Quality Review Report

2017-2018

I.S. 313 School of Leadership Development
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 09X313

1600 Webster Avenue
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Earl Brathwaite

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2018 - May 17, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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

I.S. 313 School of Leadership Development serves students in grade 6 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders engage in feedback loops that encompass classroom observation data and analysis of learning outcomes to design professional development opportunities aligned to the needs of teachers.

Impact
Ongoing effective feedback informs effective professional development and ensures professional growth and development for teachers.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders provide teachers with frequent classroom observation feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework to support professional growth. Targeted professional development opportunities are then developed based on the observations to support teachers in attaining their professional goals. These include visits to other colleagues' classrooms with a focus on the needs surfacing from the classroom observations, teacher input, and review of student data results.

- Analysis of individual components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core Learning Standards are incorporated into discussions at inquiry and vertical team meetings in conjunction with an analysis of ongoing student work and assessment results to determine students’ next steps. Teachers noted that this practice is “collegial and supportive” and has assisted in improving their abilities to set instructional outcomes, and to establish a culture for learning. To date according to school leaders’ tracking analysis on teacher practice, teachers have improved in the domain regarding "Planning and Preparation."

- School leaders target schoolwide issues related to their instructional focus, which centers on small group instruction, reading levels, conferencing, and feedback. School leaders have developed resources to help improve instruction on a deeper level. Informal and formal observations are used as a basis for teacher development and the professional development plan. Teachers are provided quality feedback that has led to improved pedagogical practice as well as professional growth as evidenced in the most current Advance data for teachers. This ongoing, effective feedback aids leaders in the formation of strategic, targeted, and differentiated professional learning. The school leaders have partnered with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) resulting in a full-time academic achievement coach, and two additional coach positions. The teachers stated they feel supported and that small group instruction and conferencing with students has improved school-wide.
Area of Focus

<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, all students were engaged in discussions and completed challenging tasks. While teaching practices consistently reflect multiple entry points, the deepening of learning through extensions into curricula and tasks for diverse learners was not typically evident in the majority of classes.

Impact

Consistent application of scaffolds and multiple entry points result in students being engaged in rigorous tasks and discussions across grades and content areas. However, instructional practices illustrated missed opportunities to further extend learning for all students, and promote ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ and leaders’ core belief is grounded in students being regularly and actively engaged in quality conversations aligned to the content, which will develop students’ critical thinking skills, build their academic vocabulary and a deeper understanding of the fundamental concepts. In the classrooms visited, teachers provided visual supports and scaffolds for students to be engaged in learning. Students were observed in small group activities, one-to-one conferencing with the teacher, or working together with a partner to respond to the task. In a self-contained math class, groups of students calculated the surface area of a rectangular prism. Students referred to content vocabulary words, such as surface area and congruency, along with terms such as two and three-dimensional to make sense of the problems.

- School leaders place emphasis on providing students with multiple opportunities to participate in high level discussions that allow them to express diverse points of view, justify their thinking, and challenge each other’s thinking. In the classrooms visited, most teachers provided guiding questions, which required students to think deeply about concepts and skills taught. However, there were limited opportunities, in a few of the classrooms, for students to challenge each other’s thinking through high level peer-to-peer questioning. For example, although students were engaged in a social studies class addressing what it was like to be a Roman soldier, most of the lesson involved only a few students in a teacher-student question and answer sequence that left little opportunity for other students to actively participate.

- The use of extensions to tasks to deepen student engagement in challenging work was evident in several classrooms. An extension to a task in an ELA class asked students to identify how Langston Hughes used poetic devices to enhance a deeper meaning of his poetry. The students shared findings with a peer. Students cited several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of the text, as well as what inference could be drawn from the objective summary of the text. In a math class, students were discussing computing volume. When asked, a few students shared that the activity was easy, and they had completed the task and waited idly for their peers to finish. However, extension of tasks was not evident in the majority of classrooms visited, including classrooms with advanced learners.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
The school uses curricula, which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts relative to text complexity and evidence-based writing. Data is used to plan and refine lessons for diverse learners.

Impact
Purposeful decision making in planning units and tasks promote student engagement and college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- Reviewed samples of curriculum maps across the different content areas provided evidence of alignment to the Common Core and included the instructional shifts. For example, in a grade eight ELA unit, students are to explain how an author uses evidence to support key details in a literary or informational text. A grade six ELA unit requires students to determine the theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters in a story respond to challenges.

- Lesson plans across grades and subjects reflect the integration of the instructional shifts. A science lesson plan emphasizes both the content standard and the Common Core standard, such as citing specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts. This practice of aligning curricula to standards was seen across grades and subjects in lesson and unit plans.

- Teachers use a variety of data including pre-and post-assessments and exit slips to refine small group instruction and assign modified tasks for diverse learners. A review of curriculum maps reflects that teachers are making revisions to support students at their instructional levels. For example, a review of math data by grade seven teachers revealed that students were struggling with word problems. As a result, they added word problems in their lesson plan to support students’ comprehension. Teachers also added fluency exercises in math to develop procedural skill, speed, and accuracy. Teachers stated during the team meeting that students should work quickly and accurately solving general, one-variable, and linear equations.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and staff align assessments to curricula, and use on-going assessments to analyze data to determine student progress outcomes and to make instructional adjustments on the grade and classroom level. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Curricula and instruction is adjusted based on assessment results, including teachers making instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, teachers checked for understanding during the instructional lesson. Teachers used writing checklists, exit slips and various questioning strategies to assess students’ understanding during the lessons. In math classes teachers walked around the classroom to observe students’ answers. The teacher made a few minor lesson adjustments when she noticed a few students couldn’t express their understanding. In a math class, the teacher used a quick-check questioning sheet to assess students’ learning. The sheet included the names of the students and a check was placed next to those students who missed a question or were unable to answer certain questions from the assigned lesson.

