Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 97 The Highlawn
Elementary 21K097
1855 Stillwell Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11223

Principal: Irina Cabello

Dates of Review:
May 28, 2019 - May 29, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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. 97 The Highlawn serves students in grade K through grade 5. 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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Area of Celebration</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</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>Area of Focus</td>
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</table>
Area of Celebration

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned with the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs that students learn best through critical thinking, cooperative learning and group discussions. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

Teaching practices promote all students to own their learning. Student work products demonstrate high levels of critical thinking, and participation across all content areas and grade levels.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers post the day’s goal that describes what students will work on during the lesson. Examples include, “We can use models to compare customary units of length and collaboratively solve multi-step word problems, and “I can demonstrate understanding of a text through collaboration in a literature circle.” There is evidence of student ownership for learning during group work as students are assigned roles and responsibilities. Students serve as discussion leader, emotional events connector, illustrator, word wizard, and sequencer. Written descriptions of each role are provided and they referred to during their discussions. Students described having group roles in the majority of their classes. The belief that students learn best when they are challenged and allowed to share their thinking was evident throughout the classes visited.

- During a first-grade math lesson, students worked in small groups to organize and visually represent data by constructing graphs. Some groups were provided data while other groups collected their own data through class surveys. The difference in the task was based on the needs and level of the group. Each group created a graph of their data and then used the graph to respond to word problems. Word problems were differentiated for specific groups of students and included the names of students in the class. As the adults in the integrated co-teaching class walked throughout the room and monitored the progress of each group, students were asked to describe what they were going to do with the data and how the bar graph helped them solve their word problem. Students in this class and across the vast majority of grades and subjects demonstrated these high levels of student participation and ownership.

- In a fifth-grade writing lesson, students conducted research on a topic of their choice focused on a charity they are interested in researching. Students stated that they first did some general research about a variety of charities and then ranked which charities they were most interested in researching further. Students also stated they enjoyed having the right to choose the topic. Students who picked similar topics worked together to gather research. Students gathered information from reading primary source documents provided by the teacher or using laptops to conduct Internet research. They were provided differentiated graphic organizers to help capture key information from their source. Sentence frames such as, “According to the research,” and “Through this research I learned,” further aided in documenting their research and drafting their writing. As a result of student choice and ownership, students can articulate and demonstrate their thinking and is evidenced in student work products and classroom discussions.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator:  | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders have processes in place, such as Plan, Do, Act, and Study (PDSA) cycles, to evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices to support student-learning needs. The use of resources is reviewed with a focus on professional development.

Impact
While there are adjustments made to the allotment of resources, it is not clear as to the alignment of what teachers specifically need to accelerate student mastery. There are revisions made to curricula and instruction but as of yet, these actions have not resulted in schoolwide coherence between what is taught and how it is taught.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders, grade-level leaders, and grade-level teams regularly evaluate the curricular and instructional practices through reviewing curricular documents, assessment data collected by teachers and teacher observation data in Advance. A review of documents shows that grade-level teams are working on revising curricular documents to provide entry points for all students including English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities for their grade level, but yet, specific teaching practices are not clearly incorporated in all plans. School leaders incorporate Plan, Do, Act, and Study (PDSA) cycles to set and monitor goals. A review of a PDSA document includes goals and plans, specific action steps to monitor the system-wide progress toward the goal is not evident. However, a description of how all stakeholders are responsible in the monitoring process is not clearly indicated. Although there is a process in place to evaluate curricular and instructional practices at the teacher team level, the PDSA cycles do not yet include all stakeholders in having a clear understanding of what is taught and how lessons are executed at the school level.

- School leaders assess the quality of professional learning through teacher feedback and exit slips. Teachers were asked to comment on the professional development workshops, which they found most useful, and what additional questions they have. Some of the responses indicated that those sessions addressing planning, backwards design instruction and developing extension activities were most helpful. New teachers in particular wanted to learn more about the tenure process. School leaders, grade-level leaders, and professional development committee members reviewed the results and made adjustments to the professional development calendar for the school. While there is evidence in meeting agendas and minutes that teacher feedback is reviewed and used to adjust the professional development calendar and there is evidence of a regular process in the cabinet and grade leader meetings to review the level of schoolwide coherence in the use of resources, the process is not yet purposeful across the school in impacting teacher development.

