Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 723
K-12 all grades 75X723
3540 Bivona Street
Bronx
NY 10475

Principal: Shante Chunn

Dates of Review:
January 23, 2018 - January 24, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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

P.S. 723 serves students in grade K 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>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Area Finding</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>
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</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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>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>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Finding</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>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>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>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>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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness with families.

Impact
A culture of mutual accountability exists around instructional expectations and feedback to teachers. Information sharing and communication with families through online platforms support students in their academic progress.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations regarding the design and delivery of instruction, as well as professionalism and day-to-day operations for this multi-site school, are shared with staff through a variety of tools, including a faculty handbook, website, weekly memoranda, and meetings with faculty. Faculty handbook topics include the responsibility to become deeply familiar with students’ Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), collaborations between teachers and paraprofessionals, implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, management of student behavior with a focus on accentuating positive behavior, and the value of maintaining consistent classroom routines. All weekly memos to faculty contain three sections, beginning with a section entitled Great Things I Noticed, in which the principal celebrates individuals and groups of teachers. Examples include highlighting teachers who volunteered to facilitate professional development (PD) sessions for their colleagues, celebrating teachers who applied for and were subsequently awarded grant money, and thanking members of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team for consistently working toward improving school tone. Additionally, two other sections detail daily reminders, assessment dates, holidays, and upcoming events.

- A culture of mutual accountability exists at the school and is evident by teachers’ appreciation for and expectation that their efforts are publicly celebrated through the weekly newsletters. One teacher reported, “Especially with us being in different sites, we need to always know what’s happening and especially what’s going well and it’s up to the principal to do that, and she does!” In addition to this, teachers and paraprofessionals rely on each other to ensure that lesson plans and instructional strategies are well-thought out so that all members of classroom instructional teams are completely prepared to serve students’ specific and multiple needs. Additionally, teachers hold each other mutually accountable as per their reliance on each other to conduct and host intervisitations and subsequently provide honest feedback. One teacher stated, and all present agreed, “There’s never a time when we reach out to administration and received no response. Whether we need materials or advice, we get it and we’re always available to administration also.”

- Communications with parents evidence the partnership with parents maintained by school leaders and teachers to ensure student success. Parents praised the school for sending daily progress sheets that detail students’ homework and classwork completion. One parent stated that as a result of these daily progress reports, “I can reinforce what’s going well for my child. I can also reward my daughter for her behavior at school and help her with homework or lessons.” Another parent discussed how she writes notes to her child’s teachers in case there is any information that will help them address her child’s needs that day in school. In addition, parents shared that they have become more effective advocates for their children as a result of an advocacy workshop hosted at the school.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The school provides lessons to students on behaviors and states of mind that promote respect for others and self. The school aligns professional development for faculty to positively manage students’ behavior and a PBIS program is in place.

Impact

While students report feeling safe in this school, there is no evidence that student voice is being meaningfully involved in decision-making to initiate, guide, or lead school improvement efforts. Programs recently implemented to positively impact students’ behavior are not currently yielding evidence of effectiveness.

Supporting Evidence

- Guidance counselors deliver monthly lessons that guide students toward understanding those who are different, speaking out against prejudice and discrimination, supporting others who are targets of hate, respecting other people, and not being a bystander when confronted with hate. Additionally, student voice is taken into consideration in deciding which rewards students can earn resulting from their positive behaviors. Students are also able to decide how to spend the points they earn as a result of this same program in a school store. One student shared that one of his peers suggested that the school provide a trophy case so that awards can be publicly celebrated.

- Each site is staffed with a minimum of three adults trained in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIC) program, who provide PD for their colleagues on the methods involved in that program. The PBIS program at the school involves use of a point system connected to students’ remaining in class, staying on task, following directions, using appropriate language, being respectful of other people, and of other peoples’ property. In addition to being able to spend the points students earn in a school store, students’ points are monitored. Once students earn a predetermined number of points for a set of consecutive days, they progress from level I to level IV. Each of these levels determines the additional rewards students receive. This program is supported through lessons that are delivered to students within advisory classes, assemblies, and team building exercises that occur every Friday.

- While the school is promoting students’ adoption of behaviors that would positively impact academic and personal successes, data show that there is still work to be done toward this goal. There have been two fewer incidents of student disciplinary infractions in the current school year compared to the previous school year at the same time. The three-year trend of incidents that occur within individual months indicates that the remaining months may include sufficient student infractions that would result in a total number increase from the 2016-2017 school year. Additionally, as of the date of the Quality Review, students have been suspended for high-level infractions eight times. The total number of suspensions for the entire 2016-2017 school year was eight, with the total for 2015-2016 being six, evidencing an upward trend in serious behavioral infractions.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
Curricula are strategically aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Coherent curricula across grades and subjects evidence strategic integration of the instructional shifts related to the citation of text-based evidence as well as building students’ math fluency. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged through differentiated groupings and leveled materials.

