Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 168
K-12 all grades 75X168
3050 Webster Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: Maureen Fullerton

Dates of Review:
February 13, 2018 - February 14, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwiec
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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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 Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School 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>Well Developed</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>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>Area of Focus</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>Well Developed</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>
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices that include explicit instruction, guided reading, and modeling strategies align to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies intentionally provide multiple entry points with differentiated tasks along with high-quality supports and extensions.

Impact

All students produce meaningful work products as displayed in classrooms and on hallway bulletin boards, including science fair projects. Appropriately challenging tasks that engage all students through higher-order thinking skills are apparent in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- According to school leaders and teachers, the set of beliefs about how students learn best is shared by all stakeholders and provides a safe, supportive environment where students develop academically, socially, and emotionally so that they can become active participants in their community. Common practices that support educating the whole child include assessment-aligned instruction that provides targeted feedback and interventions to improve mastery of learning goals, and explicit instruction that includes modeling strategies and activities aligned to the learning objective followed by an assessment. In an English Language Arts (ELA) class for students with disabilities in grades four through six, the learning objective stated, “I can find the clues when reading a mystery.” The teacher modeled a think aloud by asking herself if what happens in the story relates to the mystery, characters, or setting. She stated, “This question will help me find details in the story that are clues.” Table groups then worked together to read sentences that contained clues or other added information. Groups decided if the information was a clue and if it related to the mystery, character, or setting. Each group had an adult facilitating the discussion and the placement of clues that were then glued to a graphic organizer, which served as an assessment for the lesson.

- In a science class for intellectually-challenged children in kindergarten through grade two, the topic was “Sink or Float.” The teacher demonstrated how the students were to interact with the tank of water and various objects, make predictions, and record with illustrated labels whether each object sank or floated. An adult guided each small group as they proceeded one step at a time. All students were highly engaged and participated in each step of the experiment. Their assessment was an analysis of what the floating objects had in common that was different from the sinking objects. The adult in each group recorded this information. This lesson demonstrated the school’s set of beliefs that provided a safe environment with sufficient support so students could manage and engage in scientific theory-making with predictions and outcomes that resulted in discovering what floats and what sinks.

- In a class with a mix of grade-six-through-eight students, students were asked to connect their own experiences with a text about hurricanes. The teacher introduced the book to the whole class and related it to her own knowledge of recent storms. The class was then divided into small guided-reading groups, each facilitated by an adult. The level of differentiation included four different groupings, each assigned to a separate task. In the first and second groups, the students read independently a book of their choice and responded in a journal. The third group read “Ruby Bridges” and looked for examples of cause and effect while the last group read “Hurricanes” and made connections between the text and prior knowledge.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 3.1 Goals and Action Plans | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Goal-setting and effective action planning are informed by a comprehensive data-driven needs assessment and ongoing data gathering. School leaders communicate with the school community regarding the school improvement plan and decision-making processes but have yet to effectively involve and communicate with all constituents on the creation of the goals.

Impact

There is improved teacher practice as evidenced in Advance data. However, the school is not yet closing the achievement gap.

Supporting Evidence

- During professional development (PD) in September, the staff was introduced to the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals and monthly benchmarks used to determine if the school was on track to meet the goals. An instructional team meets every two weeks with members from each site to review progress toward goals and then turn-keys this information to teacher teams. Teachers communicate student progress toward meeting CEP goals by giving students feedback on their performance during guided reading and IEP periods. Teachers communicate with parents on student progress during parent-teacher conferences and IEP Conferences and by email, communication logs and monthly newsletters.

- Needs surveys are an integral component of a multi-site school as each site has its own set of staff, parents and students. Staff are asked periodically to complete short surveys to give feedback to school leaders about systems and programs that are being implemented. Parents are also surveyed to obtain information needed to further develop important services and strengthen those already in place. Paraprofessionals were also surveyed this year with the result of PD outcomes that were requested. An important means of communicating school goals and their status is the instructional team, which is made up of staff representatives from all sites who meet every two weeks to share concerns and data, monitor schoolwide goals, and check in with updates. School leaders also survey parents through an online platform by the school counselor. Results led to an increase in educational workshops and access to more support service information for parents. Once a month the PD team meets to review feedback on previous PD sessions and to refine future offerings. Teachers requested more immediate feedback connected to observations.

- School leaders stated that Danielson’s Framework for Teaching component that addresses the use of assessment in instruction is an instructional focus across the school. The percentage of teachers effectively using assessment in instruction increased from 57 to 64 percent, and the number of teachers who were ineffectively using assessment in instruction decreased from 16 to eight percent.

