Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Dr. Emmett W. Bassett School
Elementary 08X119
1075 Pugsley Avenue
Bronx
NY 10472
Principal: Michele Montana

Dates of Review:
February 28, 2018 - March 1, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
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 Dr. Emmett W. Bassett School 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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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## 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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>
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</tbody>
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## Systems for Improvement

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

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

Findings
School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Frequent observations and instructional walkthroughs, conducted by all four administrators and consultants, provide specific expectations that improve instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent cycles of instructional walkthroughs are conducted on a regular basis for first year teachers. Feedback is given to teachers through emails and provides next steps for support. During an instructional walkthrough, with an area of support based on The Danielson Framework for Teaching component, establishing a culture for learning, a teacher was conducting a math lesson. Feedback included suggestions on how to establish an effective learning environment. This was based on observing the teacher struggling with behavior management. The assistant principal wrote that the teacher should draw up a behavior contract and get input from the students so that they can take ownership of their behavior. An additional example was seen in other written feedback on a multiplication lesson. The principal shared that the area of strength was questioning and discussion, citing that students were explaining their thinking and were provided the opportunity to do so based on teacher questioning. The area of growth was connecting goals to the learning objective. The teacher of this observation shared, “the teaching point should reflect the important work that the students will be engaged in.” The administrator also provided a video link for the teacher’s review. Follow up for both first year teachers included informal observations and additional walkthroughs.

- The principal uses informal observations that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to evaluate teachers and provide areas of strength and challenge. An informal observation from November, 2017 showed that a teacher’s area of strength was creating an environment of respect and having a positive rapport with students. The principal stated, “This was evidenced by intonations, body language, facial expressions as well as responses to one another.” The area of growth included the use of questioning and discussion techniques. Action steps for the teacher included, “have students engage in discussion by explaining and justifying their thinking and teach students how to question each other using sentence starters.” An additional example showed that a teacher was using assessment in instruction. The principal stated that students were not aware of the assessment criteria, and the teacher did not provide clear criteria for a writing assignment. The principal stated that the teacher should model expectations based on the workshop model.

- Consultants keep a log of classroom visits that reflect support of teachers by providing feedback to improve instruction that supports student learning. A coaching visit information log listed various teachers that were visited. The logs listed low-inference notes from different classes that included, “students were working on multipication; they showed different strategies; students worked in groups and problems were differentiated.” Next steps for teachers included, modeling assessment that informs instruction; encourage differentiation through independence; coaching a writing lesson on how writers explain their evidence by connecting back to theme in a compare/contrast essay. The report is sent to the principal who provides additional supports in the targeted areas. The logs are provided to add an additional layer of support. A teacher stated. “The consultant support allows us to better prepare for observations while improving our pedagogy.”
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.4 Positive Learning Environment
Rating: Developing

Findings

The school is developing an approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support, although there is little evidence of student voice being valued. Structures are developing to ensure social-emotional learning, child/youth development, attendance and guidance supports for students.

Impact

Programs such as CARE (Caring, Awareness, Respect, and Esteem) and ROCKS (Respect, Organization, Caring, Knowledge, and Safety) are beginning to help build a culture in which student voice is welcome and valued. Guidance counselors are developing supports to know students well on an individual basis.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses ROCKS, a program designed to give students a voice by demonstrating citizenship throughout the building. During a student interview, most students were familiar with the acronym stating what the words stand for. Students stated that the program gives them a voice. One student stated “under organization we select our own performing arts to participate in.” Most students were not able to speak to other examples of voice in the school. Administrators stated that this was an area in which they were working to improve.

- Guidance counselors are working to get to know students on an individual basis during lunch time. As a result, the counselors stated that they meet with at-risk students on a regular basis. Although these procedures allow for one-on-one meetings with students and the lunchtime meetings are successful in getting to know students by name and face, these venues do not provide opportunities to know students on a social-emotional level or address student learning needs. Teachers and administrators are developing semi-monthly meetings on character education; however, staff members have stated that this is still in the process of being organized.

- Administrators have stated that students exercised student voice by recommending a parent/student book club that met on Tuesdays from October to November; the club was designed by students to help inform parents of their child’s learning. Based on parental interest, students, parents and administrators have stated the program was successful. Despite the success of the program, it only ran for a month and was not followed up with additional meetings. Also, this was a student voice initiative organized by grade-four students only.

