Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Kathleen Grimm School For Leadership And Sustainability
Elementary 31R062
644 Bloomingdale Road
Staten Island
NY 10309
Principal: Lisa Sarnicola

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

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline King-Robinson
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

The Kathleen Grimm School For Leadership And Sustainability serves students in grade PK through grade 2. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</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>Well Developed</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Findings

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff through the weekly newsletter, *Weekly Buzz*, additional emails and at professional development sessions. Staff members establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of behaviors to all students.

### Impact

Communication to staff and professional development is centered on high expectations resulting in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families supports students taking ownership of their learning and their progress toward college and career readiness.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leader provides staff with a handbook that addresses high expectations for teaching and learning that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. New teachers attend a professional development session facilitated by a teacher leader to establish what is expected regarding the use of formative assessment during instruction, using technology in planning and instruction, collaborative teaching approaches, as well as an overview of the Leader in Me (LiM) approach. Expectations are reinforced in a weekly publication, *Weekly Buzz* that staff receive via email. *Weekly Buzz* reminds staff of upcoming events and deadlines, expectations for curriculum and instruction, a vision for the learning environment, and identifies the book of the month. The professional development weekly plan is aligned to the school’s goals and reflects the support that staff receive to help them meet schoolwide expectations. Teachers share best practices with one another while promoting a culture of mutual accountability. One teacher’s email read, “Hello, while reflecting on some of my practices for my goal meeting, the principal and I discussed some best practices in regards to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component using questioning and discussion techniques that I wanted to share to raise the level during classroom discussions. Please see me or come visit my classroom for any assistance or guidance. Team work makes the dream work!”

- In June, school staff conducts an orientation for all students’ families at each grade level to establish clear learning expectations for all students when they begin school in September. Families receive a handbook that is designed to inform parents regarding school routines, policies, and features that make the school unique. Furthermore, teachers provide families with weekly newsletters that provide an overview of the current unit for each content, the focus habit for the month, as well as upcoming important dates. School staff successfully partners with families to support students on a path to college and career readiness. Positive parent feedback was given regarding a workshop focused on anxiety. One parent expressed that it made her more aware of how to respond to her child’s anxiety. Teachers provide families with progress reports that identify students’ goals in reading, writing, and math, as well as provide strategies and resources to support students in meeting their goals.

- School staff has established a culture for learning that promotes all students taking ownership of their learning. Students use continuums, checklists, success criteria, and rubrics to make improvements to their work. There is an expectation that all students will aim for the highest continuum, as explained by a second grade student. In the small student group meeting all students could explain the tools that they use to improve their work. Students implement the routines in their classrooms with very little direction from their teachers.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when they are empowered and know the success criteria for their academic tasks. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality extensions for all students.

Impact

As a result of differentiated tasks, consistent implementation of classroom routines, and accountable talk strategies all learners are engaged and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products. However, as of yet, student choice of assignments is not apparent across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all classrooms, teaching practices aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching reflect the school's belief that students are more willing to take risks when they know exactly what is expected. Students were provided with success criteria aligned to the curricula for all tasks. Students knew what they needed to do and could explain what success would look like at the end of each lesson. Clarity of expectations regarding the use of rubrics, checklists, and sample work products was evidenced in all classrooms visited. Teachers provide students with writing continuums that afford students clear models of quality exemplars for each level of the continuum. Students were observed using the continuum to identify the steps they need to take to improve their work. A first grade student said “The goal is to get level four, so I use the continuum to see what I need to do to get to level four.” Students self-direct their learning using self-reflection, rubrics, checklists, mentor pieces, and technology. However, students do not yet have the option to choose the task that they will complete to demonstrate their understanding.

- During a first grade math class, students were working in groups to build numbers to understand the concept of greater and less. One of the groups was completing a worksheet that required students to determine which number was less. Students had access to a prerecorded video of the teacher’s mini-lesson if they needed it. Another group had access to base ten blocks and a placemat. Following group work students were required to complete a two problem assessment to determine grouping for future lessons. Additionally, students participated in a math court, in which they had to defend their response to, “which number is greater, fifty-nine or ninety-five?” A student moderator facilitated the discussion by asking, “How can you prove to a friend if a number is greater?” Students used a Socratic seminar checklist to support facilitation of the discussion. Students were provided with multiple entry points throughout the lesson.

