Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 175 City Island
K-8 11X175
200 City Island Avenue
Bronx
NY 10464

Principal: Amy Lipson Ellis

Dates of Review:
December 5, 2017 - December 6, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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. 175 City Island serves students in grade K through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>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>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

Additional Finding Well Developed

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Additional Finding Proficient

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

Additional Finding Proficient

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

Area of Focus Developing

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

Additional Finding Proficient

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

Additional Finding Proficient
Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings
The faculty’s theory of action aligned to high expectations supports staff in creating an environment of mutual respect, discipline, safety, and emotional support. Structures such as the attendance team and the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) ensure that each student is known well by a staff member and receives personalized support.

Impact
An inclusive and safe school culture enables students to make decisions that have a positive impact on the school community and support students’ academic and personal growth. The coordinated efforts of structures such as advisory, interventions, and guidance ensure a positive impact on students’ academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders and faculty have refined structures that promote an inclusive and positive learning environment that teachers and parents affirmed via the School Survey, in which 92 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel respected by their child's principal. The school team designed a theory of action: “If we create an environment in which students are held to high standards of character and behavior, and a sense of responsibility is fostered, then students will thrive in an environment that supports academic and personal growth.” As a result of the inclusive and positive learning environment, students shared that during debates they can have different perspectives and push back respectfully on controversial issues in classroom lessons as teachers promote the use of protocols and evidence to defend their arguments. In addition, there are monthly assemblies to celebrate academic achievement and student behavior. Thus, the school sustains a low level of incidents and suspensions, year-to-date suspensions and serious incidents, as indicated in the Online Occurrence Reporting System.

- Multicultural celebrations in the school integrate the heritage of the diverse population of the school with instructional activities such as dance, poetry, art, and sports. Students read books where diversity is addressed and watch movies about racial struggles and success in the 1960’s. Students read works such as Mango, Abuela and Me, Salt in his Shoes, and My Name is Yoon. The student government meets weekly with principal and staff members. They organized a Jump-a-thon for hurricane relief and organized and participated in a science “Comic Con” event where older students introduced younger students to the elements of the periodic table via their comic books. Students spoke of a suggestion box created to motivate students to share their ideas on what they would like to do or see more of in the school. Therefore, the school culture meaningfully involves student's voice resulting in a productive learning environment.

- Middle school students participate in advisory sessions focusing on character education, where teachers and students address socio-emotional issues and share ideas and concerns with their teachers. Students shared that they can go to more than one adult if they have an issue. Guidance counselors have regular meetings with leaders, teachers, and parents to consistently monitor student’s academic goals and behaviors to ensure that the social-emotional and learning needs of students are met. The PPT discusses students at-risk and develops academic intervention supports or referrals for evaluations. Parents shared that their children have benefited from these interventions and from the recommendations of the PPT. The school’s attendance committee meets weekly to discuss individual attendance concerns and has established structures to sustain higher levels of attendance and reduce lateness including daily phone calls home and family outreach. As a result, these structures ensure each student is known well by at least one adult who helps coordinate supports that impact students’ academic and personal behaviors while sustaining a school year-to-day attendance of 96.2 percent.
Findings

School leaders’ inconsistent structures for observation and evaluation of teacher practice, using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, lack opportunities for frequent feedback to teachers that captures strengths, challenges, and next steps, thus hindering the development of teachers.

Impact

The lack of effective implementation of frequent cycles of observations and inconsistent feedback to teachers impedes the improvement of teacher practice based on clear expectations regarding rigor and engagement, consequently hindering opportunities of increasing positive student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders planned informal classroom visits from September 2007 to January 2018, using a color coded tool to track feedback given to teachers, however the calendar for frequent cycles of observations was not provided. The review of Advance reports revealed that as of early December 2017, only 40 percent of the teachers have been observed and one teacher was observed twice. School leaders mentioned that they are working to make the necessary adjustments to meet their observation targets. Teachers shared that they participate in professional development sessions around the Danielson Framework for Teaching. They also reported that via intervisitations and common planning sessions they receive feedback from their colleagues and consultants, and new teachers received differentiated support from school leaders, peers, coaches, and consultants. As a result of infrequent cycles of classroom observation, school leaders provide sporadic feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching compromising timely opportunities to elevate school-wide instructional practices.

