Quality Review Report
2017-2018

Providing Urban Learners Success In Education
High School

High school 10X319

560 East 179 Street
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Carol Wiggins

Dates of Review:
January 10, 2018 - January 11, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Clarence Williams Jr.
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

Providing Urban Learners Success In Education High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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</strong> 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><strong>1.2</strong> 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><strong>2.2</strong> 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>Area of Celebration</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>
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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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>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

Quality Indicator: 1.4 Positive Learning Environment
Rating: Proficient

Findings

The school has a focus on culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support. Structures are in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult who helps to coordinate attendance, social-emotional learning, child/youth development.

Impact

Students and adults treat each other respectfully. Through advisory and meetings, student voice is welcome and valued. Behavioral supports such as Case Conferencing are aligned with student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- To support students being known in the building on an individual basis, teachers use advisory to support students on a social emotional level. Advisory is held five days per week for thirty-five minutes for all students. Materials from an advisory session with a student included, a questionnaire on communication skills. Advisory teachers have stated that the questionnaire allows them to know the student on an individual basis. An example questionnaire included, the student checking off the following, “When in conversation, I focus on positive things.” “I try to use positive conversation skills in the same questionnaire, students were required to answer questions such as, “Do you have a Facebook page?” “Is there anything on your page you would not want me to see, and what would you change?” A teacher stated that the information they gather during advisory tells the about the student on a social emotional level.

- Student voice is valued in the building. Students created a game night that takes place twice per term that is tied to improving attendance. Students created the criteria that requires that they are passing all their classes and must maintain eighty-five percent attendance on a consistent basis. When asked how students decided on eighty percent attendance, a student responded, “We decided on eighty-five percent because as a transfer school, we have different schedules than traditional schools, some of us work and have other responsibilities. The principal supported us on this idea.” An additional example of student voice in the building was demonstrated as seniors meet every Friday to discuss decisions that impact their future. One of these decisions that was made by the seniors was to select the colleges that the school will be visiting. As a result, the school visited different colleges throughout the year.

- Student behavioral supports are supported by the dean who is focused on building relationships with students on a one-to-one basis. The dean, in conjunction with the guidance counselors conducts “Case Conferencing.” These meetings are conducted on Fridays. The purpose of the meeting is to work with students on an individual basis and set goals for them. An example of a case conference outcome sheet included the noticing that a student was missing a great deal of work and had been absent on many occasions. The outcomes included the student to waking up by seven-thirty and leaving the house by eight o’clock. Turn in missing assignments by the end of the week and turn the cell phone off for forty-five minutes to study. A student stated, “case conferencing is one of my favorite things about the school because it allows me know how I’m doing and lets me know that people care about me.”
Findings
School leaders support teacher growth with feedback from infrequent cycles of classroom observation. Feedback to teachers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps, but is not yet fully connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
Feedback to teachers is not consistently effective. Teacher feedback is beginning to show support for teacher development but does not articulate clear expectations in informal observations or feedback forms.

Supporting Evidence
- The principal uses Advance observation forms that is tied into the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide feedback to teachers. An informal observation was presented on a Socratic seminar. The feedback stated that the teacher was developing in using questioning and discussion techniques. Feedback included, “Many questions were rudimentary during the Socratic seminar, such as, why people are conquered?” The observation targeted an area of the Danielson Framework for teaching but does not address the area of the framework that includes discussion techniques. Further, the feedback only mentions the questions that the teacher used and does not provide feedback to the teacher on how to build on questioning and discussion techniques to promote student learning.

- The principal uses Teacher/Principal conference forms to provide feedback to teachers to support teachers in their pedagogy. The conference form list areas of “strength (warm feedback)” and “concerns (cool feedback).” In an example given, the principal checked off that strengths included, classroom management, planning of the lesson, demonstration of knowledge and being respectful towards students. Concerns included, questioning and discussion techniques. Additional comments were, “discussed moving students to thinking and even higher levels through questioning techniques.” Although the feedback identified captures strengths as an area of concern for instruction, it does not provide feedback to the teacher on how to improve on questioning and discussion or provide examples to support the initiative.