- School leaders administered school wide benchmark performance assessments in both reading and math. The results from these assessments provided school leaders and teachers with complete data item analysis of the students’ performance. Results have led to instructional adjustments at the classroom and grade levels as well as the grouping of students across the grades according to their reading and math levels.

- The principal stated that the instructional focus is to monitor student learning by implementing ongoing checks for understanding and making necessary instructional adjustments to ensure academic success for all. This was evidenced in the classrooms where teachers assess student understanding and track data. Teachers circulate and listen to conversations during mini-lessons to collect information. Additionally, teachers analyze assessment data to measure student growth and to identify gaps of understanding. Teachers performed an item analysis and noticed that students struggled with academic vocabulary. Teachers examined baseline data, iReady assessment results, and unit examinations. This analysis revealed a gap in reading and challenges in solving word problems for students in math. Teachers across classrooms made adjustments to curricula and pacing calendars to strengthen reading readiness along with ongoing formative assessment.
**Findings**

School leaders have established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff and families connected to college and career readiness. These high expectations are consistently provided to teachers and families on engagement and assessment through ongoing communication and collaborations.

**Impact**

All members of the school community are held accountable for implementing the expectations. Parents understand their child’s progress toward their learning goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Parents and students shared that they are provided with on-going and consistent feedback regarding how they are progressing. Feedback often occurs in the form of one-on-one meetings, with data and information tailored to the specific needs of the student, such as academic progress and attendance. Parents shared that teachers offer guidance and support and regularly send updates on their children’s progress via phone and email outreach. Parents stated that the school offers workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards to help them better understand the expectations of those standards.

- School leaders provide a professional handbook to staff, teachers, and paraprofessionals that outlines clear expectations and professional duties. The staff handbook also includes the school’s mission, guidelines for lesson planning and use of preparation periods. During the year, school leaders constructed a professional development plan based on the needs of teachers and the competencies of the Danielson Framework for Teaching for teachers. Based on the schoolwide focus of domain 3c-Engaging Students in Learning, and domain 3d – Using Assessment in Instruction and Providing Actionable Feedback, teachers were provided professional development for techniques to be incorporated in instructional lessons.

- There is consistent and ongoing feedback to families to ensure they understand their children’s academic and social progress. During the parent meeting, it was shared that school leaders and teachers provide frequent communication with them through phone calls, text messages, emails, and newsletters. In addition, parents expressed that administrators have open door policies, allowing them at any time during the school day to discuss their children’s social and academic progress.
Additional Finding

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<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

School leaders ensure that teachers across grade levels engage in structured professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures including involvement in development of student programs are in place.

Impact

Cross-functional professional collaborations have resulted in improved teacher practice. Teachers take part in leadership opportunities and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- In an observed grade team meeting, a teacher presented student work on a task and teachers collectively developed strategies to be implemented to improve teacher practice. Teachers collaborate with each other and support staff including SETSS teachers, ENL instructors, and ICT teachers are included to diversify instruction and provide strategies based on data shared during meetings. Teacher teams use scheduled meetings to discuss the performance and needs of students they share in common. Teachers meet regularly in grade and content-specific teams and use collaboratively developed protocols to analyze curricula and student work, to engage in shared reflection, and to develop action plans to address next steps. Teachers shared that inquiry work has strengthened their instructional capacity especially with the teaching of reading comprehension. Teachers explained that students struggled with answering short and extended response pieces on the state ELA assessment. Teachers collectively decided to employ the Respond, Answer, Cite Textual Evidence, Explain, and Summarize strategy when students wrote short and extended responses. Results on the spring ELA benchmark assessment in February indicated an increase in student achievement in writing.

- During a grade eight team meeting, teachers sorted student text-based short responses by performance level before selecting a few for discussion. Teachers described the evidence in the student work that met the description in the performance level. As many of the students had scored at level three, they decided to look at descriptors at level four with the intention of isolating these elements to develop an arc of lessons for this unit. Teachers’ systematic analysis at the previous week teacher meeting revealed that a grade eight special education class had 84 percent mastery in the mid-unit check in. This class had outperformed other classes on the grade in the subskill of “determining a theme and analyzing its development over the course of the text.” This teacher team had debriefed the teacher and analyzed the student work. The team then isolated the instructional practice that yielded the high results and set up a visitation to watch the teaching of the writing skill. Additionally, team members adjusted all lessons on the grade, as well as the curriculum map to include this new skill.

- A distributive leadership structure is embedded as an integral part of the school culture. Teacher leaders facilitate department meetings, and teachers assume a leadership role in supporting colleagues in instructional decisions that impact student programming and curricula development. Teachers state that they have significant voice in key instructional decisions, such as, Kid Talk, to discuss students that are having academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional challenges in classrooms. Teachers review anecdotal notes, look at the students’ work and social history at the school. As a result of this work there was an increase of 7 percentage points in student achievement on the New York State assessment in ELA.