- To support student attendance, an attendance team meets once per month. The team consists of an attendance teacher, teachers and administrators. The goal of the team is to address chronically absent students. The chronically absent student percentage is twenty-three percent. The team also decreased their weekly meetings from once per week to currently once per month. Teachers have stated that as a result of the meetings being held on an inconsistent basis, they have not been able to monitor chronically absent students enough to support them.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Lesson plans and units promote college and career readiness through writing across grades and subjects. Lesson plans reflect rigorous tasks for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- A lesson from an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class demonstrated rigor for ELLs. The plan stated that students are required to use the SOLVE (Study, Organize, Line up, Verify and Examine) method to complete tasks which included multiplication and division of large numbers, operations involving decimals and volume. The ELLs are also required to reflect on their learning by thinking about what they need to solve the problem, what was difficult about the problem and what they would do differently. The students would be provided with supports that include working in heterogeneous small groups and Spanish translations of materials. Teachers have stated that ELLs are exposed to the same level of rigor as other students with the necessary scaffolds.

- School leaders and teachers have stated that writing across grades and subjects is used to promote college and career readiness. A grade-three unit demonstrates how writing will help prepare students in furthering their education. The unit requires students to raise the level of informational writing by working on structure, development and language convention. Essential questions include, “How can I build on what I learned about informational writing and use mentor text to raise the quality of my writing?” During a student interview, a student stated, “We use our writing skills in every class to help build our skills of understanding how we think.” A teacher stated, “We build our students writing skills because college coursework requires students to have writing skills for reports and essays.” As a result, writing is one of the instructional goals for the school.

- Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts are integrated into unit plans. A review of an English Language Arts (ELA) unit indicates that students are exposed to the instructional shift that requires them to deepen their understanding by writing on a topic and supporting their view with reasons and information. An additional example integrated into a lesson is having students produce clear and coherent writing which is developed and organized according to task. The instructional shift included in the unit is writing to make an argument and the teaching point of the lesson is, “A good argument contains the right balance of researched evidence and rich thinking.” The unit is designed to teach students how to write an argument using a balance of the student’s thinking and explanation of evidence.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student engagement is evident in most classes visited.

Impact

The school’s belief system reflects the Danielson Framework for Teaching which includes student engagement that results in high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Student engagement was evident in most classes visited. For example, in a grade-five ELA class, students were engaged in a discussion on the health comparisons of chocolate milk and regular milk. In a discussion with his partner, one student stated, “Athletes drink chocolate milk to improve their performance.” The student further supported his thinking by showing the annotated article that supported his claim. Another student stated, “I disagree because chocolate milk has more sugar in it which is not good for students.” An additional student stated, “the article supports both forms of milk depending on the situation.” The teacher asked the group what they learned from this process of stating a claim based on an article. A student stated, “We have to balance what we read with our thinking.” An additional example was evident in a grade-five math class in which students were discussing their work products for adding and subtracting fractions. One student stated, “We have to use a multi-step approach to solve the problems.” “Another student said, “I agree, we have to draw the models and add them.” An additional student stated, “We were able to come up with the correct answer by double checking our work.”

- Teachers and school leaders have stated that students are required to demonstrate their thinking. In a grade-three math class, students were using the SOLVE method to demonstrate their thinking. The method requires students to explain their work. In one group students shared out with the entire class the following. “We used a number line to show how much juice each person drank. One person drank two thirds of a bottle and the other drank two fourths. By measuring using our number line we demonstrated that three fourths is greater.” In most classes visited, students were provided an opportunity to explain their work.

- Teachers have stated that student engagement in classes is supported by using turn and talks. During a grade-three science class, students were in small groups discussing the water cycle. Students were asked to turn and talk about what is the water cycle. A student in one group stated, “When the sun hits the water it starts to bubble up and the steam combines with the water and gets a little colder and turns back to water and the cycle starts all over again.” An additional student in the same group stated, “I think water comes from the ocean and it heats up so it rises.” In another group, a student stated, “Anything that benefits from water, including animals, people, trees and flowers, are part of the water cycle.” At the end of the turn and talk, students shared their responses with the entire class. The use of turn and talks were evident in most classes visited as an example of how students learn best.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use student work that is aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and self-assessments.

