Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. R037
K-12 all grades 75R037
15 Fairfield Street
Staten Island
NY 10308

Principal: Florence Gorsky

Dates of Review:
February 1, 2018 - February 2, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
The Quality Review Report

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

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

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

 Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

The school’s approach to culture building and social-emotional support are informed by a theory of action, which is combined with Universal Design for Learning, (UDL), principles that are embedded in the school community.

**Impact**

The theory of action results in a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward yearly goals and meaningfully involves student voice. All students are known well by more than one adult who helps to personalize attendance supports and coordinate social-emotional learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Guided by the UDL principles, the school created a core board comprised of 20 frequently occurring words across content areas. The core board gives students greater possibilities to master content, interact with others, and increase independence. Staff are recognized on shout out boards for their actions that go above and beyond their positions and students and staff are recognized during morning announcements. During interviews, students excitedly re-stated that their classmates, teacher or they were acknowledged by the school community.

- The school mantra of “We achieve greatness, we raise the bar, we raise the roof... woof, woof, woof” in the elementary and middle school sites, and “We run with the pack,” in high school, is celebrated each morning. Additionally, parents, students, and teachers say the school is welcoming and inclusive and that the school has allowed their children to communicate more effectively and become independent. Parent and student interviews revealed that teachers and school leaders embed UDL, thus providing a common language for discussing responsibilities and strategies to meet academic and social-emotional challenges.

- Teachers guide students’ social-emotional learning to decrease the number of behavior infractions and suspensions. To support staff in assisting students in developing pro-social behaviors and behavioral management, the guidance counselor team created a schoolwide Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) that includes protocols to support behavioral needs of individual students, including Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) meetings with the student's team, assistance with data collection and review, as well as classroom management supports, such as “paw” token boards, cool down corners, and end-of-lesson check ins. As a result of these supports, all sites show an 85 percent decrease in Online Occurrence Reports, incident levels one to five, from the 2016-2017 school year to the 2017-2018 school year. Furthermore, with the implementation of Get Ready to Learn, (GRTL), a yoga movement program, in which every class participates at the onset of the day with identified areas of focus including self-regulation, attention, time on task, and communication, there has been an overall demonstrated growth in student behavior of 39 percent from fall 2016 to spring 2017.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
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Findings

Teaching practices, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, reflect beliefs that students learn best when they engage in academic tasks using appropriate and effective means of communication. Teaching approaches strategically provide multiple entry points and supports into the curricula, yet teachers still strive to offer opportunities to further advance student thinking.

Impact

Students of all ability have access and are engaged in suitably challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products that push them toward their learning targets and goals.

Supporting Evidence

- During an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students were learning the sounds for the letters “P” and “J.” Paraprofessionals supported students in the class. The teacher meticulously modeled the sounds of the letters and asked students many questions, such as, “What is the name of this letter and what is the sound of P?” Students repeated sounds with the teacher leading, and teachers helped students say the answer in a complete sentence. In a social studies class, students identified different communities. The teacher shared about winter in the big city and used hats and scarves to connect the students to the information. However, extensions were not offered to push the thinking of students of all abilities.

- In a science class with six paraprofessionals, students were identifying words that start with “F and O.” The teacher used the sense of touch to activate knowledge as she gently misted students with water. Students answered the following questions, “Is the ocean wet or dry? What letter does the word fish start with? Does fish start with the letter “F?” What is the habitat where fish live?” Programmed communication devices, including yes/no devices, were used to answer questions. Some students responded verbally, other students responded by pointing to pictures. Although students identified the letter F and O, the students were not introduced to other habitats as explicitly stated in the lesson’s objective.

- Across all sites the classroom environments were highly structured and included rich print materials to support high levels of cognitive engagement, aligned with the school’s belief of student learning. Individual student work schedules; learning stations with Individual Education Plan, (IEP), driven work tasks, leveled libraries, updated technology including communication devices, SmartBoard, iPad, computer, and a wealth of educational resources and teacher-made activities were evident throughout. Across classrooms visited, students with varying ability levels were actively engaged in learning, sitting in homogeneous groupings, with tasks and respective materials adapted according to each student’s cognitive need as well as programmatic communication devices available to support student response and peer-to-peer interaction whenever possible.