- While teachers were well versed in articulating schoolwide goals and the instructional focus to improve their review of formative assessment data with students to create goals and action plans, feedback about pedagogical practice is inconsistently offered as per observation reports. Reviews of observation reports revealed that some teachers received detailed written observation reports that capture their strengths, assess the quality of teacher and student work, and provides actionable next steps relative to student groups, discussion techniques, and assessment during lessons. For example, “I recommend that you create even more sophisticated and student directed differentiation by creating 3-4 groups that will be totally fluid, based upon the previous day’s assessment. Create a checklist of skills per day - some will overlap. However, other feedback states, “Work with our consultant on differentiation techniques that will meet the individual needs of your students.” Furthermore, some observations reports show that not all of the eight components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching were rated. This results in missed opportunities to help individual teachers achieve optimal levels of performance to accelerate teacher growth and improve student outcomes.

- The December 2017 Advance report revealed that 50 percent of teachers were not observed. In addition, the analysis of observation reports revealed inconsistencies in aligning observation ratings with the written feedback. For example, in an observation report, the lowest rated component was component 3d: using assessment in instruction, however, the feedback and next steps do not refer to this component, as well as little mention of student work or data in the observation reports. Furthermore, several observation reports lack ratings in some instructional and planning components. As a result of inconsistencies in observation practices and the uneven feedback cycles for teachers, there are many missed opportunities to improve pedagogical practice across the school.
# 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

The school has effectively and strategically integrated Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and the instructional shifts into curricula. Planned and refined academic tasks emphasize higher-order thinking skills promoting cognitively challenging tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

## Impact

There is coherence across grades and subjects, enabling all students to access the curricula. The curriculum incorporates project-based learning activities with cognitively engaging tasks through which students must demonstrate their thinking.

## Supporting Evidence

- **Across content areas**, teachers designed instructional planning documents aligned to the Common Core reflecting the use of the workshop model approach, incorporating learning objectives, and tasks using components such as vocabulary development, independent reading, writing and problem solving. In science and social studies, instructional planning documents include supplemental resources such as Full Option Science System (FOSS) and primary documents to offer students experiences that lead to a deeper understanding of the natural and designed worlds. School leaders and teachers decided to supplement the English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula with iReady. As a result, core subject curricula incorporate learning tasks that emphasize college and career readiness skills for students.

- Coherence across grades and subjects is evident across units through literacy-based content and strategies aligned to instructional shifts. Units of study include accountable talk norms, text-based answers and responses to discussion, and subject-specific text complexity. This is also evident through the development of student learning targets, setting clear expectations for students, and engaging students in instructional tasks that promote mastery of standards. In math, units and lesson plans reflect instructional shifts of deep understanding and dual intensity, promoting higher levels of conceptual understanding, while practicing and applying concepts learned in real-world tasks. In a grade eight math lesson plan the concept of proportional and nonproportional relationships and functions requires students to write, solve, and graph linear equations to compare cell phone plans. As a result of this coherent approach to curricula design, teachers prepare all students for the quest of college and career opportunities.

- Plans for project-based learning curricula emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, while promoting the use of collaborative learning strategies and instructional techniques that drives students’ acquisition of content and skill. While engaging in projects, students demonstrate mastery of the research process, data collection, creative writing, and artistic representation of their learning. Such as the “Comic Book,” where students make connections of the elements of the periodic table to identify “Mighty Minerals.” Also, in a grade eight ELA lesson, students are cognitively engaged in content through making inferences about the character’s internal and external conflicts, and supporting ideas with text-based evidence using vocabulary charts, graphic organizers and close reading strategies.

