Quality Review Report

2017-2018

The Matilda Avenue School

Elementary 11X483

4520 Matilda Avenue
Bronx
NY 10470

Principal: Maria Cioffi

Dates of Review:
March 13, 2018 - March 14, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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 Matilda Avenue 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

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

High expectations are communicated to the school community through an instructional vision plan, professional development and *Talk to Me Tuesday*.

Impact

Mutual accountability for high expectations is relayed through inter-visitations and teacher-facilitated professional development. School leaders partner with families to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders delineate high expectations on instruction to the staff through written structures such an instructional vision plan and a learning environment checklist. The instructional vision plan outlines expectations for instruction defining the instructional models used in the school, such as the workshop model. Suggested unit map, unit and lesson planning templates were provided. Expectations for discussions in the classroom (referred to as “the thinking classroom”), differentiation of instruction, monitoring and tracking were articulated. A learning environment checklist outlines the expectations for the classroom environment such as classroom organization, evidence of unit of study, display of student work, and materials for students. Expectations for student work and data organization are explained through a color-coded folder system that signifies the student work to be collected for each folder. Accountability measures such as administrative walk-throughs and observations are conducted to ensure teachers adhere to the expectations.

- The school has professional development opportunities that support the school’s goals, instructional foci, and elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to reflect high expectations. A review of the school's professional development plans showed workshops on using number chats in math instruction, a series of workshops on guided reading, small group instruction strategies, and the rudiments of nonfiction writing. Additionally, a workshop entitled, “Equity and Access Goal Look Fors” also supports the school’s goal of including students’ interest in the curriculum and planning. The totality of workshops supports the school’s instructional focus of providing students opportunities to collaborate and engage in meaningful discussions. Reciprocal accountability of these expectations is attained through teacher-facilitated professional development workshops such as “Five Replicable Methods of Small Group Instruction You Can Use All Year Long…”, a series of workshops on “The How to Guide for Nonfiction Writing,” and the “Nuts and Bolts Overview of a Unit that Moves Kids Towards Conventional Writing…” Mutual accountability is also exemplified through teacher-led inter-visitations and teacher-facilitated professional development workshops.

- The school orchestrates opportunities for parents to foster a partnership with the school communicate high expectations connected to college and career readiness. Parents receive three progress reports a year detailing their child’s personal goals and progress towards those goals. Student-led conferences are an opportunity for parents to hear their child present their progress towards high expectations for instruction. Parents are apprised of their child’s progress through communication portals such as the school’s website, *Remind, Class Dojo. Talk to Me Tuesday* is a communication folder that families use to engage their child in discussions on instructional topics in their classes. Parents mentioned additional opportunities to support learning in the home through online portals for families to work with their children on reading and math and to use teacher videos on the school website that demonstrate strategies used in the classroom. There are also workshops on bullying, cook shop that promotes healthy eating and nutrition, and toolkits and workshops on social emotional approaches parents can use to connect with their child. Parents also mentioned volunteering at the school for events such as the Thanksgiving feast.
**Findings**

School leaders have an articulated belief about how student learn best through challenging and engaging partnerships evidenced by student work products and discussions; however, this was not evidenced in the vast majority of classrooms.

**Impact**

Student discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation and are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching; however, discussions do not always demonstrate ownership of their learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, school leaders have an espoused belief that students learn best when instruction is challenging, engaging, and entails partnerships that increase student achievement. In a kindergarten readers workshop class, the learning objective was, “I can read snap words with new endings.” The teacher modeled for the students how to identify snap words (words that can take an ending) using the document camera and the text *Hide and Seek*. The teacher asked the students if they knew the word playing and highlighted the ending. A student went to the interactive whiteboard and choose the word looked and highlighted the ending. Students then engaged in a turn-and-talk and discussed additional words with snap endings. However, in a second-grade reading workshop class where students were tasked with identifying similes by looking for “like” or “as,” students were engaged in the lesson based on teacher-to-student responses and their success of identifying a simile, but they were not provided an opportunity to engage in discussion with one another about the content, thus missing an opportunity to demonstrate ownership of student learning.

- In a first-grade math class, students were tasked with solving a story problem using different addition and subtraction strategies to prove their answer. The teacher projected the number sentence eight plus six equals thirteen and asked the class if the number sentence was correct. Students engaged in math chats discussion to talk about the strategies they used such as a number line or drew a picture of counters to solve math sentences. A student went to the board to demonstrate work. In a STEM class, students engaged in a simulation activity to discover how plates on the earth shift and create different landforms. Students in triads simulated the shifting of tectonic plates using graham crackers and frosting to demonstrate the formation of mountains, plateaus, and volcanoes while discussing their noticings; however, this was not evidenced in the vast majority of classrooms.