- School leaders involve and communicate with all site leaders and stakeholder groups in the school community regarding improvement plans and decision-making protocols. Another structure used to inform the school community about goals is the School Leadership Team (SLT). Members include teachers and parents from across all campuses. The School Leadership Team (SLT) meets monthly and discusses the school’s goals and updates on progress in meeting the goals.
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**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts of math modeling, real-world application, and increasing the amount of non-fiction texts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data while analyzing Common Core standards, instructional shifts, and essential elements of unit design.

**Impact**

Curricular documents demonstrate coherence across grades and subject areas that promote college and career development and next educational steps including the implementation of Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS). All students, including those who are the lowest- and highest-achieving, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are able to access the curricula and be cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders shared the Common Core alignment process that has been refined over the last five years. Using the Essential Elements design, all kindergarten-through-grade-eight curricula exhibit the same features in templates and planning documents. Features such as “Big Ideas,” essential questions, Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) question levels, CDOS integration, Common Core standards, and Essential Elements are described and articulated across all unit designs. Lesson plans include learning objectives listed as “I CAN” statements, explicit instruction, guided instruction, independent practice, and end-of-task assessment.

- In math lessons for two different grade bands, vertical coherence was demonstrated in lessons that address measurement. Grades one and two used non-standard units of measure such as paper clips, counters, and Post-Its to measure three different objects located in a basket. The activity was differentiated by complexity of objects and ease of using non-standard units with which to measure. There was also differentiation of adult support. Grades three through five students used standard measures such as rulers and measuring tape to compare different objects. Again, the table groups had specifically selected items in a basket with tasks differentiated, with one group comparing longer and shorter and the other three groups finding the longest object.

- The CDOS integration in unit plans directly addresses the integration of skills, attitudes and practice that is needed for college and career readiness and next steps in educational success. Both ELA and math curriculum maps have CDOS standards integrated into unit plans. In kindergarten through grade two, under the Character Study unit of the CDOS, Universal Foundational Skills is listed with basic skills noted as, “Listen to and read the ideas of others and express themselves both orally and in writing.” In grades six through eight, the same unit’s basic skills are listed as, “Listen to and read the ideas of others and analyze what they hear and read; acquire and use information from a variety of sources.” In math, the kindergarten through grade two length and measurement unit states the CDOS standard for career development as, “Students will be knowledgeable about the world of work, explore career options, and relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions.” In grades six through eight, the same CDOS standard is stated with tasks that are more challenging and involve formulas for arriving at area and perimeter and three-dimensional objects.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

Common assessments create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, and are used in adjusting curricular and instructional decisions. In addition, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding as in color-coded cards, symbols, and hand signals along with student self-assessments.

### Impact

All students demonstrate increased mastery that is individualized while teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs with students aware of their next learning steps.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school has seven different locations with three different programs; all dealing with high-needs students with various disabilities. Therefore, they use a wide range of assessments that produce varied types of data. According to school leaders and teachers, student assessment is the ongoing, systematic collection and analysis of student learning and the basis for strategic curriculum and instructional modifications and refinements, student groupings, instructional schedules, development of IEP goals, and for differentiation and scaffolding of instruction. Assessments include the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST), Fountas and Pinnell for determining reading levels, New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), NYS Standardized Assessments, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), and student work products with rubrics. This data collection serves many purposes. All teachers have individual weekly meetings with students about the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). The purpose of these meetings is to assess progress towards IEP goals. During these meetings, teachers and students discuss, in some cases non-verbally communicate about, the student’s achievements and skills and strategies used to meet their goals.

- Because of this close attention and individualized approach, all forms of information are kept in databases and accessible to all staff members working with each student. As a result, a clear picture of student progress towards goals is documented and shared with teachers, parents and students. Specific data, assessment results, IEP goals mastered, and student work products with feedback and evaluations are coordinated and analyzed, resulting in actions that address curricular revisions, student groupings, paraprofessional assignments and goal setting. Certainly, this case study approach is a platform for a clear picture of student progress toward goals. Staff, along with included educators and support providers, use it to analyze individual students and make determinations about least restrictive environment (LRE) and less intensive services (LIS) as students’ next learning steps. As a result, movement to less restrictive environment is eleven percentage points, higher than the city average and exceeding targeted threshold. Integration into a non-District 75 environment is over seven percentage points higher than the city average and exceeding targeted threshold.

