Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Steam Bridge School
Elementary 11X481
1684 White Plains Road
Bronx
NY 10462

Principal: Katiria Rojas

Dates of Review:
January 30, 2018 - January 31, 2018

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

The Steam Bridge School serves students in grade K through grade 2. 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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<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>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
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Findings

School leaders and teacher peers strategically use effective feedback and next steps from classroom observations to support teacher development. The Danielson Framework for Teaching provides teachers with rubric-based feedback, capturing strengths, challenges, and next steps.

Impact

The strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observations supported by peer visitation and collaboration with colleagues and school leaders ensures that actionable feedback articulates clear expectations and is aligned to professional development plans. This process promotes teachers’ growth by elevating instructional practices across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated their beliefs about the observation process, stating, "If we observe our teachers and provide them with specific next steps, actionable feedback, and support around our instructional focus, then we will see improved student outcomes." School leaders designed a strategic plan to conduct frequent cycles of observations and to support teachers in raising the quality of instruction for students. During the summer professional development sessions, new teachers received intensive support before school started, such as expectations for instruction, school culture, and logistics, as well as a mentor. School leaders ensure ongoing instructional support throughout the year. One new teacher reported that since her first meeting with her colleagues before school started, she has received support from school leaders and teachers, so she can keep up with the rigorous instructional demands of the school. The teacher was thankful for the opportunities to collaborate with her peers. A review of Advance reports indicates that school leaders are meeting their observation targets; each teacher has had three observations.

- As a result of extensive professional development, teachers have a deep understanding of the Danielson Framework for Teaching expectations. Through feedback and next steps given in observations, school leaders support teachers’ performance. Based on Advance data, leaders ensure that teachers engage in intervisitation and debrief after these lessons, discussing how to incorporate their learning into future lessons. Teachers set goals at the beginning of each school year and school leaders meet with teachers three times yearly to check on the progress of the goals, review student data, and provide actionable feedback with next steps. Goals are also addressed in observation reports and at post-observation conferences. All of this work has led to improved teacher practice, with teachers taking on the role of facilitator in classrooms, enabling students to think and speak more critically, as evidenced in observation reports.

- A review of teacher observation reports highlights that the focus of written feedback on detailed low inference notes and rationale provides thoughtful evidence supporting the ratings. Observation reports include actionable feedback encompassing teacher reflection, “glows and grows,” and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Actionable feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and development and aligns with teacher professional goals. For example, a teacher received the following feedback: “During the midpoint check-in you have to make sure that ALL the students are conforming to the rules and expectations; such as pencils down, exchange papers with their partner and provide partner a glow and a grow to enhance their work. Not all your students were having the meaningful conversation. Therefore, consider providing sentence starters or prompts for certain students to follow as they have that conversation” [sic]. Another example of feedback states, “Discussions enabled students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by you. However, moving forward have other students as facilitators other than Avery and Riley. Implement a system where students pick from a set of name cards to be the facilitator.” Thus, targeted feedback further informs and supports teachers growth in instructional practice.
### Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

School leaders and faculty have a clear set of instructional goals aligned with the learning needs of students and staff, as apparent in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). Goals and action plans are informed by ongoing data-driven needs assessment and analysis.

**Impact**

Even though the school has developed collaborative structures to meet the CEP goals, these goals have yet to leverage thoughtful changes to explicitly accelerate student learning and social-emotional growth or to purposefully improve teacher practice.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of the school's planning documents and School Leadership Team (SLT) agendas and minutes revealed that the team has clearly defined five areas of focus for school improvement: increase the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities reading on or above grade level, as measured by Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) running records; increase student participation in "Fun Friday;" improve teachers' practice by at least one level on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, as measured by the *Advance* data tracker; use the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to develop a shared understanding through norming of components of instruction during collaborative meetings and demonstrating core principles during instruction; and increase parent attendance and participation at functions such as parent workshops, schoolwide events, Parent Association (PA) meetings, and Parent-Teacher Conferences. Furthermore, the SLT engages in discussions and analysis of student achievement data and develops and tracks these schoolwide goals. Although the school has designed the five required goals for the CEP, some of them do not have clear metrics to measure whether or not the school will accomplish the goal by the end of the school year. As a result, outcomes may not be reflecting leverage changes that directly connect to accelerated student learning outcomes and social-emotional growth.

