion were viewed where students were able to fulfill tasks that increased the quality of their work products, but this practice has yet to occur in a few classes. In one kindergarten writing class, the teacher introduced a text and asked questions to help students determine what subtopics to write about. Additionally, the teacher modeled with her own text demonstrating the process for which she created her own subtopics. Students used this information and were able to develop subtopics for their own books, thus meeting the learning target. In a kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) social studies class, although a parallel teaching model was utilized and the teachers used questioning and discussion techniques with the students, some students’ responses were limited in reflecting ELA instructional shifts, such as a deeper analysis of the shared text.

- Although grouping was a common practice in most classes, tasks and strategies to further challenge students who are meeting or exceeding the standards and increase the quality of student work products were not always evident. In a self-contained English Language Arts (ELA) class with third-fourth graders, although students were grouped based on formative data, both teacher and paraprofessional prompting led to limited results where some students were not fully challenged, and in other groups questioning provided too much support. In a third-grade ELA class, students were grouped by ability level, provided tiered leveled texts, and different graphic organizers to work on identifying the main idea and details of a nonfiction article. However, when writing the main idea, some of the students only listed topics and details which reflected basic inferences and recalling facts, and thus were unable to meet the learning objective.

- In a few classes, the rationale for grouping students was not as clear and therefore some students were unable to meet the learning objective. In a science class, students were placed into groups to work on sorting and clarifying animals. After using a class chart to guide their thinking, some students showed confusion which led to misconceptions. In a fifth-grade ICT math class students were working on adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators; however, some students were not provided enough additional supportive tools and were unclear of how to use the least common multiple strategy, leading to incorrect answers, even with peer-to-peer support.
## Findings

School staff has created curricula that align with the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts such as math fluency, and text analysis and vocabulary in ELA, while refining academic tasks using student work and data.

## Impact

Refined unit plans and tasks provide access for diverse learners, increased cognitive engagement, and build alignment on particular instructional shifts to promote college and career readiness.

## Supporting Evidence

- School staff has decided to supplement their ELA and math Common Core-aligned curricula with additional programs to further support the learning objectives or targets of the standards. This year a school focus is to ensure standards-based math practices that emphasize fluency and number sense is integrated into the curricula. A third-grade math unit includes lesson objectives focused on fluency, adding greater numbers and regrouping while considering place value. Similarly, in a second-grade math unit, standards that require fluent use in adding and subtracting numbers to build number sense is integrated into learning objectives, thus building coherence across grades.

- The ELA instructional shift on vocabulary is integrated into social studies units. A fifth-grade unit on European exploration highlights vocabulary that connects to the theme including colonization and inhabitants. Similarly, a first-grade map titled *Families and Communities are Important* contains words such as values, roles and honor as part of the unit’s vocabulary. Additionally, a focus on developing claims and supporting them with details from a text are included in ELA writing tasks such as informational essays in grade five and information writing about animals in grade two.

- Teachers review formative and summative assessments to develop accommodations within tasks to ensure students are able to meet the lesson’s learning outcomes. In a third grade ELA lesson plan, a variety of leveled text and graphic organizers are included as part of planning for a lesson on main idea. In a fourth-grade ICT math lesson plan, teachers used pre-unit assessment data, exit slips, and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to determine which students are in need of using fraction tiles and those who are not. Another ICT math lesson plan reflects a review of student performance using formative assessment data, leading to whether student groups are taught strategies utilizing area models directly by their teacher or using an online audio-visual reinforcement program.
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

Across classrooms, rubrics and assessments are aligned to the curricula. Checks for understanding and self-assessment are consistently used.

Impact

Effective adjustments based on formative data and actionable feedback to students is supportive of their learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff have made a concerted effort to integrate success criteria or learning targets across the curricula that are aligned to the national standards. Furthermore, as part of the school's focus on formative assessment, teachers are utilizing the success criteria or learning targets across classrooms in the form of checklists against which students engage in self-reflection. During an interview, all students agreed that using success criteria helps them keep track of where they are and what they have to do to be successful. A review of student work reflects the use of success criteria as a form on self-assessment. In a third-grade ICT ELA class, the teachers both referred students to reflect on the success criteria and determine whether they had met the objectives for the lesson. If not, students were provided with more support and re-teaching.