Impact

Teachers use glows and grows to provide actionable feedback for students. During classroom instruction, checks for understanding and student self-assessment checklists result in instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout the building, students used self-assessments to demonstrate their understanding of material. An example was evident on a grade-four, opinion-writing rubric. A student listed his strength as “I wrote a few sentences to hook my readers by asking a question and explaining why the topic mattered. I was also able to provide background information.” The student stated weaknesses that included, “I can use words and phrases to glue parts of my piece together by using words such as, for example, one time, and for instance.” An additional example of student self-assessment was seen on an opinion-writing checklist. Students were able to check off not yet, starting to, or yes to indicate their level of understanding in the areas of lead, transitions, ending and organization. One student checked off ‘yes’ for separating sections of information using paragraphs, stating the claim and writing an ending for the piece by restating and reflecting on the claim. Students have stated that the self-assessments help their teachers to adjust the follow-up lessons.

- Glows and grows are used to provide feedback to students. This was evident in most classes visited. An example was seen on an essay on volcanoes. The glow for a student included, “Great use of chronological order to show the progression of a volcanic eruption.” The glow included, “You may want to use a timeline to demonstrate surface eruption and island bury.” An additional example was seen on a student’s essay on stages of a butterfly. The glow included, “You did a great job explaining each stage of the butterfly.” The grow was, “Think about a way to organize these facts so that they are easier for you to read and reference later.” Teachers have stated that the feedback enables students to build on knowledge and guide instruction. The principal has stated that providing actionable feedback to students is a schoolwide instructional goal.

- Teachers adjust instruction by using a thumbs-up, thumbs-down method to determine how many students understood a section of the assignment. During the observation of a science class, the teacher asked the class by show of thumbs how many people understand the water cycle. Two students articulated responses. Based on the lack of thumbs raised, the teacher chose to show a video on the water cycle to review. The teacher then read an excerpt of a book on the water cycle. The teacher then asked students to turn and talk in different groups. Students were able to share their thoughts on the water cycle. At the end of the turn and talk, all students showed a thumbs up on their understanding of the water cycle. The next step of the lesson involved, “Who benefits from the water cycle?” Checks for understanding during classroom instruction were evident in most classes visited.
# Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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## Findings

Teacher teams analyze student work and assessments for students that they share. Distributive leadership structures are developing to support leadership capacity-building and to include teachers in key decisions.

## Impact

Because of infrequent meetings, the work of department and grade-level teams does not demonstrate student progress for specific groups of students. Although teachers and school leaders have demonstrated some leadership capacity, it rarely results in effective student learning.

## Supporting Evidence

- An ELL meeting was observed. Teachers used the consultancy protocol which is designed to enable teachers to give feedback to each other based on student performance. The team looked at a grade-five ELL pre-assessment and post-assessment. The teacher noticed that students only showed a point five percent gain from one assessment to the other. The teacher stated that she used graphic organizers, modeling, accountable talk discussions and mentor texts. Teachers suggested having resources available such as glossaries, dictionaries and thesauruses. Although the team provided suggestions for the teacher, they were not tied to any error analysis of the assessments that would support improvement in student performance, thus the team did not target specific assessment-based issues. As a result, the suggestions did not target specific learning concerns.

- Grade-five team-meeting agendas were reviewed. The agendas covered: instructional and classroom environment expectations, promotion in doubt, and embedding strategies to create access for all learners. During a teacher interview, a teacher stated that the grade-level team meetings are designed to build coherent practices within the grade; however, they do not meet on a regular basis to have impact on student learning. This was evident as there were few agendas or minutes from grade-level teacher teams provided.

- Teachers have demonstrated some examples of distributive leadership within the school. However, they do not always result in progress towards student learning. An example was presented by The ELL coordinator. The coordinator works with a team in planning for Title 3 programs, serving as meeting facilitator, providing outreach to vendors for supplemental materials and previewing professional articles to share with the staff. Although the team was involved in different areas of staff development and organization, there was no significant evidence of how the team contributed to student progress for the population that they serve. An additional example was presented by a science teacher. The teacher is part of the New York City science leadership team. The team is responsible for writing the new scope and sequence for New York City and is currently training teachers on it. Although this is a clear example of leadership that will have significant impact on student learning, it will not be initiated until the following year, as a result, impact cannot yet be measured.