- Goal-setting and effective action planning at the school level, including professional development planning, are informed by a comprehensive, data-driven needs assessment and ongoing data gathering and analysis. These practices improve pedagogy across classrooms and close the achievement gap, as evident in the CEP goals' midpoint check-in system. For example, school leaders monitor and track all goals based on the Chancellor's Framework. In addition, school leaders have made the organizational decision of creating and implementing an after-school academy that addresses the needs of ELLs (entering and emerging) and students with disabilities to support the achievement of CEP goals. Furthermore, with regard to rigorous instruction, school leaders established the goal that teachers design and implement Common Core-aligned curricula, offering reading strategies that provide opportunities for students in kindergarten and first grade. During the midpoint analysis of the CEP goals, the ELL population reading on or above grade level grew twelve percent, which surpasses the expected midpoint reading growth by five percent.

- School leaders and teachers connect the growth in teacher and student performance to an expectation of increased rigor during instruction and in curriculum planning. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to track students' progress toward goals across grades and subject areas and the result are used to adjust curricula and instruction. For example, teachers use midpoint assessment analysis to identify class strengths, class weaknesses, and next steps to support the achievement of the school goals and action plans. Consequently, goal setting and decision-making, based on school data, is informed by regular communication among faculty members that helps determine next steps for ongoing school improvement.
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

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in the school's curricula and academic tasks, which are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects. Curricular and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Effective collaboration practices of the school's instructional team result in the design of rigorous tasks requiring learners to demonstrate their thinking. Data are effectively used to design curricula and tasks, ensuring that all students have access to the curricula, are cognitively engaged, and are learning at a high level.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan differentiated instruction strategies to develop or modify tasks that require the application of increasingly complex thinking to new situations. Instructional planning documents incorporate tasks requiring real world application of higher-order thinking skills to contextual situations. Science projects across grades require students to research a topic, construct a hypothesis, test it with an experiment, analyze data, draw a conclusion, prepare a display, and present findings to an audience. For example, a second grade science lesson includes tasks to engage students in critical thinking activities to determine causes of water evaporation. In a kindergarten lesson, students are to find the problem and a solution in a story and then share their work in writing accompanied by illustrations in a class presentation. Moreover, these projects require students to consistently use academic vocabulary in producing their reports, writing assignments, and describing problem-solving steps in oral discourse. As a result, rigorous habits and higher order tasks, such as those that require students to create their own meaning, integrate skills into processes that are coherently embedded within curricula across grades and subjects, effectively preparing students to demonstrate their thinking.

- Reviewed instructional planning documents revealed that teachers are planning curricula using multiple sources of data from summative and formative assessments to reviews of student work. All lesson plans evidenced the use of differentiated instructional strategies, including strategic student groupings and differentiated tasks. A first-grade lesson plan about how writers create a stronger beginning to their fables includes three colored tiered tasks. Students in the red groups will be provided with sentence starters to support writing two sentences to describe each character, students in the yellow groups will write ideas about what their characters might say in the fable, and students working in the green groups will write what their characters might say in the fable connecting with the next day’s instructional outcome: “How do writers incorporate dialogue into their fables?” Also, ELLs will be provided with visuals. Such practices regarding the ongoing revision of curricula enables all students to have access to the curricula, which reinforces the concepts being taught.