- Teachers integrate critical-thinking activities into lesson plans. For example, an eighth-grade social studies lesson plan for a unit on World War II focuses on the characteristics that a leader should have. Students read three different notes on how Hitler rose to power, followed by reading *Yertle the Turtle*. Also, in a third-grade ELA unit plan about informational report, students will read leveled nonfiction text, use graphic organizers and sentence starters. Through the use of these strategic planning approaches, students will be able to comprehend and use evidence from sources to inform or make an argument.
Findings

Across classrooms, instructional practices reflect teachers' consistent use of scaffolds, interventions, and extensions to ensure that all students are appropriately challenged with tasks that promote high-level critical thinking. Student work products reflect rigorous tasks and the use of multiple entry points to support learning in most classrooms.

Impact

All learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, discussions, and work products that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students engaged in pairs, small group discussions, and large group discussions which allowed them to demonstrate their progress toward learning targets and further the group’s understanding. In a grade seven science lesson, students were working in pairs on understanding plate boundaries; at the beginning of the lesson, students observed a video clip about tectonics, followed by activities where each pair had their own set of lab materials as well as graphic organizers. Students were observed highly engaged in creating their tectonics models that described the movement of plate tectonic boundaries, in the process they engaged in discussions, analyzing different possible scenarios, and recording data. The teacher mediated twice to ensure that all students had equal participation on the task and in discussions. As a result of these teaching strategies, most students had opportunities to fully engage in their lessons and make their thinking visible.

- During lessons, most teachers allocate time to confer with students in a one-on-one or group setting and are aware of each student's level of understanding and participation. This practice informs how teachers differentiate instruction for each child and was demonstrated in a grade eight Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class. Teachers created differentiated tasks based on groups' needs. Each task included graphic organizers to support students in writing linear equations to compare different cell phone plans. Extensions were provided for higher achievers, as well as assisted technology for newly arrived students. Furthermore, teachers facilitated the learning process by circulating throughout the room and encouraging them to use previous knowledge and models, asking probing questions to allow students to engage in group discussions, all of which enabled students to think deeper and justify their responses. Thus, all students observed were engaged in higher-order thinking activities through their interactions with peers and teachers. However, this level of differentiation and teacher-student and student-student engagement is yet to be implemented in some classrooms.

- Classroom visits revealed that there was a consistent emphasis on using academic language, and a great deal of experiential learning that required students to engage in discussions, cite evidence from relevant sources, and use guided notes organizers. This was evident in a grade eight ELA lesson where students used those resources to guide their discussions about identifying the protagonist's internal and external conflicts. In their dialogues, students were observing, annotating text with highlighters, referring to textual evidence in their discussions, and using accountable talk stems in their interactions. This practice has been observed in most classrooms, however few still remained with more teacher-led instructions, resulting in missed opportunities to engage all students in productive discussions.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teacher-created rubrics, grading policies, and assessments align to the curricula and provide a clear profile of student mastery of learning targets. All teachers implement multiple forms of ongoing assessments.

Impact
Teachers provide students with actionable and meaningful feedback that supports student achievement and the implementation of ongoing checks for understanding, which results in effective on-the-spot instructional adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs. As a result of this implementation, students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence
- Classroom visits, conversations with students, and the review of student work products revealed that rubrics and checklists are used across classrooms and subject areas. All students interviewed articulated the purpose and use of rubrics, they articulated that these assessment tools are used to inform their learning and guide them to their next steps. For example, one student mentioned that based on her teacher’s feedback she was able to write a good thesis statement but needed to work on transitions from topic to topic. Another student shared "In my math assignment, I got the correct answers, but I need to add more math vocabulary to my responses and elaborate more on how I solve the problem. When asked what this meant, the student responded, "I am good in math, I am able to figure the solution, so in most cases I just write the answer. But, I know I have to explain how I solved." The review of students’ work products revealed that teachers across content areas provide effective feedback such as, “Great job choosing evidence to support your ideas. Next time include more background information to help your reader understand your ideas. Work on adding sophisticated vocabulary.” Thus, students use teachers’ actionable and targeted feedback to make meaning of their learning and increase their achievement.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms there are ongoing checks for understanding such as do-nows, conferencing, targeted questions, student responses, student share outs, written assignments, and exit tickets. Teachers use assessment tools attached to a clipboard to record students’ progress and consistently make on-the-spot instructional adjustments. In an ELA grade five ICT class, teachers gather real time data about student’s editing process, then based on the information, students are grouped in stations so they can engage in differentiated tasks that provide appropriate entry points to the content. Students understand why they are in their assigned groups and articulate their next learning steps to make progress toward reaching mastery of the standards.

