Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 059 The Community School Of Technology

Elementary 10X059

2185 Bathgate Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Sita Basu

Dates of Review:
November 8, 2017 - November 9, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Liza Zarifi
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. 059 The Community School Of Technology 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<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>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings

The use of resources is well-aligned to the school's instructional goals of building professional collaborative practices and improving student achievement in specific standards and focus areas. The use of staff time is structured so that teams have regular and substantial meetings to focus on data-driven planning and strategies to support instruction, particularly in reading and math.

Impact

Student work products reflect increased problem-solving strategies and writing growth across the writing standards as a result of increased resources to support planning and targeted instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The leadership team has allocated staff to support school goals on student achievement, providing targeted support for subgroups at risk academically, including English as a New Language (ENL) students and students with disabilities. The Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teacher works with classroom teachers to provide reading intervention support, and five students serviced in a third grade class have all grown at least one reading level between September and the beginning of November. Student work products, including writing pieces and problem-solving math tasks, reflect improvements as a result of these supports.

- The school’s partnership with a writing consultant has resulted in meaningful student work products, as evidenced by students’ going through the writing process and producing higher-quality pieces. The consultant supported teachers’ planning and executing lessons from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) curriculum based on analysis of student work and a rubric to provide targeted feedback to students. For example, in a fourth-grade class, students worked on argument writing and went through a multi-step process to develop reasons for a topic of their choice. The teacher conferenced with students to provide targeted support as students went through the drafting and revision process. One student focused on rewriting his conclusion using next steps from the teacher and supports on anchor charts and was able to explain the focused revisions he had made over the last few days to improve his writing.

- Leaders have allocated resources to support increased achievement in the fifth grade. The grade has been departmentalized for two years and teachers report that they are able to go deeper with planning from the standards because of the focus on two content areas. Additionally, the program facilitates strategic use of staff to support student needs. Based on an analysis of test data, the leadership team allocated staff for push-in math academic intervention services (AIS) support and math coaching for teachers. Additionally, the school is an Algebra for All school, and fifth-grade teachers were able to choose the content area to teach and receive targeted professional development to deepen content and instructional knowledge. As a result of these changes, there has been an impact seen in growth in the cohort of students who moved from fourth grade to fifth grade last year by twelve percentage points on the New York State math assessment.

- Teacher teams have substantial and regular meetings each week, each with specific focus areas aligned to school goals and student need. Grade level planning teams meet weekly, and teachers analyze data, look at student work, and make adjustments to the curricula and instruction. Additionally, there is a master schedule that gives teachers common prep times so that teachers are able to meet and co-plan with support providers. Teachers also engage in various Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to go deeper with specific instructional practices, such as guided reading and advanced reading. Tasks and lesson plans reflect increased use of tools and resources to support diverse learners, and across classrooms students were working in small groups with access to manipulatives, leveled texts, or teacher conferencing.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula through small group instruction and differentiated tasks or tools. Students have opportunities to engage in discussion throughout lessons.

Impact

Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation through partner discussion and the use of slates or notebooks to show thinking and record strategies. However, opportunities exist to strategically provide high-quality supports and extensions and increase student ownership of discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a focus on small group instruction across grades and content areas in order to provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Students in a kindergarten reading lesson worked in differentiated small groups. Two groups worked with a teacher, one small group worked on computers, and two independent groups read leveled books. Some students read in pairs, and others used post-it notes as they read. In a fifth grade math lesson, students worked in pairs and triads. However, some students struggled to engage in the task or to know what tools or resources to use to help them.

- A third grade math lesson on measurement and rounding had all students working on the same task, with differentiation provided through access to tools and grouping (small groups and a teacher-led group). Some students working independently were confusing the length and weight measurements, and others struggled with the rounding component. Consequently, opportunities remain to strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports so that all learners are appropriately challenged and can demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

- In a fifth grade reading lesson, the teacher provided multiple strategies for tackling challenging nonfiction texts. The teacher used a model to reference finding the main idea and key details as well as reviewing the title and subheadings. Students then were released to work independently, either continuing with the same text or utilizing a different text. Students had access to strategy charts, and the teacher circulated the classroom and conferenced informally with students. Some students were unclear as to the focus of the lesson; some mentioned annotating the text, others said finding the main idea, and others said being able to read a confusing text. Thus, there are opportunities to be strategic with the objective and the entry points to content so that all students have clarity of purpose and are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

- The staff is working on building high level student discussions across the vast majority of classrooms. In a first grade classroom, students practiced using post-it notes to record their thinking and share with others. In a fourth grade math lesson, students jotted down notes from the class discussion on partial products and followed along with the problem-solving on their slates. There are opportunities for students to process their thinking and demonstrate their learning through increased discussion and student ownership. For example, in a technology class, student independent work culminated at the end of class without a debrief or discussion of the learning.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Academic tasks are embedded across grades and content areas to support rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills. Curricula are planned and refined through the analysis of student work and data.

