Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S./M.S. 004 Crotona Park West

K-8 09X004

1701 Fulton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Vincent Resto

Dates of Review:
October 25, 2017 - October 26, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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./M.S. 004 Crotona Park West serves students in grade PK through grade 8. 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](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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</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>Area of Celebration</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>Developing</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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
Staff ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are strategically integrated. Curricula and academic tasks are purposefully planned to emphasize rigorous habits and academic tasks that are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact
Curricula coherence across grades and subject areas promotes high levels of cognitive challenges and college and career readiness for all learners. Faculty routinely plan and refine curricula to ensure so that all students are cognitively engaged and able to demonstrate rigorous habits and thinking in academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers have embedded research-based instructional best practices into the curricula thus providing multiple opportunities for all students to engage in meaningful high level discussions, with an emphasis on the writing process and citing evidence from sources across grades and subjects. Teachers strategically integrate cognitively challenging questions, discussion starters, and problem-solving tasks into curriculum maps and lesson plans. For example, in grades kindergarten through eighth grade lesson plans and curricula identify common conversation practices that teachers utilize to foster high levels of student engagement such as partner talk, table talk, and discussion circle protocols. For example, a fourth grade math lesson requires students to solve a real world problem by debating the merits of students’ claims that their strategy is the best in which to solve a given equation. Likewise, review of curriculum maps revealed that teachers have also identified literacy connections in the maps which require students to cite text evidence when discussing mathematical applications identified in stories such as Anno’s Mysterious Multiplying Jar.

- To build coherence across grade levels and content areas, teachers include common instructional strategies, protocols, and student resources in their curriculum maps and lesson plans. This practice creates opportunities for high levels of student thinking and discourse and writing tasks. Resources such as the ‘Author’s Argument’ graphic organizer require students to identify the author’s argument or claim, cite details from the text to support the author’s claim, explain the writer’s reasoning for their argument, and write down the evidence student groups have collected to support their answers. Similarly, the use of student checklists for writing ensures consistency in the writing process across disciplines and requires student self-reflection. The use of accountable talk stems pushes students to engage in intelligible discussions with consistency across grades and content areas, resulting in the promotion of college and career readiness skills for all students.

- Higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits are promoted across grade levels and disciplines for all students through the implementation of schoolwide practices that are embedded into the curricula and meet the rigors of the Common Core. For example, in addition to using accountable talk protocols and writing prompts across classrooms and content areas, teachers also require students to use group work checklists to ensure equitable participation and completion of the task at a high level. For example, in a first grade science lesson plan, students have to use a ‘Finding Details Process Chart’ to check off critical steps in the inquiry process as they work collaboratively to cite evidence from a variety of sources such as photographs and informational text. As a result, there is coherence in having all students demonstrate their thinking across grades and subjects.
Area of Focus

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

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the school leader’s belief about how students learn best as identified in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Pedagogy is inconsistently differentiated and does not consistently utilize strategies such as inquiry, cooperative learning structures, questioning, and discussions, to promote high levels of thinking and engagement for a diversity of learners.

Impact

Across grades and contents areas, teaching practices do not consistently leverage school leader identified best practices, resulting in missed opportunities to provide all students with challenging learning tasks that require them to use critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. Tasks inconsistently encourage inquiry, collaboration, and ownership among students.

Supporting Evidence

- The leadership team identified differentiated instruction as a core belief to ensure that teachers’ address students’ individualized learning styles, needs and modalities, although this practice was not observed in most classrooms visited. In some classrooms, students were provided with manipulatives, graphic organizers, and visuals. However, this was not prevalent across most of the classes. In some of the classes, instruction was not differentiated to allow multiple entry points into the lesson, nor were there scaffolds or specialized instructional strategies or language objectives identified in teacher lesson plans for students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELLs).

- Across classrooms, lesson plans and supporting materials are beginning to represent a knowledge and understanding of students’ diverse needs, resulting in academic tasks and activities that engage students in high levels of cognitive activity in some classes. Some lessons include academic tasks and supports, such as scaffolds to generate challenging discourse, to engage all learners. In a first grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were required to use close reading and text-based evidence to identify the main idea from informational texts about families. The teacher modeled the process of identifying details that support the main topic of a text prior to transitioning into collaborative groups. The teacher grouped the students by reading ability and provided them with leveled texts and differentiated tasks. Accountable talk prompts were provided at the tables as a potential scaffold for students. However, this practice was not consistently observed across most classes.

- In a sixth grade co-taught ELA lesson in which students were asked to work in collaborative groups to identify literary conflicts in texts, students’ expected outcomes were identical. The lesson plan cited having “notes available for students with disabilities” should they begin to struggle with noting evidence from the test. However, despite students in some groups not writing, these notes were not made available. Despite the task being a collaborative effort, few students interacted with each other and two students were observed drawing. Consequently the level of rigor of the lesson was low, with limited access to the task for some students.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and school curricula. Across grades and subject areas, the school faculty use common assessments to adjust determine student progress toward goals.