- Teachers use data from formative and summative assessments to make adjustments and revisions to instructional planning documents. Adjustments made to essential questions, contributing questions, instructional supports, and assessments based on student writing and outcomes on math and literacy performance tasks demonstrate teachers’ capacity to refine curricula to support access to content. Lesson plans reflect support for diverse learners through the use of materials and strategies such as graphic organizers, visual aids, desktop charts, sentence starters, anchor charts, highlighters, post-its, labels, visual cues/prompts, explicit task cards, intentional grouping of students, scaffolding of academic language, conversation prompts/questions to promote deeper discussions within student groups, and think-pair-share. Teachers use their student conferencing notes/logs in addition to data gathered from student work samples and unit assessments to plan next steps.
**Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms, coherent teaching practices informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching are aligned to the curricula and reflect the belief that students learn best when teachers create a supportive environment that allows differentiation, leading to engagement for all students. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

**Impact**

Shared beliefs among school leaders and teachers about how students learn best support the concept that meaningful work products are produced when learning is active, conducted in small groups, and personalized to students’ needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers believe that all students learn best and can produce high quality work that demonstrates the instructional shifts in a supportive environment that allows differentiation, leading to engagement for all students. This environment is supported by uniform structures and protocols, such as effectively using the “I Do, You Do, We Do” approach to teaching and dedicating a portion of each lesson for independent and paired interaction between students across all classrooms. Observed lessons revealed that students are strategically grouped and assigned different tasks and resources, based on a common learning target, to meet them where they are cognitively engaged with the content and skill. In an Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) first-grade reading lesson, students were assigned to three different groups, with each group provided with chunked text at the appropriate reading level. Students with disabilities and ELLs used a graphic organizer to draw. This practice was consistent across the vast majority of classrooms. Because of a coherent implementation of how students learn best, all students were able to demonstrate their learning in different forms of expression.

- School leaders and teachers created supportive environments where all students are learning in print-rich classrooms using instructional tools equipped with scaffolds, visual aids, and technology. These provide students with supplemental access to the material while promoting ownership in the learning process. One-on-one conferencing is a constant practice across classrooms where all teachers engage in effective interactions to gauge student progress, and, in some cases, to address misconceptions in their learning process. Thus, small groups are strategically designed, based on conference notes and assessment data. In a second grade ICT math class, students worked independently on their two-digit subtraction problems. When supports were needed, they looked at their process charts or consulted with their peers. Based on their progress, teachers reassigned students to different groups where they could find more challenging activities, receive additional support from peers, or work with the teacher.

- Across a vast majority of classes, students provide each other with feedback and ensure voices are heard during student-led discussions. Students formulate their own questions to further discussion, utilize academic vocabulary while verbalizing their thinking, and build upon each other’s ideas and/or agree/disagree with their peers’ thoughts. Students used accountable talk stems in a student-to-student discussion. Collaborative learning was observed in the form of whole group, small group, and heterogeneous/homogeneous partner work. In a science class, students worked together to determine the causes of water evaporation. After the group work activity, students as a whole group (and with minimal teacher mediation) engaged in conversations to explain under which conditions water will evaporate faster. In other classes, at the end of the lesson, students shared ideas and engaged in productive conversations about their learning. Thus, the vast majority of students demonstrated cognitive engagement in their lessons, with their active participation promoting ownership in their learning process.
Additional Finding

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

The school uses several common qualitative and quantitative assessments to identify strengths and gaps in student understanding, which are effectively used to inform instruction and make adjustments throughout the year. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Across classrooms, all teachers effectively implement on-going checks for understanding and track student progress to make effective curricular and instructional adjustments. These result in informed decisions impacting increased student mastery, including for ELLs and students with disabilities, as well as ensuring students’ awareness of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of assessment data revealed that teachers frequently analyze assessments to measure student growth and identify gaps of understanding. Teachers examine literacy assessment data and analyze Fountas and Pinnell running records and letter recognition assessments to ascertain students’ reading readiness skills. Also, teachers use common assessments to determine student’s progress toward goals across grades and subject areas, with the results used to adjust curricula and instruction. For example, teachers use midpoint assessment analysis to identify class strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. Across all classes, student groups were determined based on assessment data, with students assigned to differentiated math, reading, and writing groupings. Teachers periodically adjust these groupings based on formal assessment data as well as in-class conferencing. Teachers across classrooms make effective curricula adjustments such as designing differentiated instructional tasks for each lesson, creating graphic organizers to meet all students’ needs, and incorporating ENL strategies to address the needs of ELLs. As a result of established data analysis expectations, the kindergarten math mid-assessment unit revealed that most of the students understood the concepts of counting a set of objects and identifying the correct number for that object. However, within the same assessment, most students had trouble with continuing the number sequence, especially when counting backwards.