- Paraprofessionals worked in concert with teachers to impact student learning. Students worked one-on-one with paraprofessionals as the teacher rotated to each student to provide additional support. In two math classes, students used pictures and manipulatives to help stimulate visual senses. The teacher shared different shapes with students and posed the following questions, “What shape is this? Can you find us a circle? Is this a triangle? Where do you see a square in the classroom? Where do you see the triangle?” The teacher modeled that shapes are everywhere, and students were able to identify shapes placed strategically in the room.
Findings

All curricula are strategically aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and illustrate integration of Career Development Occupational Standards, (CDOS), and the instructional shifts in writing. Teachers collaborate to develop rigorous and coherently sequenced tasks for all learners.

Impact

All students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, (ELLs), have ready access to curricula designed to promote college and career readiness. Academic tasks provide multiple opportunities for all students to demonstrate high levels of thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s curriculum maps are used cohesively across the organization and align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. ELA curriculum maps include supports such as sentence strategies, to build complexity and clarity and well-structured summaries, paragraphs, and argumentative essays. Teachers of students who are alternately assessed focus their planning and curricula on the use of functional vocabulary for daily living skills, use of money, measurement and time, and student behavioral and social-emotional needs. Curricula are also centered on embedding real-world experiences and inclusion of the CDOS across the curriculum and include essential questions such as, “How do we use research techniques to learn about the world? How do we share with others what we learned from our research?”

- Lesson plans in all subjects include a pre- and post-assessment, core vocabulary, hands-on materials, and a selection of adaptations, including the need for assistive communication. The assistive communication provides students access to concepts and skills taught based on individual student needs. Additionally, student’s individual goals are integrated into plans so that there are maximum opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals to address IEP goals in an integrated way during small group content-specific instruction. All units demonstrated differentiation of a lesson, kinesthetic learning opportunities, and a focus on student engagement and communication, teaching points and objectives. Each lesson plans included differentiated supports, such as repetition, adequate processing time, choral responding, visual representations, actual objects, hands-on materials, assistive technology, leveled learning materials, carrier phrases, and core words. These supports take in account the individual learning needs of students resulting in providing students access to higher order skills.

- Teacher unit and lesson plans included evidence of tiered higher-order tasks and groupings, vocabulary, assessments, preferred mode of communication and specially designed instructional notes. An ELA lesson on writing included intentional details on how students, some of whom are non-verbal, would respond to the task by nodding their heads, turning towards or away from the item or pointing to a yes or no card. A different ELA plan introducing China noted the lesson’s objective, supplemental materials, differentiation incorporating how students were expected to demonstrate their understanding of the lesson. Students engaged in highlighting vocabulary with assistance, and cutting and pasting an image that represented their topic.
Additional Finding

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

The school has a coherent structure of common assessments aligned to curricula in all subject areas, tracks students’ progress toward goals, and consistently checks for understanding using a varied approach to meet the needs of all student groups.

Impact

Across the vast majority of classrooms teachers consistently monitor achievement data, making curricular or instructional adjustments as needed. Students take ownership of their learning goals and demonstrate mastery toward those goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use individualized instruction tracking forms to document student progress toward school goals. One teacher’s form indicated daily tracking of progress in operations, while another teacher’s form monitored successful teaching strategies that supported the student and included additional strategies to promote more progress. The vast majority of students demonstrate gains by moving one or more SANDI levels through the task analyzed SMART goal. A photographic portfolio document provides evidence of an alternatively assessed student working on component parts toward the culminating task for a story elements unit. Through conferencing notes, the teacher comments indicate that the student is able to demonstrate identification of story elements.

- Teachers across the classes visited, and in teacher teams, explained how they make decisions regarding instructional learning groups based on baseline level data. Teachers monitor incremental gains with weekly student work products culled from common teacher-made assessments to inform revisions to their next planning steps and to effectively analyze students’ movement toward learning mastery. Data indicate that an average of 90 percent of all student groups participating in alternate and standardized assessments made achievement gains as measured by State and local measures.

