Quality Review Report

2017-2018

J.H.S. 131 Albert Einstein
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 08X131
885 Bolton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473

Principal: Monique Mason

Dates of Review:
April 25, 2018 - April 26, 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


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>
<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>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>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 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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>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>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry based professional collaborations using a modified Standards in Practice (SiP) protocol where they consistently analyze data and student work for students they share. Teacher teams are working to develop school wide coherence.

Impact
Teachers consistently use the results of assessments to identify how students are performing in the acquisition of the specific skills required in the Common Core Learning Standards. The identification of teaching practices that address students’ learning gaps results in specifically targeted instruction and improved student performance.

Supporting Evidence

- During the seventh grade math team meeting, teachers were observed using a modified SiP protocol to analyze student work from a performance assessment. The protocol required teachers to analyze the task and rubric, review student work with two lenses: what can the students do and what still needs support. Teachers then identify next steps and develop a plan of action. The task required students to study the problem, organize the facts, line up a plan, verify the plan with action, and examine your results (SOLVE) to complete the task. Teachers noticed that students were experiencing difficulty with lining up a plan and examining the results. Teachers attributed the struggle to students not being able to articulate how they were going to solve the problem because it forces them to dig deeper. Next steps included refining tasks to provide opportunities for students to verbally articulate how they will solve a problem. Advance data reveals improved ratings in the component that assesses teachers growing and developing professionally.

- Teachers agreed that their team work has enabled them to know more about students’ academic and social-emotional learning needs, which support them with modifying curriculum and instruction to meet students’ academic and emotional needs. Teachers use the data from iReady assessments to develop goals for individual students. Teachers monitor student progress towards meeting individual goals. Assessment data reveals increased proficiency and credit accumulation for groups of students.

- 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 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.
Findings
The school staff believes that students learn best when they are engaged in rigorous learning activities that incorporate inquiry and real-world experiences and are beginning to align curricula and teaching practices to this belief. Across classrooms teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
As of yet, consistent student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities is not evident across some classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- During a visit to a seventh grade self-contained, special education classroom, a group of students were observed using dictionaries to define historical terms and create semantic maps. Another group was working with a teaching assistant to annotate a text about the First World War to determine the causes of the war. Student grouping is varied across classrooms and is not always data-driven, thereby limiting the effectiveness of providing support to address the needs of targeted students, especially students with disabilities. As a result, instructional practices do not sufficiently provide multiple entry points that actively engage all learners.

- Teachers are beginning to provide scaffolded strategies in classrooms and multiple entry points that provide access into the curricula for a diversity of learners. Across classrooms, students justified some of their responses by citing textual evidence and had peer interactions in small groups. Teachers made connections to the real-world by explicitly connecting concepts to everyday experiences. Extensions for higher performing students were not always in place. While a few teachers encouraged students to frame their own questions and respond to other students, there were instances of teachers leading the lesson and answering student questions, instead of reframing and redirecting the questions to other students for discussion. Academic tasks vary in opportunities for student choice and extensions for higher performing students are limited.

- During a sixth grade English classroom visit, the teacher previewed vocabulary from the poem, *The Many and The Few* prior to students working in their small groups. Additionally, the teacher modeled how to complete the graphic organizer that required students to cite evidence from the poem. Groups were provided with tiered versions of the poem based on students’ performance levels. Grouping based on individual student learning needs was evidenced in a few classes visited. In a seventh grade math class, the teacher reviewed vocabulary with the students, A few students were able to define supplementary and complimentary angles, however some students were confused about the meaning of slope, when trying to determine the measure of an angle that is complementary to a 62-degree angle. Students identified supplemental angles that were not complementary to the 62-degree angle. One student realized that all four angles totaled 360 degrees, however there was a missed opportunity to explore the student’s response to further the reasoning of the other students in the class.
Findings
Inquiry teams and teacher teams refine curricula to align to Common Core Learning Standards and integration of the instructional shifts. Results from pre- and post-benchmark assessments inform planning and refinement of academic tasks to promote access for diverse learners.