Supporting Evidence

- All lesson and unit plans, including those designed for students whose needs call for assessments other than formal State exams, are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Evidence of the strategic integration of English Language Arts (ELA) shifts can be seen in the frequent appearance of students’ need to support arguments with textual evidence. This appears in a grade-six social studies lesson plan wherein students are to cite evidence in their analysis of a text on the rise of Mesopotamia. A kindergarten-through-grade-two alternate assessment class lesson plan includes reading and listening activities that require students to locate key facts while either reading or listening to a non-fiction passage about the Earth’s natural resources.

- The lesson plan for a mixed-lower-grades class evidences a focus on building students’ fluency through activities in which students are adding and counting numbers, appropriate to their grade and individual goals, repetitiously in order to build speed and accuracy. Similarly, another lesson plan makes clear that students will rotate through four stations at which they will engage in activities designed to help them place numbers in the appropriate order, add numbers using the tens frame, or identify numbers from flash cards that the teacher will rotate. Additionally, evidence of real-world application of math, as well as communication, is evidenced in lessons and materials across grades and content areas.

- Review of curricula documents and academic tasks evidences the planning and modification of instruction to meet all students’ needs. For example, the plan for a mixed-lower-grades science lesson details that students are grouped into one of three categories and are assigned to differentiated activities at work stations focused on either the sun, the earth, or the moon. In addition, the plan details what each adult will do to support each student at each station. A grade-six social studies lesson plan shows that students are assigned into three different groups based on their functional level and that different scaffolded supports are attached to each group. The plan also details the specific supports that each student will receive from one-to-one paraprofessionals. Similarly, a combined grades six, seven, and eight ELA lesson plan includes a detailed “IEP Connections” section for each student in the class. For example, one student will be asked five questions about key details from a level B book, another student will acknowledge an interaction initiated by others, and another will work on increasing reading readiness by building phonemic awareness.
findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching about how students learn best. Across these same classrooms, teaching practices strategically provide multiple entry points and high-quality supports.

impact

Shared beliefs among staff about how students learn best lead to students of all levels being engaged in discussions. Additionally, all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

supporting evidence

- In a combined grades four and five math class, students turned to their partners and discussed the definition of partial product. In a mixed-grade ELA class serving students with severe language and literacy acquisition disabilities, students rotated through five stations. At one station, students were engaged in a multi-sensory program that teaches speech, reading, and writing in an integrated way to individuals who struggle with oral and written language. In a similar class designed for students in grades six through eight, non-communicative students used a device to answer the teacher’s questions by pressing on pictures which, when pressed, orally communicated answers on the students’ behalf. During a combined grades kindergarten through two science lesson geared toward students who struggle with oral communication, students at one station were presented with an array of three pictures depicting either a rock, air, dirt, or a volcano. Students named what was shown in the pictures in order either orally or through an assistive device.

- During a mixed grades three-through-five ELA lesson, students worked on either reading comprehension, oral communication, or writing tasks. Each student was issued a schedule that detailed the different stations to which they needed to report, the times when all students would transition to different stations, and the paraprofessionals with whom they would work throughout the day. Similarly, kindergarten through grade-two students received schedules they would follow as they traveled between stations learning about the different materials of the earth. At each station, students worked with a paraprofessional on differentiated assignments. In a class containing seven students from a mix of kindergarten through grade-two, students also rotated through stations. At one station, students were divided into three pairs and worked on math problems aligned to the same standard while utilizing scaffolded supports, such as blocks or an assistive device. Students also had been issued schedules that included the different stations they were to visit during the class as well as the different scaffolds that would be available to them at those stations.

- During an ELA lesson, a mix of students in grades three, four, and five were in one of two groups and circulated through two stations. While students at one station worked on reading fiction, students focused on the mechanics of reading at the other station. While work at each station was designed around the aforementioned themes, each student’s assignment was differentiated to meet each student’s needs. In a grade-six social studies class, students were in one of three groups, working on commonly differentiated tasks focused on reading and understanding how the Sumerians developed the world’s first civilization. Similarly differentiated instruction was observed across all grades and content areas.
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

