Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 038 George Cromwell
Elementary 31R038
421 Lincoln Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10306

Principal: Nancy Acosta Murillo

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2018 - May 17, 2018

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. 038 George Cromwell 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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

Leaders consistently provide training and communicate high expectations via morning messages, observations, feedback, and beginning, middle and end of year memoranda. Faculty effectively communicates with families via a handbook, newsletters, surveys, and workshops.

Impact

School leaders and teachers hold each other accountable using observation and professional development feedback, inter-visitations, and impact teams. Leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support student progress toward shared expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Leadership shared that there is a **Circle of Collaboration** among administrators, faculty, staff, and students within which all members of the community hold each other accountable to their shared vision for learning and school improvement. During the beginning of the year plenary session, all staff received copies of the staff handbook and leadership shared the school vision, instructional focus, and schoolwide initiatives. Leadership’s expectations shared at the plenary were reiterated and explained at the beginning of the year in Memorandum #1. In this memo, leadership highlighted the schoolwide instructional focus, “Tailored small group instruction with an emphasis on consistent monitoring for understanding across all content areas through the use of on-going summative and formative assessments.” This memo also outlined expectations for instructional walkthroughs and shared that leaders would be talking to students about how they are learning and what they are doing to improve their learning. Leaders communicate with faculty daily via Morning Message emails. An October 2017 message shared expectations for an instructional walkthrough and read, “We are looking for high levels of student engagement and problem solving in math. Do children understand the mathematical process? How do you know?”

- Teachers shared that leadership and teachers hold each other accountable and support one another for the benefit of the students. Teachers voluntarily open their doors to colleagues to observe practices. Colleagues from the grade above or below conduct inter-visitations to make connections to the skills they are currently teaching in their classrooms. Leadership uses data from observations and analysis by teacher teams to provide professional development that supports teachers and the schoolwide focus. The 2017 – 2018 professional development calendar included curriculum specific professional development sessions in English Language Arts (ELA), science, and math, as well as differentiated sessions for special education, English as a New Language (ENL), and paraprofessionals. To support the instructional focus on math problem solving, there were multiple sessions entitled, “Raising the Level of Student Achievement in Mathematics.”

- Parents shared that there is always someone available to work with them when needed. Teachers communicate frequently via conversations during dismissal, phone calls, and parent meetings. Teachers send home monthly grade level newsletters that review upcoming units and learning activities and what students should be able to do. In the January 2018 fifth grade newsletter, teachers shared that in the reading unit students would “determine multiple themes of a text, compare, and contrast story elements.” Parents shared that they also receive progress reports and regular updates on how their children are progressing during parent conferences. Parents participate in workshop surveys and monthly **Parent as Learning Partner Days** and conduct instructional walkthroughs as members of the School Leadership Team. **Learning Partner** topics have included bullying, social media, college awareness, goal setting, and the use of the study the problem, organize the facts, line up the plan, verify your plan, and examine your answer (SOLVE) math strategy.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<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 and assessments aligned to the curricula; however, written feedback is limited to reading and writing tasks. Teachers consistently check for understanding using guided practice, mid-workshop interruptions, and exit tickets but there are limited opportunities for student self-assessment.

Impact
Actionable and meaningful feedback is not consistent and therefore does not provide a clear portrait of student mastery across contents. Inconsistency and a lack of opportunity for self-reflection limit students' awareness of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of student work and assessments indicated that teachers use rubrics and assessments that are content specific. For example, a review of submitted student work samples included specific rubrics for opinion writing, narrative writing, and informative writing. These rubrics are used to assess student performance along grade-level progressions and include written feedback on writing samples that highlight successes and identify next steps for the student. Teacher feedback on a grade three sample highlighted the student's organizational skills, use of the table of contents, and transition words. Next steps for this student suggested a more appropriate paper choice, labeling diagrams, and improvements to the paragraph structure. Although feedback of this nature usually accompanied writing tasks across all grades, there was little evidence of similar feedback in other content areas.

- Teachers checked for student understanding during observed guided practice activities and paused to ask students questions as a gauge for learning. During a grade four read aloud of chapter ten in Number the Stars, the teacher asked students to turn and talk to respond to questions, such as “Who do you think is at the door?” and “Why do you think the author included that?” During the turn and talk, the teacher listened in to student conversations before reading on. During a science lesson on gas particles, the teacher asked students to turn and discuss whether distance from the source of the gas had an impact on the smell. Teachers also assess learning during conferences with students and they record notes. One teacher's conference notes included separate pages for each student with space for data over several dates. Notes included observations of student learning during reading and next steps taken. Noted next steps for one student included providing a graphic organizer for the student during read alouds to help her stay focused. Classroom visits also provided evidence that teachers administer exit tickets at the end of lessons to prepare for the next day.