- Feedback to teachers is infrequent. During an interview, the principal stated that each teacher has been observed once. Although each teacher has been observed once, as of January there have not been any follow-ups documented or presented that provided a written follow-up observation or next step supports for the observations that were presented. For example, an October informal observation stated that a teacher was “developing” in engaging students in learning. The principal stated, “Some students are intellectually engaging the lesson while others get very distracted and lose focus.” The teacher was also developing in using assessment in instruction and using questioning and discussion technique. Although this observation was done in October, the principal has not produced any follow-up observations or supports for the teacher as of January, stating that each teacher has only been observed once.
Findings
School leaders and teachers ensure that the curricula are strategically integrated into the Common Core Learning Standards. The curricula are refined based on student work.

Impact
College and career readiness is reflected in the curricula for all grades. Curricula is planned to ensure cognitive engagement for all students, including the lowest and highest achieving students.

Supporting Evidence

- To ensure that the curriculum reflects integration of Common Core Learning standards, the principal and staff use standards-based weekly assessments that address reading, writing and speaking and listening standards. A plan from December on government, strategically, incorporated Common Core writing standards that stated, students will evaluate viewpoints from different authors on the same historical event and assesses the authors’ claim, reasoning and evidence. The reading standard included having students determine the central idea form primary and secondary sources, speaking and listening standards include, “integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media to address a question or solve a problem.” The standards demonstrate how teachers use different standards to support a topic and support student learning.

- To support student learning, the curriculum is refined to ensure that a variety of learners’ needs are being met. Socratic seminar was incorporated in the curriculum after teachers noticed that students were not responsive to text response and expressing ideas in text analysis responses based on English Regent scores. Socratic seminar has allowed students to improve on expression and supporting claims based on the text. As of September, Socratic seminar is in use across all grades for all learners including math and science. This is reflected in the lesson plans that were reviewed, Students have stated that the seminar allows them to express themselves no matter what level they are on.

- College and career readiness is demonstrated in the curriculum through developing writing skills. One example was seen in a lesson plan that incorporated Statement, Evidence of support and Explanation, (SEE paragraph). The lesson plan demonstrates how students use this writing method to improve comprehensive writing and adding details through higher order thinking skills. The method requires students to provide relevant and logical statements that coincide with evidence and use depth of knowledge to analyze text. A student stated, “The school prepares me for college by helping me to improve my writing skills. The SEE method helps me put my thoughts together and helps me build understand of writing. In the fall, I will be going to school for journalism.”
Findings
Across classrooms visited, teaching practices reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching.*

Impact
Teachers use Socratic seminars to reflect how students learn and support student engagement. These practices result in all student producing meaningful work products that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observation of a global studies class, students were observed discussing essay selections that they have chosen for their final exam. One student was discussing how Obama displayed nationalism. The student stated, “as President, he supported domestic policies that would help bring jobs in.” Another student discussed the topic of how the first Iraqi war still resonates. The student was discussing how the war did not go as planned. When the teacher asked, “How do you support that claim?” the student cited the text stating, “The article says that Saddam Hussein said it would be the mother of all battles.” The teachers asked, whether it was. The student referred to the article again quoting, “It was history’s most lopsided victories.” Other students were engaged watching video of a speech from former President George Bush, discussing the war and annotating elements of the speech. All students were engaged in the lesson through discussion reading and listening.

- Teachers use Socratic seminars to promote student engagement. During the observation of an economics class, students were engaged in the preparation of a Socratic seminar. Students that were going to be in the inner circle were having a discussion on: whether it is a good idea for celebrities to endorse products. One student stated, “Athletes are effective at endorsing products because the more famous you get, the more people will listen to you. Another student stated, “I disagree because some athletes are poor role models.” When the teacher asked for an example, the student named a celebrity that was in the paper. An additional student stated that advertisers should not support celebrities who have negative publicity. One student stated, I agree because if I’m famous I have an obligation to behave in a certain way.” During the conversation, the teacher was taking notes on the conversation and reminding students that will be in the inner circle of their responsibility to take notes, and for the outer circle students to remember to support their statements with detail.