Students self-assess in a variety of ways; they utilize student facing checklists, peer assessments, and student-friendly rubrics that enable them to monitor their own understanding and identify their next steps. For example, prior to submission for grading of a science project, students in a grade seven class used a rubric to ensure that they included a front cover, used a mineral or characteristics of a mineral in the context of the story, and scenes drawn for their “Mighty Mineral Comic Book.” This rubric has a section for self-assessment and teacher evaluation. In math lessons, students are provided with a unit performance task rubric, where they score their work using a 0-2 scale for each learning target. In addition, students, at the end of their tasks write reflections of their learning. These reciprocal interactions between students and teachers are resulting in a transparent process of providing students with an understanding relative to reaching or exceeding identified learning targets.
Additional Finding

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

All teachers are involved in inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the development of teacher capacity. Teachers are provided with many opportunities to build their leadership.

Impact

Teachers are active in participating in ongoing professional collaborations, and leading school-wide initiatives to increase teachers' leadership skills, thus increasing teachers' participation in inquiry work to improve student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have systems in place for collaborative teams to work in grade and content teams in weekly meetings. Protocols for looking at student work and norms for discussion among team members ensure that teams engage in inquiry work aligned to the Common Core as well as the instructional shifts to support the achievement of school goals. During teacher teams meetings, teachers are required to present the problem, explore possible solutions, choose and implement strategies, gather data, and present their outcomes to their team. This process is continuously repeated throughout the year to address teaching and learning. Reviewed agendas, minutes, and action plans reveal that teachers use this time to make curricular and instructional adjustments, then follow-up from previous sessions to monitor if the implemented recommendations were successful. As a result, the collaborative work is leading to improved teacher practice and student learning where 46 percent of the students met State standards on the State math test; the average score at this school which is 20 percentage points above district results and eight percentage points above City results.

- During an ELA team meeting, a teacher presented the outcomes from her implementation of strategies suggested in a prior team meeting. The recommendation was to provide students with a graphic organizer with all the required elements of the task. The teacher presented students' work reflecting the implementation of recommended strategies. The team reviewed a sample of student work and determined that the students' made improvements in structure of the responses and using evidence to support claims. Another teacher presented a narrative piece from her third grade class, and teachers used a looking at student work protocol to analyze the work, they reviewed the task, examined the work, shared their observations, interpretations, and determined next steps, such as modifying the rubric, color coding the ending checklist, and referring to the graphic organizer. Teachers shared that teacher team gives them an opportunity to share best practices and identify strategies that support student learning. School leaders reported that the work of teacher teams is increasing pedagogical capacity and building instructional coherence throughout the school.

- As a result of professional collaborations between school leaders and teachers, key decisions relative to professional development and teacher initiatives have developed greatly. Teachers facilitate professional development sessions for their colleagues, and share best practices via intervisitations. Teachers lead schoolwide activities such as Book-of-the-Month activities, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) activities, and an Earth Day Celebration and they have opportunities to discuss curriculum development and adjustments with school leaders. Teachers reported that they participate in student placement decisions and in creating classes for the next school year and one teacher is in charge of school programming. School leaders reported that based on grade and/or subject, teachers are included in the hiring process.