- During an interview, students were able to gauge whether they were meeting grade-level standards by their grades on student-friendly rubrics and the success criteria. Feedback is written in the form of glows, as areas of strength, and grows, growth areas; so that students are able determine what they need to work on and how to get there. One student stated that in order to make her writing better, she needed to take her teacher’s suggestion of using transition words in particular parts of her memoir. Another student was able to state that adding more dialogue to his memoir would make his story more interesting and he would use the teacher’s suggested sentence starters to help him make the writing better.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding in the form of exit slips and conferring are consistently utilized to reteach concepts as needed. In an ICT math class, using exit slips, teachers determined that certain students were in need of reinforcement in specific math skills and retaught a math concept using a different approach. In a fifth-grade ICT math class, after observing a student who showed difficulty in articulating a solution to a math problem, one teacher conducted a conference and used prompting to assist the student in obtaining the solution. Similarly, questioning and remodeling were adjustment practices that were prevalent across classes.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and staff ensure consistent communications are provided to parents and students in regard to building a college-ready atmosphere that includes high expectations.

Impact
Parents are aware of their children’s progress toward State and national standards. Students are provided support to ensure they are ready for the next academic level.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents reported that there are several ways to learn about the school’s expectations and how they are related to meeting State standards. One method all represented parents agreed upon was how helpful Family Math days are enabling them to learn about newer math concepts along with their children. Additionally, a review of the parent activity calendar reflects that Family Literacy and Science Technology Engineering and Math, (STEM), parent workshops are provided each month. Parent newsletters, the school website, as well as social media, offers additional information on the standards and what is expected per grade, thus fostering a culture of learning for families in support of their children’s success.

- Parents reported that communication is a key value in the school as teachers and school leaders have consistently made concerted efforts to ensure they are aware of their children’s progress in school. Last year, based on parent requests, the progress report was altered to provide more clarity in understanding where their children are academically. In addition, several parents reported that the teachers often provide information to help them, whether it is to further enhance their children’s skills with challenging work or support them in the areas of needed growth. Parents stated that teachers have provided resources, strategies, and websites to help their children practice skills at home which have led students to increase their reading and math levels in school.

- As part of the ICCARE vision of the school, students are provided with exposure to high schools and colleges as well as a focus on 21st century skills in their classrooms. Students use technology to create character and theme-based projects using PowerPoint as a tool. The Eagles Leadership Academy consists of fifth graders who work on civic engagement and leadership through a program via Wagner College that promotes the ICCARE focus of building a college-going culture by bringing an awareness and readiness to elementary school students. A College and Career center was created where students can engage in learning about colleges. One student stated as a result of these opportunities, he knows he needs to work on his math skills now and throughout his educational career in order to become an architect, which requires a thorough understanding of math concepts. Similarly, other students’ responses demonstrated an awareness of what middle and high school are like and what skills are needed in order to be successful at these school levels.
Findings
The majority of teachers consistently engage in grade-level inquiry-based teams where they conduct reviews of student data and work.

Impact
Teacher teams promote school goals on strengthening teacher capacity in math and literacy while tracking the progress of targeted students.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level teacher teams work in cycles that are based on summative assessment data from literacy and math benchmarks and engage in reviews of student data and work products using structured protocols as a means to engage in reflection of student progress and teacher practice. The kindergarten team has a literacy focus and is using formative and summative primary grade skill reading checklists to determine student progress and reflect on what they have learned. One new learning obtained by this review is the importance of tying in primary grade reading skills across subject areas and within different balanced literacy approaches such as read aloud and guided reading to reinforce these skills and students’ use of specific strategies. In the upper grade classes where there is a focus on math this year, teachers reported that there is a need to integrate ELA skills into unpacking math problems as their target students have previously performed well in literacy and not in math. Teachers stated that students need to learn how to use literacy skills and strategies used while reading and apply them when reading math word problems. This has led to the integration of the SOLVE strategy, which is used in several classes across the school.

- During a meeting using a consultancy protocol, the second-grade team reviewed three students and determined what strategies worked and those that didn’t in order to develop an action plan for instructional next steps for the current and next unit. The teachers determined that students made progress in their understanding of parts of the SOLVE strategy and were able to identify the question of the problem independently. However, the target students need more support in regrouping in ones, a number sense skill concept. Teachers collectively came to a group consensus and agreed that pairing up students by ability and the use of pictures would help support these students and thereby planned on readjusting the grouping during the next few lessons versus refining the curricula.

- The third-grade team used the Collaborative Assessment Conference protocol to reflect on student work and whether the strategies used furthered students growth in math in number sense. Teachers noticed that the students used multiple ways to solve the word problems. Yet, some of the strategies students were choosing led them to the wrong answers. Teachers decided to fully reinforce certain strategies that would help with students’ misconception in regrouping including using expanded form and the break apart strategy. Additionally, teachers reflected on the success criteria and chose to adapt it to include their new approach and monitor its use by students.