- Checks for understanding are an integral component in all classrooms as teachers, support staff, and service providers need to know how well students are functioning, processing information, and feeling. Students mentioned stoplight cards that are red, yellow, and green cards that are displayed if help is needed. The staff to student ratio means that students are in close proximity to helpful adult at all times.
Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through the staff handbook, IEP handbook, guided reading handbook, and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) handbook. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Ongoing communication and training result in a culture of mutual accountability for the school’s expectations. Teachers provide clear, focused and effective feedback and guidance to ensure that students, including high-needs subgroups, own their educational experiences and are prepared for their next least restrictive environment and their future.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and walkthroughs and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. Teachers also receive a staff handbook that covers topics ranging from day-to-day professional responsibilities and expectations for all sixteen of the Framework for Teaching components with clear expectations in each category. There are also specific guidelines to instructional structures required in each classroom, such as what an ELA unit of study entails with the guided-reading handbook as a resource or math-block expectations. High expectations are embodied in student engagement with differentiated instruction, accountable talk protocols, leveled questions, and academic language to establish a culture of learning. Additionally, teachers receive the PD plan at the beginning of the year. Embedded within this plan are the connections between each topic and the different domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- The school developed its own PBIS plan called SOAR (Safety, Ownership, Achievement, Respect) that is used throughout the school to promote self-regulation necessary for academic success through rewards. These rewards are earned by acquiring points. Rewards may include clubs, trips, events, and school store purchases. Matrices indicating positive behaviors are posted throughout the building and in classrooms. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers use the SOAR program to set clear expectations and provide students with feedback on their behavior.

- The school’s culture for learning systematically communicates high expectations to all students primarily through a weekly IEP meeting that each student has with a teacher. This process provides a structure within which teachers support each student’s learning goal attainment. By providing clear, focused, and effective feedback, teachers support students in preparing for their next level of education, which for most of these students is the least restrictive environment (LRE) that the school uses as a method of tracking progress and improvement for their students. As a result, on the 2017 NYC DOE School Survey, 94 percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that they are learning a lot in their classes to prepare them for the next level or grade. Also, 94 percent of students in grades six through eight agreed or strongly agreed that the school provides useful information and guidance to students about the high school application process. In addition, 98 percent of students in grades nine through twelve agreed that adults at the school help them plan to meet their future career goals and consider what colleges to apply to.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teacher teams systematically use various protocols to analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice such as guided reading, assessment data, and student work for students they share. Distributed leadership structures are embedded; at the school’s various sites, there are teachers who are essential to the successful management of each site.

Impact

Shared improvements in teacher practice are evidenced in Advance reports, and mastery of goals for groups of students is demonstrated by data and student reports.

Supporting Evidence

- As reported by school leaders and teachers, common-planning teacher teams analyze student data to inform the development of Common Core-aligned units that are accessible to all students. Teachers use the Essential Elements to ensure that alternately-assessed students have access to rigorous standards-based instruction. Teacher teams meet daily and work on a five-week cycle. The cycle includes two weeks of planning and refining units using student data, one week of Intervisitation to examine best practices, and two weeks of inquiry, where teachers read an article about a problem of practice, use a text-based protocol to discuss the article, and identify how it impacts their practice. Then, each day teachers bring in samples of student work and use a consultancy protocol to look at the work and determine next steps to increase student achievement. In a teacher-team observation, teachers of autistic students met to discuss one student. The student’s teacher was the main presenter and the main concern was one of fluency and confidence. After presenting the student’s background, academic strengths and concerns, teachers discussed possible supports that had not yet been utilized. Suggestions included purposefully grouping the student, taking book walks before reading to build text familiarization, and going back to lower-level books for fluency practice.

- As noted above, one week of each common-planning cycle is dedicated to intervisitation. During this week, teachers collaboratively plan a lesson, visit a teacher’s classroom to observe the lesson, and provide feedback and next steps for the teacher’s practice. In addition, teachers visit each other outside of common planning based on the area of growth they self-identified during their Initial Planning Conference in the beginning of the school year. A template that lists the eight main components of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching provides a guide sheet for teachers who are visiting and observing each other’s practice. Advance ratings demonstrate teacher improvement with an overall increase from 72 to 79 percent in teachers rated effective between the first and second rounds of observations. For the portion of the Framework for Teaching dealing with instruction, the percentage of teachers rated effective increased from 60 to 65 percent.

- Distributed leadership is found in the administrative structure at each school site. Teacher leaders work with the assigned assistant principal at each site to manage and support the staff. Lead teachers are responsible for their grade-level teacher meetings. Through rotating roles, teachers take turns with varied responsibility to ensure that meetings are well thought through, timely and productive.