- Although teachers demonstrated consistent use of checks for understanding, there were limited opportunities for students to assess their own learning or that of their peers. In a first grade math class, the teacher had students share their responses to questions about combining three-dimensional shapes. Students came up to the chart to share their combinations and received feedback on their responses from their classmates. In this class, first grade students shared the reasons why they agreed or disagreed with their peers. In a self-contained reading class, students had a clear understanding of their learning objectives and their next steps. One student shared, “I am working on getting better at retelling. I have my tools here and I’m getting my mouth ready for tricky words.” However, opportunities for self-assessment were not present in other classes.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Curriculum maps and plans ensure alignment of teaching points to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate opportunities for students to provide text based answers. Lessons and tasks across most classes are planned and revised for diverse learners using visual images, organization tools, and small group discussion.

### Impact

Purposeful curricular decisions build coherence, and promote college and career readiness for all students. Planning and student friendly language in support documents provide access for diverse learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have revised curriculum maps and lesson plans to be Common Core aligned. Revised maps across content areas identify the Big Ideas, Essential Questions, and Common Core standards addressed in each unit. A first grade reading unit includes the Big Idea, “Nonfiction readers attach their new learning to what they already know.” The Essential Question for this unit asks, “How do I use everything I know about reading to read books that teach me information and ideas about things?” This unit addresses reading, speaking, and listening standards and indicates that students will “Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide range of text types.” A review of curriculum units demonstrated that teachers across content areas have made purposeful decisions to include relevant Common Core standards in unit maps.

- Across lessons and units, teachers integrate questions to encourage student discussions using text-based evidence. A grade four reading lesson includes planned literal, inferential, and opinion questions. A grade five science lesson includes prompt questions for small group discussions during a scientific investigation. A first grade math lesson includes number talk questions and a planned SOLVE word problem that requires students to draw a picture to provide evidence of their response. A second grade social studies lesson includes plans for the teacher to stop during reading, noting, “I will make frequent stopping points to engage students in turn and talk, and push them to think of the election process and electoral votes through questioning.” This lesson includes planned text-based questions such as, “Why do you think Mrs. Barrington said, ‘In the name of democracy. What did she mean by that?”

- Revised curriculum maps from a variety of content areas include sections to plan for differentiated tasks. A reading unit plans differentiated activities for low, medium and high performing students, all with the same learning objective. For example, the unit plans for all students to engage with the features of a non-fiction text but varies the extent and supports provided. In this unit, a medium activity requires students to use a table of contents to locate information and provide an oral summary with text details in sequence. A lab report unit includes differentiated prompts for students in low, medium and high performing groups. Prompts range in difficulty from recall of the steps to carry out the experiment to explaining how the experiment is applicable in the real world. Across units and plans, teachers incorporate videos, opportunities to include illustrations, graphic organizers, partner, and small group discussions as a way to support diverse learning styles. Success criteria and sample handouts accompany lessons and units and include visual images, bold print, and student friendly language.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers consistently use multiple entry points, including strategy lessons, guided small group instruction, visual supports, and tools to engage all students in rigorous tasks. Teachers consistently engage students in small group discussions.

Impact

Teaching strategies engage all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, in challenging tasks so that work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers led students in small group instruction across classes visited. In a collaborative teaching classroom, teachers engaged students in groups of four or five and asked them prompting questions regarding their reading. In this class, students were also prompted to share their reading goals with a partner, and received feedback on their goals. A student who stated that they were getting better at finding relationships was prompted to show evidence of his improvement. In a first grade math class, one teacher worked with a small group of students at a table with wipe-off boards and manipulatives to explore three-dimensional shapes. In this class, the teacher and students drew visual representations of shapes and clarified their responses using three-dimensional manipulatives.

- Across classes, teachers modeled tasks using visual images on charts and presentation boards. In a math class, the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to annotate a word problem, circling key words and underlining the question. Teachers across classes provided students with tools and resources at their desks to support them during independent work. These tools consistently included images to support struggling readers and ELLs. A Five Finger Reflections tool included a drawing of a hand with the parts of a story on each finger, including characters, setting, problem, events, and solution. Another tool included a stick figure of a little girl jumping rope to remind students to skip hard words. The caption read, “Read…Skip…Go back and read.”

- Teachers engaged students in partner and small group discussions using planned questions and prompts. For example, in a science lesson on measuring volume, the teacher asked students essential questions regarding the specific procedures and outcomes of their investigation and required them to discuss their answers in small groups. In a social studies class, students analyzed artifacts and the teacher prompted groups of students to discuss what they thought a map represents and to share any conclusions they could draw by looking at the map. In a kindergarten math class, the teacher supported partner discussions of the steps needed to complete a SOLVE word problem. The teacher prompted student partners by asking questions such as, “How do you know you have 17?”, “How do you show your partner?”, and “Did you check his answer?” Planned high-level questions engaged students and enabled them to demonstrate high levels of thinking.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Observation feedback accurately captures teacher strengths, challenges, and next steps in the form of glows and grows. Leaders effectively use teacher data to identify teachers' assignments, and to design and implement professional learning.