Impact

The staff’s use of planning time ensures that rigorous habits and higher-order skills are coherently embedded across grades so that all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking. Academic tasks and curricular resources provide access to all learners and promote cognitive engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- The reading curriculum utilizes TCRWP as the foundation and integrates grade-level complex texts into a shared reading component organized by genre. Teachers College consultants support teachers’ planning from the curriculum and ensure Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) alignment. Teachers plan for alignment in the teaching of the writing standards across grades and content areas and adapt common rubrics from the curriculum to support student achievement. Teachers utilize the *Up the Ladder* TCRWP resources to meet the needs of students who require additional support to access grade-level content. *Up the Ladder* units are aligned and embedded with the grade-level curriculum through the pacing calendars and through teacher planning. Students are able to demonstrate their thinking through practicing multiple shorter pieces of writing and using checklists and teacher feedback to make improvements. For example, in a narrative unit, the *Up the Ladder* supplement provides students with multiple opportunities to plan, draft, and revise shorter pieces of writing using familiar mentor texts.

- Curricula and academic tasks are planned using student work and data. The math block is structured to provide time to teach the grade-level content from the *Eureka* curriculum, as well as a 30 minute block to teach data-driven small groups, re-teach content, and work on the schoolwide focus on place value. Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and ENL teachers provide push-in support for groups of students and collaborate with classroom teachers to create individualized and small group plans based on student data.

- Special education teachers and service providers plan and refine curricula to ensure all learners have access to the curricula. Self-contained classes teach grade level content organized into modules and provide small group instruction informed by module assessments to provide access for all learners. Additionally, all teachers plan for differentiated instruction in lesson plans. For example, a fifth grade math lesson plan indicated higher-order thinking questions and scaffolded supports for ENL students and three other groups of students based on need. Tools such as manipulatives and charts are indicated in the plan and available as needed during the lesson. A third grade reading lesson indicates which students the teacher will conference with, an extension activity, as needed, and a small group with a leveled text. A self-contained fourth and fifth grade bridge class teacher planned for an ENL support group with a push-in teacher and three other groups according to level, including an extension group with partner work and another group working with a paraprofessional and using word banks.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and assessments that align with the school’s curricula. Leaders and teachers analyze data and student work from common assessments to determine student progress across grades and content areas.

Impact

Assessments and rubrics are used to provide actionable feedback to teachers and students regarding achievement. However, opportunities exist to ensure feedback to students is meaningful and offers a clear portrait of mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Common rubrics created from curricular resources are used across grades and subjects. Teachers use rubrics to score tasks and provide actionable feedback to students. For example, a fifth-grade math teacher used a rubric to score and provide feedback on a math task that offered next steps on using a strategy to solve and show work. A fourth-grade teacher used the vertical narrative writing rubric to provide feedback on a writing task that gave next steps, such as “focus on your conclusion for our next meeting.” However, the teacher did not give a specific direction for the student to take with the conclusion. Opportunities exist to leverage rubrics to be more student-friendly and provide students with clear and meaningful next steps.

- AIS, SETSS, Reading Recovery, and ENL support teachers focus on groups of students and make adjustments to their instruction according to analysis of reading assessments. For example, the SETSS teacher supporting fourth-grade students analyzed Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) data from January of last year through the present to create groupings and inform instructional focus areas. Students have been assessed twice since the beginning of the school year to inform changes to groupings or instruction. An AIS teacher analyzed running records and reading conference data to track progress towards reading goals and inform next steps for fluency and comprehension work with third graders.

- Teachers analyze common assessments to track progress on standards across grades and share data through a Google Drive “data wall.” Leaders and teachers analyze progress in focus standards across grades and use the results to make adjustments to curriculum and instruction. For example, the kindergarten team administers three benchmarks on target math standards and uses the results to identify gaps in student learning and inform work in centers. Leaders and teachers analyze results across grades for four performance bands in math and use the data to support data-driven planning and vertical collaboration.

- Teacher teams analyzed state test data along with simulated state test common assessments in the fall to inform plans for data-driven instruction, groupings, and intervention supports. Students are grouped according to common standards-based gaps. For example, in third grade a group of students was created because of a common gap in determining the meaning of unknown words in context. The teacher then created small group plans to address areas of need. Analysis of data schoolwide showed a pattern of gaps in place value across grades, and the faculty created math tasks to support this gap, adjust the curricula, and inform instruction.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism, instruction, and communication to staff through professional development and by establishing a schoolwide culture of collaboration. Leaders and staff consistently provide information about school expectations and student progress to families through frequent communication, report cards, and workshops.