Impact
Curricular documents include modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities, thus promoting access to cognitively engaging academic tasks. Curricular coherence is being developed across grades and subjects and includes skills for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- A seventh grade math lesson, included student groupings based on the results from a Math Simulation assessment. The assessment revealed that students struggled with proportional reasoning, therefore the plan requires students to collaboratively solve problems aligned to the standard. The plan includes a SOLVE graphic organizer to promote student access and cognitive engagement.

- A sixth grade poetry lesson plan includes student groupings that were based on the latest focus Friday assessment, a weekly schoolwide assessment that evaluates a specific standard. The plan identifies differentiated strategies for ELLs and students with disabilities, including sentence starters, visuals, and guided questions included with the text. Visuals included in the plan support students with establishing prior knowledge, promoting access and cognitive engagement. Additionally, there were three different versions of the text, one had guided questions and spaces to record the response to support students’ analysis of the poem, one had guided questions with no space provided for responding, and the other only included the text. Although scaffolds were provided, all students will be required to complete the same task. Lesson plans include translated versions of texts and graphic organizers in a variety of languages.

- There is an inquiry team that meets to ensure alignment and coherence across grades and subjects. The team ensures curricula align to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Teachers meet with the coaches and teacher leaders to develop Common Core aligned lesson plans that include modifications for ELLs and students with disabilities.

- An eighth grade science curriculum map illustrates alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the New York State Science Standards, as well as academic content vocabulary. A poetry unit includes progressions for grades six through eight and integrates the instructional shifts. A seventh grade social studies curriculum map requires students to analyze primary and secondary sources, cite textual evidence to support a claim, write informative and explanatory essays, and determine the meaning of words as they are used in the text.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, checklists, and teacher generated assessments that align to the curricula. Assessment results are used to develop student action plans for math and English Language Arts (ELA).

Impact

The school’s assessment practices at the classroom and schoolwide levels yield data that teachers use to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers use rubrics aligned to the curricula to provide scholars with actionable feedback.

Supporting Evidence

- Results from iReady assessments are used to develop action plans for ELA and math. The plans identify areas of strength and improvement, as well as goals and how they will be monitored. Teachers and students develop action plans two times per year to monitor progress and establish new goals. iReady data reviewed evidences that students’ scale scores are on average increasing by 30 points between the first and second administration of the assessments in ELA and math. Assessment data is used to design the school's focus Friday lessons and assessments to address standards that students have yet to master. Teachers track student performance and display the data in all classrooms for easy accessibility. Data walls reveal that students, including ELLs and students with disabilities are showing growth in both ELA and math.

- Teachers use rubrics and checklists for all formal and informal assessments. In all classes the use of rubrics was in evidence on all posted student work, as well as on classroom tasks. In the student meeting one student stated, “Most of my work was showing that I was performing in the fifth grade range. The rubric shows progressions for fifth, sixth, and seventh grade, so it lets me know what I have to work on to get to the seventh grade level.” Teachers provide students with feedback aligned to the rubric to help them improve their work. A student shared, “rubrics help me to organize and identify what I did well. The teacher also provided me with verbal feedback.” All students agreed that they receive specific feedback to help them improve their work. Feedback to a student on a writing task read. “I like the way you simplify more complex ideas so that your reader can better understand your claim. Try using transitional phrases that connect ideas between paragraphs.”

- Three times per year school staff administer common assessments across content areas. Teachers use a data reflection tool to analyze the data in order to determine next steps and implications for instruction. The data enables teachers to identify scholars that are on level, approaching, or below level. For scholars performing below level the next steps include providing support through academic intervention services. Teachers utilize assessment data to determine scholar progress and adjust instruction.
Additional Finding

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

The school leader consistently communicates high expectations aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to the entire staff through the *Albert Einstein Weekly Bulletin*, additional emails and at professional development sessions. Families receive a student-parent handbook that informs them of schoolwide expectations.