- Teacher monitoring of student engagement and understanding on the part of stakeholders, including paraprofessionals, is visible. The teaching team can be seen either working with small groups with adapted materials or circulating to guide and intervene as needed. All teachers and paraprofessionals conference with students who need support in their academically and personally goals. Students, on their own, through paraprofessionals and/or assistive learning technologies, shared they were learning. Students were observed using a self-assessing tool and identifying what they are able to do in the activity, such as pick up or hold a picture.
Findings

The school has a culture whereby school leaders, staff and parents have high expectations for themselves and the students they share. Communication and training drive the school’s instructional goals and plans that meet the long-range achievement goals of all students.

Impact

As a result, there is a well-entrenched culture for learning whereby all stakeholders hold each other accountable for thoughtful, mutually developed learning expectations and corresponding supports so that the students they share make continuing and optimal progress toward post-secondary success.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal explains that as a result of professional development in questioning and discussion, teachers of non-verbal students have developed charts of step-by-step indicators of increasing student engagement. Posted charts display pictures of their students at current levels of engagement. Training for paraprofessionals and related service providers is offered on the use of communication devices as evidenced. Staff also shared the high value they place on the support of their peers in a climate that sees everyone as having strengths. Surveys, regularly disseminated, also yield feedback from the staff at large. All teachers articulated that they felt important in all planning decisions.

- Guidance counselors support the articulation process for middle school students providing assistance with high school applications. The pupil personnel committee helps students and families with decisions regarding appropriate placements such as transition to their high school inclusion program, and/or other programs in community schools or District 75 settings. Parents shared that teachers communicate regularly with them using an online grading policy, daily updates that keep them apprised of what their child is working on in school and the progress they’re making. Every teacher shares information with families and newsletters provide parents other timely schoolwide information. Parents could speak to how they continue to work with their children at home on skills being taught in school.

- School leaders and staff not only have an open-door policy, but proactively partner with families to improve post-secondary outcomes for their children. For example, in reviewing data as well as by having a deep knowledge of their students, the school identifies students who could benefit from a decreased reliance on adult support and/or related services to move them toward independence. Outreach to respective families is made, the school and family collaborate to put a plan into place, and the student’s instructional progress is monitored. Parents state they value the communication and training they receive from the school’s transition and guidance support team. The guidance/advisement team helps families access outside agencies and other community resources as they partner with families in the transition goal planning process for all aging-out students. Parents believe their children are being prepared for the optimal independent life they can achieve. Teachers and parents alike, shared personal testimonies that speaks about how the staff has impacted students. To paraphrase, another parent shared that his son is ready with the skills for employment, and that he doesn't know where his daughter would be today if it wasn't for this school.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |
|

**Findings**

Teachers and teacher teams collaborate to analyze a range of student data and information and make connections to classroom practices. Additionally, the school has created a system of leadership structures to promote staff investment through shared decision making aligned to student achievement goals.

**Impact**

As a result, staff engage in an array of opportunities that afford them input into the direction of school goals relative to student achievement; thereby creating a cohesive culture of practices and shared improvements impacting student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams analyze a range of data and student work as standard practice, as reflected in team minutes as well as shared by designated lead teachers of each teacher team. Teachers can provide a rationale for the team’s collective thinking around the instructional decisions relative to classroom planning and small group instruction and how they apply the adjustments each teacher makes given the needs of the students they teach. Subsequently, the assistant principal follows up by supporting each teacher individually with implementation of the agreed upon strategy. Logs from this classroom support are reviewed by the school’s instructional cabinet and serve as feedback that cycles back as additional data to inform future team meetings facilitated by the lead teachers.

- Conversations with teachers and teacher team members indicate a shared understanding of schoolwide plans and a common instructional language that is developed through an embedded system present through structured professional collaboration time and common preps. Practices are created and shared and can be seen cohesively across classrooms. For example, one teacher shared how she learned to utilize different scaffolds with her students earlier in the year. Teachers articulated how they began experimenting with various graphic organizers, such as Know-Want to know-What I have learned (KWL) chart to access student’s background knowledge, and then motivating students by setting the stage for new learning. In all classes visited, the KWL strategy was seen in use.

- Staff articulate that they have an open invitation to participate on focused committees. Teacher leaders and their peers piloted a fresh idea that fostered a culture for learning whereby all stakeholders are vested in the plans. This resulted in teachers who are motivated in problem solving and developing new ways to engage students in learning how to apply academic skills to real life situations. For example, teachers created a First Authors writing curriculum in response to students’ needs.