High quality assessment practices are embedded across all subjects and grades and on display in hallways and on classroom walls as well as on student work, offering a clear portrait of student mastery. In addition, in-class assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective adjustments that enable students to be aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, examples of feedback evidence clear portraits of student mastery and feedback to students that they can use for increased achievement. For example, written feedback to students advises them to show all of their work, carry over numbers when adding, check their answers, and to make sure they write legibly when describing the steps they took when answering problems. Feedback is issued in written form on rubrics that are in forms modified to align with students’ grade and reading levels. Students came to a quick consensus when reporting on the value of their teachers’ written feedback. One student reported that because his teacher continually advised him to use correct punctuation and organize his writing into separate paragraphs, he now does this regularly. Other students discussed feedback regarding the use of text-based evidence in ELA and social studies classes as well as advice on which class-based supports to use for struggles with writing and reading. One student stated and all present agreed that “My teachers are always telling me what I can do to improve, and I do!”

- In addition to the written feedback that teachers give to students, teachers also offer oral feedback in classes where students required one-to-one paraprofessional support in conjunction with multiple teachers. Teachers and paraprofessionals were observed giving feedback to students as they progressed in activities involving verbal and non-verbal communication, applying math to real world situations such as navigating the purchase of household goods in a store, as well as reading. Teachers and paraprofessionals were also observed offering feedback related to students’ goals as they progressed through activities.

- Across most classrooms, there was evidence that teachers are assessing students’ learning and making adjustments to instruction, as necessary. In a math class consisting of grades four and five students, the teacher reviewed a word problem and reminded students to use the: circle the key numbers, underline the question, box any action words, evaluate steps to take, and solve and check (CUBES) method to solve the problem. Students were then instructed to use their erasable white boards and solve the problem with a partner. After the allotted time, the teacher asked student pairs to hold up their white boards and noticing that students were able to answer the problem, the teacher then transitioned the class into the next activity. In classes where all instruction was individualized, teachers and paraprofessionals conducted checks for understanding on data tracking sheets specific to the skill being taught. Adults were observed actively using data sheets to check for students’ understanding of how to use sounds in forming words and responding to verbal prompts, writing single letters, complete words, or sentences. In addition to teachers’ checks for student understanding, students were self-assessing their progress toward task completion as well as IEP goals. Students were observed self-assessing their reading as well as double digit multiplication.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

All teachers are engaged in teams that analyze student work in cycles of inquiry that reveal targeted areas of student need and actively address them in their work toward fulfilling the school’s goals. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning through service as site teacher leaders, as well as members of the schoolwide curriculum team.

Impact

Collaborations within teacher teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacities while data reveal increases in student achievement. Teachers’ voices are integral to decisions around modifications to reading curricula that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- At the alternate assessment (K-5) team meeting, a teacher shared a student’s struggle with being able to comprehend what he reads but unable to then portray his comprehension though answers to written questions. The teacher asked the team for feedback on how the activity could be modified in order to help this student. Teachers offered advice on modifying the activity in order to reveal if the student’s issue is with writing or if the student does not actually comprehend what he is reading. Recommendations included the use of a different assessment to measure comprehension, such as a checklist or allowing for verbal responses so that there would be a way to establish the student’s comprehension without requiring him to write, as the act of writing might be the struggle itself and may be blocking his ability to accurately capture his comprehension. Another teacher suggested dividing the worksheet so that individual questions would appear on separate strips of paper in order to prevent overwhelming students. Teachers then shared out their assigned sections of the article *Tell Me About the Story: Comprehension Strategies for Students with Autism*, by Paula Kluth.

- Members of the schoolwide curriculum team regularly collect data from their sites and input the data into an online platform. At monthly meetings, team members analyze that data and plan for teachers’ intervisitations as well as PD sessions that can be facilitated at targeted sites or at a single site for teachers from across the schools. Intervisitation logs show evidence of teachers visiting each other within their respective sites as well as across different sites. They have observed each other with the goals of adapting strategies for differentiation, facilitating student groups, as well as managing behavior. The curriculum team is also responsible for making necessary adjustments to the programs and curricula. For example, through analysis of data and student work, team members decided to begin using a reading program that could be used more effectively to provide leveled readings for students than the program that had already been in use. Current data evidences increases in students’ reading levels for those whose reading performance are evaluated using standard assessments.

- Teachers serve as leaders for all schoolwide teacher teams, along with teacher leader roles for each school site. In addition to the volunteers who have joined the curriculum team, each site has a representative on the curriculum team. In addition to the aforementioned modification to the reading program that has improved the ability of teachers to match students with readings that appropriately challenge them, teachers have also made decisions about changes to the language development program in use at the school. After data analysis made evident that the language development program in use was not sufficiently serving students at lower and higher performance levels, teachers decided to supplement the primary program with two others.