- In a math Special Education Teacher Support class (SETSS), students were required to solve a word problem using a checklist. Students worked on assigned math problems, each using a strategy of their choice, as well as their choice of manipulatives for support. Students were engaged in the activity as they conferred with their teacher about the strategy and the use of the checklist. In an English as a New Language (ENL) SETTS class, students were learning about the world around them through their five senses. Students conducted a milk experiment using milk and food coloring to simulate a rainbow. Sitting in pairs, students used their sense of sight to draw their observations and discussed what they observed, however, this was not evident in the vast majority of classrooms.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders ensure that curricular planning documents incorporate the Common Core Learning Standards such as students participating in collaborative conversations with diverse partners. Curricular and academic tasks allow all students to make meaning of the tasks.

Impact

Incorporation of specific Common Core standards builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness, so that all learners have access to the curricula and academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents reviewed showed an adherence to a school-wide lesson-planning template that integrates the Common Core Learning Standards for speaking, such as participating in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade-specific topics and texts with peers and adults in small and large groups. This standard was evidenced in curricular planning documents across the grades in the humanities and science. Additionally, lesson plans across the content areas included lesson objectives written in the student-friendly language in the form of “I can” statements. Further review of lesson plans showed key vocabulary, the use of the workshop model, pivotal questions to be asked during the lesson, and assessment strategies with differentiation of instruction for groups of students or differentiation in the task. The purposeful integration of the Common Core Learning Standards and the common elements in the curricular planning documents across the content areas builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills were evidenced in curricular and academic tasks. In a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) lesson plan students were required to conduct a simulation of the movement of tectonic plates to show the formation of landforms. While conducting the simulation, students had to make meaning of the results and explain their findings. An English as a New Language lesson plan outlined an introductory lesson on the five senses. Students conducted a milk experiment using food color to use their sense of sight to make meaning of the colors viewed in the rainbow-like configuration. Similarly, a SETSS math lesson required students to make their own meaning by determining how to solve a word problem using a checklist. Students were required to solve their word problem using two strategies and to assess their own work. Scaffolds to capture student work were included and plans showed differentiation of assessment for groups of students based on ability levels, thus allowing all students to have access to the curricula and academic tasks.

- Curricula and tasks require students to identify and consider multiple meaning and interpretations. A second-grade ELA lesson plan require students to identify similes by looking for comparisons using words “like” or “as.” Using differentiated scaffolds, students read passages with text such as “As blind as a bat” and “My mind was like a blank page.” Students were tasked with identifying the similes and deconstructing the meaning of the phrases. A first-grade writing lesson plan required students to begin a writing series by thinking of more than one story for their favorite character. Using examples of series books and looking at common themes such as adventures, students were tasked with writing a story using their favorite character and a common theme for their character. Lesson plans showed differentiation for groups of students, with explicit modeling as the strategy, ensuring that all students have access to the curricular and academic tasks.
Findings
The school uses common assessments and goal assessment trackers to glean data to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use rubrics that are aligned to the school’s curricula.

Impact
Data from assessment are used to adjust curricula and instructional decisions so that all students demonstrate increased mastery and are in receipt of meaningful feedback.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers, individually or part of a collaborative team, effectively analyze assessment data to glean information about students’ performance and learning needs relative to the learning goals. A review of a writing goal assessment tracker showed a mid-year goal projection of fifty-five percent of students at each grade were expected to place at a Level 3 or above on their Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) performance-based assessments. As a school, fifty-seven percent of the students have scored Level 3 and above, thus exceeding the goal. Class writing assessment data for TCRWP also showed student with disabilities scoring at Level 3 and above, thus demonstrating student mastery. Data from the assessments are used to inform small group instruction and to adjust the writing curricula to align to the Common Core Writing Standards.

- Teachers use a math goal assessment tracker to analyze students’ performance on Go Math beginning and mid-year assessments. Students have individualized goals and a review of the tracker showed students, including those with disabilities, meeting and exceeding their goals by four to thirty-two percent. Data gleaned from the assessments are used to inform small instruction groups. Lastly, Fountas and Pinnel (F&P) data is also tracked to monitor that students are demonstrating at least three levels of growth. A review of class data showed students, including those with disabilities, meeting and exceeding the mid-year goal projection, thus demonstrating student mastery.

- During the student group meeting, students when questioned were able to articulate and make meaning of the feedback on their work and were aware of their instructional goals. A student wrote an informational piece about gymnastics. The feedback commended the student for organizing their All about Gymnastics book, gave details and explained what gymnastics is all about. The student stated that the feedback mentioned the steps needed to carry out gymnastics were explained and “did not use just one word to explain the essay.” The student stated that their ELA goal is to “Look over your work;” thus, the feedback to the student was meaningful.
## Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

Feedback to teachers through observations and mid-year conversations provides clear next steps. School leaders utilize trends and patterns in observation data to inform professional development.

### Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher practice that promotes professional growth and reflection.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across multiple teacher observations, next steps in observation notes, and a feedback tracker consistently align with school and teachers’ goals and are part of a strategic, articulated plan of action to improve teacher practice. In a review of observation notes, recommendations for teachers were given, including strategies to increase discussion and engagement in the classroom by providing partners in discussion different prompts to respond to in order for students to explain their thinking. This feedback would also provide opportunities to collect formative assessment data during the lesson. The feedback is in alignment with the instructional focus of providing students opportunities to engage in meaningful discussions. A review of the feedback tracker also showed the verbal feedback provided to the teachers and its alignment with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components for highly effective practices. The feedback is aligned to the teachers’ instructional goal of using assessment to drive instruction and to improve questioning and discussion during the lesson. Subsequent observations and mid-year conversation reports showed teachers attaining highly effective in the assessment and engagement component.

- Individual teacher growth is documented over time and accompanied by reflection, interim goal setting, and individualized professional development, thus demonstrating improved teacher growth and development. A review of observation reports and teacher goals showed that the teacher feedback was centered on providing opportunities for students to engage in discussions, to use open-ended questions during the lesson to promote discussion and to utilize conferencing with students as opportunities to collect formative assessment data. Teachers received one-to-one professional development based on the feedback from the observations. As a result of the feedback and individualized professional development, teachers demonstrated improvement on subsequent observations.

- Trends in feedback provide a rationale for professional development decisions. Data from observation reports, individualized professional development, mid-year conversation on attainment of goals, and a feedback tracker are used to provide individualized professional development as well as whole-staff professional development. Observation cycle data showed a focus on professional development to staff on strategies for improving small group instruction, guided reading, and using the *Exemplar* math program to institute math chats during math instruction. The principal was able to discuss succession plans for teachers pursuing leadership programs and undertaking roles such as model teacher, data specialist, and testing coordinator. Additionally, the family worker has unofficially taken on the role of parent coordinator by serving as a liaison between the school and the parents.
Findings

Grade and vertical teams use protocols, and leadership to analyze student work in their student inquiry groups.

Impact

Teacher collaborations and leadership result in mastery of student goals and is integral in affecting student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A first grade teacher team was observed engaging in inquiry work with the goal of identifying the students who did not meet their TCRWP benchmarks and to devise an intervention plan. Teachers consulted class F&P, TCRWP benchmark data, and class goal trackers. Data for subgroups, including but not limited to, students with disabilities, ELLs, the bottom third, holdovers, and male students of color were reviewed, using a Looking at Student Work protocol to note class and grade data trends and patterns. The data revealed that the bottom third students, including male students of color across the grade showed a range of two to six levels of growth in their reading. Holdover students demonstrated three levels of growth in reading. Eighty-eight percent of the first-grade students have met their mid-year goal, including eight-five percent of boys of color and sixty-eight percent of students with disabilities having met their mid-year goals. ELL students were identified as not meeting the TCRWP benchmark and intervention strategies were identified such as reviewing sight words with targeted books, additional instruction in Fundations, strategies to build up reading stamina, and recommending students for academic intervention services (AIS). Teachers shared resources such as, “Breakthrough Levels In Moving Students from Level A Through Level Q in a Leveled Text” and Fountas and Pinnell Guided Reading Text Level Descriptions (F&P) to add additional intervention strategies to their teaching repertoire.

- A vertical guided reading inquiry group in the second week of a six-to-eight week cycle was observed conducting an inquiry meeting in which the group analyzed F&P data of their students using a Looking at Data protocol. Across the grades, teachers noted trends and patterns in letter identification, sight words, and dictated sentences. The data revealed that sixty percent overall and one hundred percent of the kindergarten classes’ demonstrated growth in an F&P level. One hundred percent of the first graders moved up one reading level and forty percent of the first graders moved up two or more levels. Lastly, eight-three percent of the second graders moved up one level. ELLs and students with disabilities in the second grade still demonstrated signs of struggle. Teachers mentioned that students responded well to a multisensory approach to learning, and using small groups for reading supported teachers and students during guided reading instruction.

- Teachers on each grade participate in an inter-visitation committee with neighboring schools to support the school goal of collaboration through meaningful discussions to strengthen student outcomes, specifically in math. An overview of the school-wide summary statements revealed that students used scaffolds to further discussions, protocols for partnerships have been established, and teachers provide feedback. Next steps denoted an area of focus to strengthen discussions and questions, the need for the use of data and conversations in small groups, and student need to provide feedback to each other and use the feedback.

- Distributed leadership practices are embedded in the school and teachers serve on committees such as professional development, school improvement team (SIT), safety, school leadership team, attendance, inter-visitation, and grade-level planning. As a result of their roles, student learning across the school is affected via the revision of lesson plans and progress monitoring.