Impact
Teachers analyze student assessment data to provide actionable feedback to students and teacher teams regarding student achievement levels. Across grades and subjects, assessment results are used to adjust curriculum and instruction.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers use common rubrics and assessments across grade levels that align to the school’s curricula and have adopted a schoolwide policy of analyzing baseline, midline and endline tests, pre- and post-assessments, and quizzes and unit tests to identify concepts that require re-teaching. A review of student work samples indicated that across grades and disciplines, most teachers provide students with actionable feedback and next steps for improvement. Many teachers cite an area in which each student met or exceeded the criteria for proficiency on common rubrics and areas in which each student needs to improve. For example, an eighth grade ELA teacher had written, “I agree Robin and Dexter are starting to become friends, but how do you know? You need to cite specific details from the text to support this claim.” While most students indicated that teacher feedback helps them focus on the next steps to improve their work, they also noted that the quality of the feedback varied by content area. Similarly, while most of the student writing samples examined across content areas had concise next steps, some feedback statements on math work was limited to, “Next time, challenge yourself by using an alternative strategy” or “Next time, show your work”.

- In kindergarten through eighth grade, teachers use common assessments to identify students’ strengths and weakness, plan small group instruction and interventions, and identify potential “reteach lessons.” Teachers also engage in one-to-one and small group conferencing to ensure student comprehension of content specific concepts and skills and to determine what subskills should be targeted during small group instruction and during student working groups. Similarly, curriculum team members meet over the summer as well as twice per week during the school year to discuss units of study, to include but not limited to, aims, objectives, tasks, differentiation, methods of instruction, engagement, and student discourse.

- Utilizing the schoolwide data collection system, teachers analyze baseline, midline and endline tests, pre- and post-assessments, quizzes and unit exams in order to identify reteach lessons, instructional foci, and to revise the curriculum on a continual basis. The analysis of data is conducted during dedicated grade level collaboration time. Teachers meet during content specific common planning sessions to determine and revise curricula and pacing guides. Teams meet weekly to discuss potential revisions to curricula and identify instructional strategies and differentiated academic tasks to meet the needs of the tiered instructional groups.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The school leader communicates high expectations to staff through professional learning and collaboration opportunities. Staff provides feedback and advisement to parents on their children’s academic progress in school.

Impact

Systems of accountability for staff and communication with families ensure that the students and their parents are aware of the progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders are committed to communicating expectations to teachers and holding them accountable to them as well as providing the ongoing support that is required in order to improve their professional practice. Expectations addressing curricula, pedagogy, and assessment are shared with faculty at the beginning of the school year via the staff handbook and throughout the year during grade level and team meetings. These are reiterated in the literacy and math frameworks and identified in teacher-created resources, such as the ‘Mathematics Slim Book’ which serves as a framework for teaching. The school leader also sends out a newsletter that reminds staff of the schoolwide pedagogical expectations that “data should be used to inform daily instruction, all tasks should be differentiated, and ample opportunities should be provided for student discourse.” The school leaders’ work with professional development consultants and employs an instructional coach to provide ongoing support to teachers throughout the school year to meet schoolwide expectations.

- The school leaders provide teachers with support in advancing their professional practice and aligning their instructional strategies and curricula to the prioritized instructional foci through professional collaboration and learning sessions. School leaders share data from instructional walks with teachers so they can assess the level at which the initiatives are being implemented in their own as well as schoolwide practice. Teachers report that instructional leaders often model instructional best practices in the classroom. Likewise, teachers participate in vertical teams, or ‘Pods’ to identify instructional practices to implement schoolwide by participating in planned inter-visitations with their Pod colleagues. These visits are used to informally observe one another and provide feedback and actionable next steps to for improvement in practice as evidenced in feedback statements such as, “Embed higher level [Webb’s] Depth of Knowledge questions in your lesson to ensure rigorous meaningful discussions.”

- There is a “Bucket filler” program in place to identify student expectations and create a culture of mutual respect and good citizenship, as well as promote the adoption of personal attributes required to be college and career ready. Parents reported that the expectations for staff and students have been clearly articulated by school leaders and feel that high expectations have been set for the entire school community. Students report that the work in the majority of their classes is challenging and there are supports in place to assist them if they struggle. Students stated that the Common Core Learning Standards are difficult but reported that they realize that that they are being prepared for high school and college and career. Parents feel that school faculty are appropriately challenging their children and adequately preparing them for the next level. They receive regular updates on their child’s progress via reading logs and progress reports sent home with students and by using an online platform that allows parents to monitor their child’s behavior and participation in class daily. Parents of fifth and eighth grade students explained how helpful the staff have been in helping them get prepared for middle and high school.
Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school leaders’ goals, and promote professional growth and improvement in student achievement.

