Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Hunts Point School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 08X424

730 Bryant Avenue
Bronx
NY 10474

Principal: David Vazquez

Dates of Review:
May 22, 2018 - May 23, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

The Hunts Point School 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 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>Developing</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</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: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations on creating high-quality, standards-based unit plans, and implementing essential components of daily instruction to staff. Faculty members use ongoing structures and partnerships to communicate high expectations to students.

Impact
School staff are held accountable and receive support for ensuring effective teaching and learning methods are consistently utilized. Students are aware of the schoolwide expectations and are provided guidance and advisement in preparation for the next grade level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use a weekly newsletter called the *Monday Morning Memo* to remind staff members of the instructional focus on introducing units of study, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards across the curricula, with a high premium on critical reading and writing. Additionally, the memos provide reminders on the five daily essential instructional components school leaders are reinforcing: Standards-based learning targets, a minimum of three observable checks for understanding in lesson plans, scaffolding for English Language Learners, (ELLs) and students with disabilities, authentic and effective utilization of paraprofessionals and use of exit slips. Furthermore, professional development is focused on supporting staff on understanding how to create effective learning targets using the workshop model. A review of the professional development plan includes topics connected to the five components and instructional focus such as a workshop on developing checks for understanding and a series of ELL strategy Monday and lunch workshops for supporting small group instruction. Collectively, staff members reported that these structures are helpful in providing guidance towards meeting school leaders’ expectations, thus supporting them in maintaining high expectations.

- Throughout the year, school leaders conduct instructional walkthroughs to observe how staff members are engaging with the five daily essential components and provide feedback to support their efforts in meeting them. Feedback is emailed to staff members and growth areas are listed along with a professional development opportunity based on their noticings, such as a lunch and learn workshop on checks for understanding that was noted in one report. Additionally, school leaders conduct post-observation debriefs with teachers to discuss what was observed, how teachers are progressing in using the five essential components and to provide strategies as needed. Other ongoing conversations with teachers include data talks where reviews of student progress in English Language Arts (ELA) and math are managed along with conducting action planning. Overall, school leaders are establishing a culture of high expectations for all staff members.

- A key structure for supporting students in understanding their transcripts and providing guidance towards high school readiness is the advisory program. Advisors use an online grading tool and meet with their students to review their progress and offer guidance on what the expectations are for the current grade level. All eighth grade students have engaged in a town hall on the articulation progress and guidance counselors push into classes to conduct lessons on the high school selection process. Additionally, a leadership course for struggling students is provided, which students report has provided them with opportunities to obtain extra credit and teachers offer incentives to increase scholarly behavior. Students reported that these structures help motivate them to learn more about what it means to be ready for high school. Several students reported that they are attending Saturday programs to prepare themselves for upcoming exams and ensuring that they are maintaining the school’s expectations for their end-of-year success.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

Although assessment practices and standards-based grading policies are beginning to align to the curricula and checks for understanding are present, self-assessment has yet to reflect a consistency of practice.

Impact

Limited feedback and inconsistent adjustments hinder students' opportunities to improve their work products and ensure their learning needs are met.

Supporting Evidence

- This year, school leaders revised the grading policy to ensure it is standards-based so that the majority of student’s grades come from projects and assessments by reducing the percentage for homework to 15 percent. However, when speaking with students on the school's grading policy, some students were not aware of the changes. A review of rubrics across subjects reflects alignment to unit objectives. Furthermore, students stated that in ELA, they received rubrics once completing assignments to aid in their understanding of the criteria and how they earned their grade, yet the frequency of this process varies in math and science. However, rubric criteria is not commonly provided in advance of starting tasks in some classrooms and limits students’ ability to understand how to obtain a good grade prior to the task’s completion. Additionally, a review of student work products in most classes contained grades, yet the connection between the grade and feedback provided wasn't as consistent or actionable based on the rubric provided. On a math task, a student received a perfect score. Yet, the feedback stated that the student needed to work on showing how they found their answer after completing a problem on circles, which did not match the criteria for a perfect score. This feedback which was similar to other comments viewed in areas of the school, hinders students’ understanding of the grading policy and how to improve their grades.

- During an interview, students reviewed their work in different subject areas and discussed how they would work towards obtaining a stronger grade. After reviewing her feedback and rubric, one student shared that in order to improve her writing, she needs to add more transition words and a better introduction. When asked if she received any additional support towards improving these areas, she stated that she received another essay to complete. In reviewing their work, students acknowledged that they have received their grades and understood the differences between percentage levels and rubric-based performance levels, yet rubric-aligned feedback to support their next steps was provided only to some students, deterring some students from achieving a higher grade.