Impact

School leaders hold teachers accountable through frequent cycles of formal and informal observations and provide feedback and next steps aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Families understand their student’s progress towards high school readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year a parent orientation meeting is held for all parents and they are provided with a parent handbook. The handbook is published in English and Spanish and school leaders outline the expectations for attendance, discipline, uniforms, and homework. It also informs families of important dates for the school year, the grading policy, and suggested ways they can support their child at home. All parents must sign acknowledgement of receipt of the handbook and having reviewed the expectations with their child.

- The eighth grade guidance counselor initiates high school articulation beginning in seventh grade. Students and families receive a personalized invitation to the articulation meeting. The guidance counselor supports families with the high school application process and conducts one-to-one meetings to support students applying to specialized high schools. Additionally, the guidance counselor develops action plans to inform families of the next steps in the high school application process. During the parent meeting, all parents agreed that the school keeps them informed about what is going on at the school and offer many workshops for families.

- The school leader issues the *Albert Einstein Weekly Bulletin* to staff that reinforces schoolwide and instructional expectations. The bulletin reminds staff of upcoming events and deadlines. It also identifies the instructional focus for the week and the focus’ alignment to the *Framework for Teaching*. The identified focus from the November issue was to continue focusing on engagement, “to ensure that we know how to engage all students during each hour of our lessons through targeted motivation and clearly communicated expectations and instructions.” This is aligned to the Danielson component that evaluates student engagement.

- To support teachers with meeting instructional expectations school leaders have identified a peer instructional coach, model teacher, and content leaders for each content area. Teacher leaders attend outside professional development with the expectation that they will turnkey new learnings to the school staff. In addition to support from teacher leaders, teachers receive training and support with planning from a Litlife coach, National Training Network coach, and the Center for Education Innovation provides support for instructional practices. Teacher teams conduct intervisitations and provide support and feedback to ensure that teachers meet schoolwide instructional expectations, thus holding teachers accountable for the identified focus.
**Findings**

School leaders use frequent cycles of observations to support the development of teachers. Effective feedback aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* provides next steps, and identifies a teacher’s strengths, and challenges. Teachers support one another through peer intervisitations.

**Impact**

The formal and informal feedback communicates clear expectations for improvement in teacher practice, promoting reflection, and professional growth.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school leader conducts bi-monthly observation cycles to provide feedback to teachers utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. Teachers are required to furnish student work products or any other evidence during the post-meeting conference. Teachers leave feedback sessions with a clear plan for next steps. Feedback is aligned to teachers’ individual professional goals that are established by the teacher and school leader, during the initial planning conference. Additionally, progress towards meeting these goals is monitored through observation cycles and reflected upon during mid-year reflections between the school leader and individual teachers.

- School leaders analyze student work alongside teachers. The analysis of the student work supports and informs the development of the feedback teachers receive. Inquiry teams identify teacher practices in need of improvement based on the feedback that team members receive from school leaders. Teachers conduct research-based collaborations to identify pedagogical strategies that can improve their practice. After each observation teachers are required to provide student work during the post-observation conference with school leaders. Feedback from a school leader to one teacher stated, “In order to be effective in this component it is important that you plan lessons that align to our Core Ready units of study, follow the unit pacers, and differentiate your plans according to students’ individualized education program. Please continue to meet with your instructional coach and direct supervisor to plan effective lessons for the students that you serve.”

- School leaders share schoolwide instructional and curricular goals with the staff. Teachers receive *Advance* data from the previous year to complete a data dive. In conjunction with school leaders, teachers develop individual goals aligned to the schoolwide instructional goals. Progress towards meeting goals is monitored through frequent cycles of observation and the end-of-year debrief. Teachers reflect on the feedback that has been received, *Advance* data, and professional development they have received, in order to inform the feedback they provide to school leaders in regard to the support and professional development they have received.