**Impact**

School leaders train staff and support a culture of high expectations through observation and feedback and by utilizing a drive to share data, professional development learnings, and lesson plans. Teachers and staff offer ongoing feedback to families to help them understand student progress through consistent communication including class newsletters, mobile applications, and dedicated time for parents on Tuesdays.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Leaders utilize professional development (PD) time as well as a transparent Google Drive system to communicate expectations to staff. Expectations include sharing data openly and collaborating to analyze data together, using this analysis to inform instruction. Shifting to google drive has supported these expectations across the school, as reported by both leaders and teachers. It has also helped teachers share best practices for instruction. For example, teachers that attend training at Teachers College (TC) upload their notes into the drive and share learnings with staff during professional development times. Planning templates and unit plans are available on google drive across content areas to support teacher planning practices and communicate expectations around what plans for instruction should consider and include.

- School leaders and staff communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to students and families. For the fifth grade, expectations for middle school are communicated through visits to classrooms by the guidance counselor, a career day, and workshops for parents run by the parent coordinator and guidance counselor. Additionally, the school has built structures that support middle school readiness, including departmentalized classrooms and student-led conferences in the spring. Fifth-grade students visit fourth-grade classrooms in the spring to share expectations for the fifth grade and explain what departmentalization feels like as a student. Pre-kindergarten students in the annex visit the main building in the spring as well to visit the kindergarten classrooms and get an orientation to the building.

- School leaders and staff consistently communicate with families through the use of Class Dojo, newsletters, notes home, informal chats at dismissal, and workshops. Additionally, there is dedicated time every Tuesday afternoon for parents to meet with teachers. Parents reported they felt their children were doing well and making progress, and that they feel the school does a good job of communicating with parents. There are content workshops offered in math and English Language Arts (ELA), as well as in science, particularly for the fourth-grade science test. Additionally, workshops are offered to support fifth-grade parents and students with the middle school application process. Parents also reported that the parent coordinator is always available for support and information. The Learning Environment Survey reflects that 97 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that the staff regularly communicate with them about how they can help their children learn and that they feel well-informed by the communication they receive from the school.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

Teachers engage in inquiry teams, grade level planning teams, and professional learning communities that meet regularly. Distributed leadership structures are in place to support teacher development.

**Impact**

Teacher teamwork moves school goals forward, promotes the implementation of the instructional shifts, and strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers through collaborative analysis and planning. Teachers are building their leadership capacity by leading meetings and participating in committees that inform and advance school goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers work on multiple teams that focus on various instructional and content areas, including grade-level teams, teams for English as a New Language, special education, and lead instructional teachers, and inquiry teams. Additionally, teachers work in cycles of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to go deeper with various topics. Cycle one PLCs focus on advanced literacy, fostering student independence, guided reading, a math book study, and developing paraprofessionals. PLC topics align with school goals and the demands of the Common Core, such as accessing complex texts, academic vocabulary, and conceptual learning. Teachers are able to incorporate research and articles to facilitate conversations, share resources and strategies, and conduct intervistation to see instructional practices in action.

- Distributed leadership structures are in place to support teacher capacity. The administrative team has identified instructional lead teachers to conduct meetings with grade teams. These meetings are often co-facilitated by a coach or leader, and leaders are currently working on supporting the teacher leaders’ capacity to lead effective and impactful meetings. Opportunities exist to embed these structures so that teachers facilitate multiple team meetings, taking more ownership in tracking mastery for groups of students and fostering specific improvements in teacher practice.

- Teachers have a formalized structure to have a voice in school leadership and influence decisions on a monthly basis through the consultation committee. Four teachers, a union representative, and an administrator sit on the committee, meeting monthly to discuss topics ranging from school culture initiatives to teacher development to school goals. For example, the guidance counselor and the dean, in collaboration with teachers, developed the idea and plan for the school’s mentoring program. The program is currently in its second year and has grown to support additional students and include additional staff mentors. Students in Tier II of the Response to Intervention (RTI) program are nominated by teachers for the mentor program. Teachers and staff opt in to become a mentor for one or two students. The leadership team and teachers report feeling empowered to present feedback and ideas, as long as they come with a suggested plan in place to support the idea. As a result of leaders creating open channels of communication with teachers, 93 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the principal encourages feedback through regular meetings, as reported by the Learning Environment Survey.