- Teachers have stated that students learn best by working in a student-centered environment. This was evident in an English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were observed working independently in small groups. The topic was working on supporting argumentative claims. One group was working on the question, posed by the teacher, “What would happen if drones took jobs form delivery people?” In a small group setting, one student stated, “People would lose jobs because businesses would not have to pay wages.” Another student stated. “It would be good for management but not for people who rely on the job.” Another student stated, “There will be less traffic tickets, which could also affect the economy.” The teacher allowed the students to continue their conversation by expressing their thoughts. Students were also independently reading the text, “Along for the Ride” an article about using drones to drive cabs. While students worked in their groups, the teacher took notes on their comments.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers and students use rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Teachers use classroom assignments and rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students. Additionally, teachers use student self-assessment, check for understanding during instruction, and make adjustments to support student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- To support comprehension of instruction, students use self-assessment across classes. A SEE paragraph rubric demonstrated how a student assessed their understanding of citing textual evidence. The rubric has four levels. The student recorded that they are a level 3. Under current performance, the student stated, “Today I am a three because I demonstrate a correct analysis using a clear central idea with evidence from the text to back up my story.” The rubric also required the student to state their goals for next steps. The student stated, “In English I want to work on citing more than three examples from the text.” An additional example of self-assessment using the SEE rubric was demonstrated. A student rated himself a level 3, stating that they gave the central idea with two examples, and made it clear for the reader to understand. The next goal included, “I repeat myself too much and sometimes I don’t understand what I’m saying.” Students have stated that the SEE rubric allows them to give an accurate assessment if where they are in the class and helps them to prepare for other assessments.

- Teacher feedback provides actionable next steps for students on their assignments. In a science assignment on atomic structure, the teacher used a post it to state, “Find out what are some variations in atomic structure and clarify your facts.” On another student’s assignment, next steps included, being mindful of organization and include details and “Learn how to represent reactions with equations.” During a student interview a student stated, “This school has teachers that always let you know how you’re doing in their classes through next steps and conversations that we have with them.

- During classroom instruction, teachers check for understanding and use the information to adjust the instruction to ensure that all students understand the material. During a lesson on the American dream, the students were engaged in a do now that required them share their example of the definition of the American dream. Students were hesitant to express themselves. Some students said they were not sure how to put it into words. As a result, the teacher put them into whole groups to brainstorm together with those who had a better understanding. At the end of the brainstorming, session students wrote their responses on chart paper to share with the class as a team. The teacher stated that the students were more comfortable working together and coming to a consensus to share with the class. One example given was, “The American Dream is to have a family and have enough money to survive and splurge.”
Findings
Teacher teams consistently analyze student work across subjects. Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers have built leadership capacity and contribute to schoolwide initiatives.

Impact
Social studies and English team work results in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for students. Teacher leadership results in initiatives to promote teacher learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Minutes and an agenda from a social studies meeting demonstrated how the Socratic seminar would be modified based on student performance to support ELA and social studies. The agenda included, which text would be most useful for the seminar, which online resources could be used, which videos and other multimedia tools can assist students, and how can current events be incorporated into the seminars. The minutes stated that teachers noticed that students were tying text-based discussions to current events. The team decided that they would tie in more current events to the Socratic discussions to promote more student dialogue and to help with historical context. This was also evident in an ELA meeting where minutes reflected using historical context that is tied to social studies to support Socratic seminars. The minutes also reflected that students needed to improve on note-taking skills. This was a result of teacher noticing that students' notes were limited and inconsistent.

- Distributive leadership initiatives support teacher growth. The school has five teachers that are enrolled in an accredited leadership program and are given roles to support the staff. An example of this was seen in the special education department. One leadership candidate oversees the special education department to oversee compliance and supports teacher practices for students with disabilities through inter-visitations and walk-throughs. All school leaders meet with the principal twice per week to provide updates.

- The principal supports leadership development by allowing teachers to research initiate and monitor new classroom practices for schoolwide use. An example of this was demonstrated with the Statement, Evidence of support and Explanation, (SEE paragraph) protocol. This initiative was brought into the school by a school leader. The teacher trained the staff on it through a series of professional developments and it is currently in use in the core subject areas. The protocol teaches students how to write by looking at evidence, how to cite evidence and how to demonstrate a thoughtful analysis of a text. The protocol has a rubric that rates student performance from one to four and the practice was evident in most classes visited.