**Impact**

Feedback to teachers supports the instructional focus and articulates clear expectations for improvements in teacher practice. Leadership decisions regarding professional responsibilities promote professional growth and reflection.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Leader feedback in Advance reports highlighted teacher strengths in the form of glow statements and teachers' areas for improvement as grow statements. In one report, the glow commended a teacher for conducting a demonstration lesson to highlight new teaching methods in math. The leader captured the specific new strategies implemented in the lesson, writing, "You started with math talks, used the close reading strategy to present the group problem, and integrated an important element, the application of the skill in real life." The grow included recommendations for future lessons such as; "Have students develop the success criteria as it will ensure ownership and mastery." Leader feedback across observations reviewed followed a similar format.

- A review of observation reports demonstrated that leader feedback included targeted next steps to support teacher development in practices that support the schools focus on math reasoning, problem solving strategies, partner, and small group work. For example, grows in one report asked the teacher to "Work toward developing questions that are real world but lend themselves to deeper investigations using SOLVE." This report also asked the teacher to "Continue to put students in teams and partnerships to facilitate high levels of engagement." Feedback to teachers was also time-bound and clearly articulated expectations for the implementation of recommended next steps. One report read, "I look forward to observing the transfer of the suggested feedback into your math practice across the next two weeks."

- Leadership shared that professional development is planned in cycles so that it can be informed by teacher data, goals, and requests for support. Based on frequent observations of instruction, teachers are identified to lead demonstration lessons, lab sites, and inter-visitations. Leaders, mentors, and consultant staff developers provide differentiated learning sessions to support teachers in the implementation of new practices. In an observation report, leadership commended a teacher for attending targeted professional learning in ELA, writing, "You attended specialty group days as well as in and out of house professional development and the methods and strategies learned immediately transfer into your practice." Leadership also noted, "I am pleased you have joined our leadership team where your ideas and voice will make a difference." In another report, leadership noted, "I would like to see you take the driver's seat and share your knowledge with your colleagues, not only on your grade, but across grades."
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

Findings

The majority of teachers engage in structured grade-level inquiry. Teacher teams consistently analyze pre- and post-assessment data to identify new teaching strategies and tools for learning.

Impact

Professional collaborations support the achievement of school goals and strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers in the use of schoolwide protocols and instructional strategies. Teacher teamwork results in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are engaged in weekly inquiry on a variety of teacher teams including ELA, math, science, and technology impact teams, as well as a writing inquiry team and an instructional team. Teams use a variety of protocols to analyze teacher and student work. Teams have teacher leaders, identify target students as part of their inquiry focus group, and members bring data and work samples for analysis and inquiry. Impact teams use agenda templates and protocols to focus their work and plan next steps for teachers on the team. For example, an agenda from the second grade writing team identified the facilitator, data set, inquiry question, noticing, wonderings, next steps, and preparation required for the next session.

- Teachers and leaders shared that teamwork has resulted in the sharing of best practices and tested strategies on and across teams. Teachers shared that they have strengthened their practice in the use of tools to support students, creating toolkits across the grades that support students in using reading and writing strategies. Teachers also shared that they have improved in their planning for access with planned activities for low, medium and high performing groups. A review of lesson plans demonstrated that teachers across the grades plan differentiated tasks for groups of students.

- Across teams, teachers analyze student work samples and data sets to identify areas of need and plan adjustments to facilitate growth. Inquiry teams organize data using a Making Adjustments to Facilitate Growth template. The template requires teachers to identify students not making progress along the continuum, next steps to move them, measures to monitor growth, student products, mastery evidence, and dates to check for progress. Across teams, teachers attribute progress for groups of students to the targeted work of teacher teams.

- Targeted groups of students who received support through the work of teacher teams have made gains this year. All students in the early morning literacy group made gains in the acquisition of phonemic awareness skills. A comparison of December 2017 and January 2018 running records showed that 92 percent of the students in the morning program made gains between one and five reading levels. Students in the morning session also increased recognition of word-wall words. Proficiency levels of ELLs on the New York State ELA assessments increased from 10 percent to 17 percent from 2016 to 2017. Focus students in the top tier of the fourth and fifth grades participated in a technology enrichment program implemented by the technology impact team. Most students who participated in this program demonstrated improvement in both ELA and math with 83 percent of grade four and 93 percent of grade five making progress in ELA and 75 percent of grade four and 71 percent of grade five making progress in math.