- Teachers provide students with tool kits for writing and math, which contain a variety of scaffolds for students to utilize when completing tasks. In a kindergarten classroom, students were observed using the tool kit as they added dialogue to their writing assignment. The teacher utilized Knuffle Bunny as a mentor text to model how an author uses speech bubbles to illustrate dialogue between characters. Additionally, the teacher modeled adding speech bubbles to her own small moment writing piece. As students transitioned to independent work, a student set the timer for 12 minutes. Students organized themselves by taking out their tool kits, reviewing the success criteria, and their checklists. All teaching practices reflect the schoolwide belief about how students learn best and provide multiple entry points for all students.
Additional Finding

### 1.1 Curriculum

**Rating:** Well Developed

#### Findings

School leaders and staff ensure alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically embed opportunities for students to make a claim and support it with relevant evidence. Curricula and academic tasks have been refined using student work and data and consistently emphasize higher-order thinking.

#### Impact

The curriculum is coherent across grades and subjects. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged in challenging tasks that require demonstration of thinking, thus promoting college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- All curriculum maps are designed through collaboration by vertical and horizontal teacher teams and the school leader. Curriculum maps are revised two times per school year. Revisions to a kindergarten writing curriculum map incorporated mentor texts that model expectations for writing and three additional lessons that scaffold the steps to writing a how-to-book step by step. Revisions to a second grade pacing calendar included identification of the priority Common Core Learning Standards that will be a focus for each lesson and anchor texts for each of the lessons. Revisions made to curricula documents were based on student work and data. More than half of the students were missing numerous components of the summary, thus teachers agreed to provide the students with sentence starters for each component to ensure their work improved.

- Driven by a schoolwide instructional focus on developing students into self-directed learners, teachers create lessons that require students to self-assess, peer review, provide feedback to their peers, revise work products, and make claims supported with evidence. A second grade writing lesson plan entailed students sharing what they write on their graphic organizer with a partner. They will evaluate one another’s completed graphic organizer with a partner. They will evaluate one another’s completed graphic organizer and provide feedback in the form of a glow and grow. Students are to use the feedback received to successfully draft their book review. Additionally, the plan included opportunities for differentiation, without simplifying the task. For example, providing a graphic organizer, work with a partner, work with the teacher, and receive feedback from a peer or teacher were modifications to make the task accessible for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. Additionally, to make the task more challenging the plan identified those students who can work independently with leveled texts.

- The instructional shifts are embedded throughout the curricular documents. A second grade pacing calendar reveals that there is a balance of literary and informational texts that students will be exposed to throughout the unit. Units ask students to make claims and support their claims with textual evidence, demonstrate a deep understanding of the math they learn, increase academic specific vocabulary across subjects, and develop speed and accuracy when solving a problem. A second grade math lesson plan includes a quick drill to promote fluency of addition and subtraction facts, as well as skip counting by fives and tens. Math curricular documents include the vocabulary that will be introduced, word definition, as well as a picture model for each chapter in the unit. A narrative writing unit contained vocabulary that is specific to writing a personal narrative.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use common assessments, rubrics, checklists, and teacher generated continuums that are aligned to the curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding (CFU) and student self-assessment.

Impact
High quality assessment practices provide meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective instructional adjustments during classroom instruction, resulting in increased mastery for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School staff administer Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) three times per year and running records are administered in the middle of each cycle to determine student progress and determine the instructional support needed to increase student reading levels. Presently, the results indicate increased mastery for all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. Pre and Post on-demand writing assessments are administered prior to the start of a writing unit. Outcomes reveal that all students in a kindergarten class increased in each component of the assessment. Additionally, teachers administer benchmark assessments in math. Data from the benchmark assessments confirm that all students increased at least two reading levels.

- Teachers provide students with rubrics, checklists, and continuums, which enable students to self-assess in order to make improvements to their work products. A rubric specifically for use with realistic fiction includes pictures and symbols to support students at their appropriate reading level. A problem solving checklist required students to annotate a math problem to ascertain what the problem was asking them to do, choose a strategy, prove that their thinking is correct, and explain how they solved the problem using math talk.

- Across all classrooms visited, students were required to reflect on their work. Students utilize a let’s reflect on our work protocol that necessitates that students share their solution. The partner uses an assessment card to agree or disagree with their partner, determine if the partner used the success criteria, and ask thick and thin questions to support one another with improving their work products. A form of this protocol was observed throughout all classrooms visited. During the observation of a first grade lesson, the teacher asked students to respond to the prompt using a plicker, which is an electronic device showing the student’s response. Student grouping was based on the data that was captured. The teacher provided small group targeted instruction to students who did not respond correctly to the prompt, while other students went on to complete the task. Students are made aware of their next learning steps through reflection, peer feedback, and targeted instruction from their teachers.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and teacher leaders promote the development of teachers through the use of strategic cycles of observation and feedback provided within forty-eight hours of the observation that is aligned to the teacher’s professional goals. Professional development is based on data from observations, analysis of student work and assessment data, as well as mid-year and end-year individual reflections with the school leader.