Impact

The increased instructional capacity resulting from teacher team inquiry has strengthened and improved teachers’ pedagogy, positively affecting student learning across grades and content areas, and increasing the number of students meeting benchmark goals or proficiency on assessments.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership team has an effective formal observation cycle in place to support the professional development of teachers and provide actionable feedback on instructional practices, via frequent informal classroom observations and follow up collegial conversations. Teacher teams participate in peer-to-peer inter-visitations, in which team members share best instructional practices through peer-to-peer classroom observations and informal feedback. Additionally, the analysis of assessment data and student work products allow teachers to identify instructional strategies to close achievement gaps, thereby leading to improved pedagogy. Teachers report that participation in the collaborative team work and professional learning sessions, along with meaningful feedback on formal and informal observation by school leaders and colleagues, has strengthened their pedagogical practices in domain three, instruction, of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This is reflected in an increase in Advance data ratings in which the percentage of teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective increased from 65 percent at the end of the 2015-16 school year to 73 percent by the end of the 2016-17 school scored year. This is an indication that the school leaders’ observation cycle is having a positive impact on classroom instruction.

- The school leader’s instructional goals, as clearly articulated in the CEP, are shared with staff at the beginning of the school year. These include increasing student engagement across content areas through the use of questioning and discussion techniques. Additionally, the faculty are committed to differentiating classroom instruction to meet the needs of Tier I, II, and II learners and students with disabilities and ELLs. Additionally, Pod members have identified schoolwide best practices, which are communicated regularly to school leaders, to support the planning of professional learning cycles for staff. These include the use of questioning techniques and scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into the lessons. Trends and patterns in instruction are also shared with teachers each during professional collaboration time. In addition, the principal sends out a newsletter to faculty highlighting the instructional foci and related upcoming activities, such as professional learning sessions. Post-observation discussions with school leaders and informal coaching conversations serve as regular reminders to teachers of schoolwide expectations for instruction. A review of teacher observation feedback indicates comments to teachers that clearly articulate next steps for improvement and identify supports to improve their practice.

- School leaders have established a professional learning cycle with a professional development plan that includes professional learning sessions designed to strengthen teachers’ ability to engage students in the close analysis of text, promote high levels of student discourse, and have students write purposefully across grades and content areas. School leaders actively engage teachers in team work to analyze trends in instruction, student achievement data, and student work products to inform changes to pedagogy that are required in order to achieve the schoolwide goals. For instance, to foster high levels of student discourse, teachers adopted the use of accountable talk stems across grades and disciplines.
Findings
The vast majority of teacher teams are engaged in structured inquiry-based collaborations through teacher team and departmental collaborations that align to the school leader’s goals. Consistent systematic analysis of assessment data and pedagogy is conducted through teacher collaboration teams across grades and disciplines.

Impact
Collaborative teamwork has strengthened and improved teacher practices and implementation of the Common Core shifts across grades and disciplines have resulted in instructional coherence that improves student learning across the school, as evidenced by an increasing number of student groups achieving goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers collaborate in grade level teams and in multi-grade Pod teams to focus on pre-requisite skills and expected outcomes for students for each grade level and content area. A review of meeting agendas and minutes indicate that teams use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to assess the level of rigor of lesson plans and curriculum maps across disciplines. Teacher teams identify best instructional practices to implement schoolwide by participating in planned inter-visitations with their Pod colleagues in which they formally observe one another and provide feedback and next steps to improve their practice. As a result, overall English Language Learner (ELL) progress improved significantly from a 51 percentile ranking in 2015 to a 63 percentile ranking in 2017, 5 percentile points higher than the New York citywide average.

- Higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits are promoted across grade levels and disciplines for all students through the implementation of schoolwide practices that are embedded into the curricula and meet the rigors of the Common Core. Resources such as the teacher-created grade level ‘Mathematics Slim Book’ serve as a framework for teaching and include a curriculum map, scope and sequence, tiered academic vocabulary words, and best practices for instruction including differentiation for a variety of learners. Slim Books are revised each summer by teacher teams, and professionally bound and disseminated to teachers prior to the beginning of the school year. A review of curriculum maps revealed that teachers have identified literacy connections in the maps which requires students to cite text evidence from a variety of sources when participating in class discussions across grades and content areas.

- A vertical seventh and eighth grade math team was observed using a student work protocol to analyze student responses on the New York State (NYS) math assessment to identify trends in how students performed on specific standards and determine what subskills they would need to improve in order to reach proficiency. As a comparable, student performance was compared to citywide and statewide averages. Analysis of the data was used to determine student placement in tiered instructional groups to provide targeted instruction for students that struggled to develop the identified skill sets. Instructional strategies were generated that could be used to improve students’ understanding of mathematical concepts such as the operations of rational numbers. As a result of the focused math team work, the percentage of students meeting proficiency on the NYS math assessment increased from 23 percent in 2015 to 29 percent in 2017, 8 percent higher than comparable schools and 10 percent higher than the District average. Similarly, performance for black males on the NYS math assessment increased by 20 percentage points from 2015 to 2017, 18 percentage points higher than similar schools in the comparison group.