- Across classes, teachers’ use of formative assessment as a means to check, and if needed reteach concepts to increase student understanding, has yet to become an ongoing practice. In one ELA class for students with disabilities, the teacher posed key questions to students and used prompting to help specific students make prophesy predictions relative to Macbeth, which helped them understand the characters’ relationship. However, in a science class, although the teacher attempted to reteach a concept to students, a review of work products reflected misunderstandings. Furthermore, although checklists are used for self-assessment in ELA, adjustments based on student reflections have yet to reflect consistency across classes and work products.
Findings
Teacher are beginning to develop daily, rigorous tasks across grade and subject areas. Curricula and tasks reflect planning for students.

Impact
Planning documents reflect some access to rigorous tasks for groups of students to support cognitive engagement for a diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- In a social studies unit plan, some learning objectives are planned to provide students with lessons geared to skill development and building conceptual knowledge, while others are planned for more analysis. One lesson objective states that students are participating in a writing activity to describe the cultural changes that occurred during the 1920’s and analyze how the growth of the industry affected life during that time period. However, in a social studies lesson plan, the majority of the lesson focuses on students grouping government programs by type and providing a small written rationale for choosing particular categories, reducing the amount of elaboration and ability to provide analysis in their response, thus limiting their writing to skill development and missing out on providing rigor to the expectations of the lesson.

- In a science unit plan, the culminating task involves students in a panel discussion of a Congressional meeting where they are creating a speech to express their concerns about the climate change. To create the speech, students are developing a claim and are expected to use evidence from a textbook and other sources to support their reasoning. In a science lesson plan, students are limited to creating a Know, Wonder, Learn (KWL) chart to gather information on dew-point and relative humidity which confines responses to recall and basic inferences with a focus purely on skill development.

- In an ELA historical fiction unit plan, the learning objectives focus mainly on building skills connected to drawing conclusions and conducting research. However, in one reading lesson plan, students are grouped by station with different documents which include visuals and kid-friendly websites. Although students are provided guiding questions to help them obtain information needed for future research, most of the questions are either recall or require students to make low-level inferences.

- Some lesson plans contain a clear rationale for grouping students and connect specific adjusted tasks based on ability level from formative and summative data. In one sixth grade ELA lesson plan, two out of three groups are provided with a modified version of the story of *Ruby Bridges* to help students develop a critique of the texts. However, in two math lesson plans, there is no evidence of how data is used to formulate engaging tasks for specific groups of students. In a science lesson, although some scaffolds were provided to support ELLs and students with disabilities, a data-based rationale for other student groups was not provided and all students are required to complete the same task. Overall, the use of data-based planning in some lesson plans demonstrates that this is a growing practice for the school.
## Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

### Rating: Developing

#### Findings

Teaching practices are beginning to reflect all five components of daily instruction in connection to ensuring students are thinking critically based on the curricula. Teaching strategies have yet to reflect consistent multiple entry points into tasks.

#### Impact

High-order thinking and standards-based responses are reflected in some work products.

#### Supporting Evidence

- As part of the school’s instructional focus, teachers are working on implementing the workshop model to incorporate the five daily essential components. In some classes observed, teacher approaches are beginning to mirror the school’s core beliefs in exposing students to standards-based tasks and fostering student engagement. In an ELA class, students were asked to use annotation strategies to read and determine areas where their character changed and whether that impacted the conflict of the story. Students were able to point to specific areas in their books where the character changed and how they knew and kept track of their thinking. One student shared that she knew the character had transitioned and how that impacted the story because she put herself “in my character’s shoes,” and elaborated how that helped her analyze the situation. However, only some classes were able to demonstrate the same level of thinking in work products which serves as a missed opportunity in other classes for students to engage with standards-based work.

- In a social studies class, students categorized a set of New Deal government programs into three areas: relief, recovery, and reform. Some students stated that one program focused on jobs and that it couldn’t be a recovery program as, “it isn’t changing something that is wrong.” Similarly, another student matched the Home Owners Loan Corporation as a relief program. However, teacher questioning did not prompt students to think further and explain their rationale for matching selected programs to the assigned categories, leaving students' responses focused on skills such as categorizing and low-level analysis.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, both teachers used questioning and prompting to support student understanding of the difference between cubing numbers and finding the cube root. Some students were able to grasp the concept and apply it when solving other problems, yet due to limited scaffolding provided by the teachers, other written responses were either incomplete or demonstrated misunderstandings of the concept.

- In a science class, students worked individually to complete a KWL chart to list information they obtained in their textbook on relative humidity and dew point. A review of some of the students work reflected quotes and other information from their books yet lacked in a deeper analysis. One student wrote “I know there is a lot of water vapor in the air and want to know the history of the dew point.” Another student completed the graphic organizer, yet when it came to finding an answer for her wondering, her response did not connect with the question. Similarly, other student responses reflected the same patterns with little connection to the learning objective of the lesson on explaining the difference between relative humidity and dew point, which limits their opportunity to engage in higher-order thinking and analysis.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

School leaders support the development of all teachers through monthly cycles of observation and review of student work or data analysis to provide feedback which contains strengths, growth areas, and next steps.