- The vast majority of teachers consistently and effectively use a variety of assessments to monitor student progress in all content areas. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding through an entrance ticket, a midpoint check-in, observational notes, traffic lights, flags, end-of-the-lesson share outs, and student self-assessments on assignment sheets. For example, in a second grade math lesson, the teacher started the lesson about solving subtraction word problems using an entrance ticket. While students engaged in solving their problems, the teacher circulated about the room, assessing students’ progress, noting “check, check plus, or check minus” so students knew that assignments/groupings were based on the on-the-spot assessments. All teachers consistently implemented on-going checks for understanding and made on-the-spot adjustments to the lessons. As a result of these ongoing assessments, teachers are able to make instructional adjustments to meet the current learning needs of each student.

- A review of students’ work products, conversations with teachers, students, parents, and school leaders, and observed classrooms revealed that students are consistently engaged in self-assessment activities. For example, at the bottom of each assignment/task, students have checklists to assess their work. Furthermore, during the midpoint check-in the lesson, students engage in peer-assessment. As a result of these assessment practices, students are fully aware of their learning needs and equipped to improve their work for the next assignment.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that strengthen teacher instructional capacity and promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Embedded leadership structures encourage teacher voice in key decisions, from planning curricula to improving instructional practices.

**Impact**

Effective teacher leadership and the integral participation of teachers in instructional decision-making have resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, improved pedagogical practice, and increased student achievement for all.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders reported that all teachers participate in both vertical and horizontal teams as well as special teams, such as English as a New Language (ENL), students with disabilities, and bottom-third teams. In these teams, teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations, with protocols used with fidelity to ensure that there is time on task. The “tuning protocol” is used to engage teacher teams in discussions and revisions to instructional practices, and concrete next steps are shared at the end of each meeting. Teachers share best practices that influence changes in lesson planning and delivery. This work is enhanced by an ENL teacher leader who is present at every meeting, offering instructional strategies to support ELLs, such as ways to increase the use of academic vocabulary across content areas. For example, in math, with the use of differentiated scaffolds, students were able to solve word problems, making better sense of them at the outset. Teachers shared that having the ENL teacher at their meetings offers a different perspective, helping refine their teaching practice and incorporate targeted supports for all students. Data from Fountas and Pinnell reveal that students’ overall achievement has increased when comparing first and second quarter assessments.

- All school leaders and teachers work collaboratively to create, develop, and adjust curricula aligned to the Common Core, incorporating instructional shifts while addressing possible misconceptions, embedding rigorous differentiated activities/tasks across content areas, and including opportunities for cooperative learning through engaging discussion and activities. Grade level teacher teams meet regularly to ensure alignment regarding curricula and standards being addressed and to gauge students’ progress towards reaching each unit’s overall goal(s)/standards. As a result, the school has seen an increase in math of twenty-nine percent when comparing mid- and post-unit assessments.

- Meetings with teacher teams and school leaders revealed that they collaborate to make decisions about professional development and instruction. Teachers lead a school-wide instructional initiatives to improve instruction through peer feedback and discussion. Teachers said they use each other as resources and regularly turnkey professional development, conveying that school leaders value their voice in key decision making. For example, they have opportunities to make curricular decisions about instruction, planning assessments, and scaffolds, as well as designing the schoolwide “Positive Behavior Expectations Matrix.” Teachers also have active participation in the hiring process. They meet one-on-one with their colleagues, conduct intervisitation to provide formative feedback, and have a space to share pedagogical strategies. Moreover, teachers recommended a phonemic building program to address individual students’ needs, including ELLs, students with disabilities, and bottom third students. The 2017 School Survey indicated that 100 percent of teachers reported that they have a moderate to great deal of influence over school policy in the area of developing instructional materials and influence over school policy in the area of setting standards for student behavior.