Impact

Schoolwide observations and professional learning structures foster improved instructional practices resulting in improved quality of student work products. Teachers receive feedback that articulates clear next steps for teacher practice and support teacher growth.

Supporting Evidence

- At the start of the school year teachers are provided with a memorandum that outlines the expectations for establishing professional goals that are aligned to the Framework for Teaching. The school leader and teachers come to consensus regarding goals during the initial planning conference. Additionally, progress towards meeting these goals is monitored through the observation cycles and reflected on during joint mid-year and end-year reflection between school leader and individual teachers. Next steps from a mid-year reflection required a teacher to reread chapter four in Leaders of Their Own Learning to ensure that students are being provided actionable feedback. School leaders provide staff with pertinent professional books to support in their development.

- The school leader conducts monthly observation cycles to provide feedback to teachers utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. Feedback is aligned to teachers’ individual professional goals that are established by teacher and school leader, during the initial planning conference. Within forty-eight hours teacher and administrator meet to reflect on the observation. Teachers are required to furnish student work products or any other evidence during the meeting. Teachers leave feedback sessions with a clear plan for next steps. One report contained feedback aligned to a teacher’s goal targeting assessment during instruction. It read, “In the future when planning lessons, think about the unit and concept connections more deeply and then create pre-planned questions that you can pose to push their thinking and make discoveries on their own.” Alignment to individual professional goals was evidenced throughout observation reports reviewed.

- Advance data evidences growth in teachers using questioning and discussion techniques and using assessment in instruction. During observation cycle one, fifty percent of teachers were rated effective and eight percent were rated highly effective in the domain that assesses using questioning and discussion techniques. During observation cycle two, the percentage of teachers rated highly effective in this same domain tripled to twenty-four percent. Additionally, the percentage of teachers rated highly effective in the domain that assesses using assessment in instruction doubled between cycles one and two. Providing teachers with effective feedback has elevated schoolwide instructional practices and clear improvement in student learning.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations on impact teams utilizing the Evidence Analysis Action protocol to systematically analyze student assessment data and work. Distributed leadership structures are embedded throughout the school.

Impact

The work of impact teams engaging in inquiry-based professional collaborations has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, improved teacher practice, and increased mastery of goals for students. Team structures support distributive leadership and create a forum for all teachers to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers are involved in professional collaborations with their peers utilizing an Evidence Analysis Action protocol to structure their inquiry work. The protocol requires teachers to identify the enduring understandings, focus standards, success criteria, as well as why it is important for students to learn the concepts, allowing them to thoroughly reflect on their practices. Teachers analyze student work to determine the number of students that fall into each proficiency level and make inferences as to why students were successful or challenged and what would take students to the next level. Subsequently, they develop goals for students performing at each level. Goals are used to develop checklists and success criteria that students use to self-assess when summarizing a book. Teachers agree that teamwork has increased their instructional capacity to provide students with tools and strategies that promote independent learning.

- During a second grade team meeting, teachers were analyzing a pre-writing assessment to identify trends and patterns. The facilitator checked in with teachers to determine if teachers brought materials needed for the meeting. A teacher was reminded that they were supposed to bring a video of the teacher conferring with a student. Teachers were reflecting on their practice to determine what aspect of their teaching impacted student performance. Teachers viewed a video of a teacher modeling for students what was expected during the lesson and the teacher conferring with a student. Teachers agreed to try these strategies with their class over the next two days. Additionally, next steps were identified for students performing at each level. For example, teachers agreed to provide high performers with small group instruction to clarify their misconceptions and students performing at level two to receive individual conferences to address individual needs. Identified next steps included, aligning reading and writing units, create sentence orders, and preplanned post-its to provide feedback to students. All teachers agreed their teamwork has resulted in increased independent learning for all students.

- Leadership opportunities are embedded throughout every aspect of the school and every member of grade level teams facilitates the meetings. There is an opportunity for all teachers to have a voice in key decisions, such as aligning the reading and writing units. Each month a team member attends the vertical team meeting to help ensure schoolwide instructional and curricula coherence results. Additionally, teachers lead the Response to Intervention Team, curriculum development team, school implementation team, and a lighthouse team. Teams collaborate to make schoolwide decisions. The school leader stated, “Teachers feel valued and respected and in turn they have a vested interest and ownership in the work we do at Public School sixty-two.”