Impact

Feedback consistently articulates clear expectations connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to elevate instructional practices and professional reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have developed a four week cycle of observation to support all teachers, new and experienced. Reviews of online intervention data and student work are integrated into the feedback provided to teachers as part of post-observation debriefing sessions. Teacher feedback is provided in a timely manner within 24 to 48 hours. Teachers reported that there is an open door policy where school leaders are available to discuss their progress based on previous feedback and that they find both informal and formal structures helpful and supportive. The majority of feedback is specific, prioritized, clear, and actionable with support strategies provided per the selected growth area. To support assessment-based instructional practices, one teacher’s feedback contained a list of possible formative assessment approaches to use for enhancing and increasing the frequency of checks for understanding methods. Additionally, to maintain the focus on checks for understanding, the school leader highlighted ways other adults who are present in the classroom could use these approaches and even assign specific students to them based on need, thus providing clear actionable guidance for the teacher in this specific component. A review of feedback reports reflects similar feedback by all school leaders in support of increasing the quality of teaching practices.

- A review of post-observation feedback reflects that school leaders provide comments in the form on strengths, growth areas, and next steps and make connections to the Danielson Framework for Teaching per report. One report suggests that the teacher reflects on the quality of feedback to ensure it is “substantive” and that it incorporates strengths and weakness and how to improve towards mastery. As a next step, the school leader recommends providing examples of mastery work to match the criteria description. The school leader provides both two professional texts to support those next steps and guiding reflection questions to help the teacher revisit his future planning to incorporate some of the suggestions. Similar feedback structures are integrated across several reports including non-evaluative ones, which overall, promote specific expectations and thorough reflection of instructional practices.

- In promoting the school’s instructional focus and expectations for daily learning approaches, a review of feedback emphasizes the importance of rigor, student engagement, and assessment-based instruction. In one report, the school leader recommends that the teacher use turn and talk approaches to increase student engagement and promote discussion. In another report, the school leader recommends that the teacher use a quick write, also known as on-demand short writing assignments, as an entry assessment ticket into the lesson to determine whether reinforcement of specific skills is needed in order for students to be successful in the current lesson. Overall, feedback reinforces schoolwide expectations for teaching and learning and provides strategies to support future lesson modifications and improve instruction.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations connected to school goals on increasing State exam scores by engaging teachers in analyzing benchmark data for groups of students.

Impact
Department teams are beginning to engage in inquiry-based practices towards supporting improving teaching and increasing student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- For the past few months, ELA teachers are beginning to embrace more structures to look at student work with a reflective lens on how to increase progress for target students and hone instructional practices. During a department meeting, a few ELA teachers presented some of their target students’ writing and used a protocol with their colleagues to examine each piece. In the seventh grade group, the presenting teacher shared a pre-unit assessment of a fictional narrative. Teachers noted that the writing had a good lead, was sequenced well, and was considered to be a nice story. Some growth areas for the student were writing with an organized focus and the need for easier transitions per paragraph. As a next step, teachers referred to a professional text to obtain strategies and shared some of their own ideas to suggest approaches such as peer editing, a graphic organizer for plotting the sequence and the use of an exemplar text, thus collectively working to support classroom pedagogical practices and increase target students’ progress.

- This year, the math team is beginning to use inquiry-based practices to support the school’s goals on increasing students’ proficiency rates on both State exams. During one math meeting, teachers reviewed a math benchmark exam to determine areas of strength, challenge and areas of critical need for a group of target students. Based on the review, teachers determined that students needed reinforcement on number systems, understanding proportional relationships and expressions and equations skills. Teachers discussed re-teaching the skills during the following unit and using exit slips, error analysis conversations, and online intervention programs to assess whether students are grasping the content. Although math teachers are reviewing data in support of making progress towards school goals, opportunities for consistent reflection of instruction using data is a growing practice.

- Some teams are in the process of developing consistent inquiry based protocols and structures. A review of science agendas and notes reflects that science teachers review benchmark assessment data yet focused mainly on unit pacing revisions. Teachers are beginning to integrate ELA strategies to support scientific writing. Additionally, previously this year, science teachers worked on graphing which has shown some improvement in student benchmark data. Teachers reported that the social studies team has been working on integrating a new curriculum and using quick writes, to determine how ELL students are progressing. Overall, teachers are working to building more sustained, inquiry-based practices during team meetings to improve their practice and support target students.