- School leaders evaluate and adjust the use of resource allocations aligned to school goals in order to increase the quality of student work products. A schoolwide goal was established to increase the number of teachers participating in professional development to improve teacher practice as well as student outcomes. There is a professional development calendar and there is evidence that there is an increase in the numbers of teachers participating in professional development and improvement in teacher practice as evidenced in teacher observation reports that show an improvement in engaging students in learning and designing coherent instruction for some teachers. While school leaders shared, that they review schoolwide observation trends and data a few times a year and how this is impacting some teachers, there is not yet a purposeful system of strategically reviewing observation reports across the school leading to improved teacher practice.
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 aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts with a focus on close textual analysis, writing from primary and secondary sources, and mathematical applications. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks across grades and subjects.

Impact
Curricular alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts result in coherence across subject areas, and the effective preparation of students for the next grade level. Rigorous and higher-order tasks require that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Courses, lesson plans, unit plans, and curriculum maps reflect full integration of the instructional shifts embedded in Common Core Learning Standards across content areas. For example, lesson plans in English Language Arts (ELA) emphasize the value of text-based evidence and writing from primary and secondary sources. The ELA instructional shift focusing on incorporating textual evidence in writing and reading is evidenced in a plan where students are to write an opinion research project that requires the student to present an argument on a topic addressing the pros and cons of the topic and reference the relevant evidence. Applying mathematical understanding is incorporated in a lesson that requires students as they work in groups to discuss how clocks measure time and to think of the different times of day when specific things occur, such as the start of the school day and recess. Questions have students reflecting on how they know when it’s a specific time of day as well as having them apply their understanding of time to solve word problems.

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that promote preparing for the next grade level and college and career readiness for all students. A fourth-grade math lesson plan includes a task in which students apply their understanding of customary units of length such as inches, feet, yards, and miles as they use models to collaboratively solve multi-step word problems. A third-grade ELA plan describes how students would engage in literature circles as they read a text selection, identified key events and asked inferential questions about what they read. A first-grade social studies science lesson describes how students will work in groups as they look at picture cards and determine if the visual representation depicts a producer or consumer and then record their responses in drawings or writing.

- Lesson plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits in the course of instruction. Goal statements are written as the major objective of the lesson. Statements, pushing the thinking of students such as, “We can use models to compare customary units of length and collaboratively solve multi-step word problems,” and “We will be able to work collaboratively to provide meaningful peer feedback to our classmates about our opinion research projects by asking each other probing questions and using the authentic assessment rubric,” are consistently included in plans across subjects. Lessons include opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and identify additional questions they have. Plans contained higher-order questions such as, “What is true about all quadrilaterals? How can you use models to compare customary units of length?” or, “What can I learn from another group that I can use to improve my presentation?” Lesson plans for students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELL) incorporated the use of modeled responses, sentence frames, graphic organizers, the previewing of content and academic vocabulary, graphics, anchor charts, and leveled primary and secondary texts.
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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use performance assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula and focus on critical thinking and cooperative learning. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher written actionable feedback providing students the steps they should take to strengthen their work. One recommendation included “You showed your work in two different ways. Next time, you can include a diagram to show your mathematical thinking.” Another example read, “Next time you need to organize your writing into a sequence of separate sections using subheadings and headings. Try to transfer information from the graphic organizer to the writing piece.” Yet another example read, “I like how you showed your work. Can you explain the process to solve with more detail?” In work samples that include multiple drafts and revisions, there is evidence that students incorporate the feedback from their teacher and peers resulting in improved work products and progress toward their goals.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, rubrics and checklists are used as tools to support student growth. Specific task related rubrics are employed including a response to literature rubric, narrative writing rubric, problem solving rubric and group work rubric. Students develop reading and spelling goals at the beginning of the year and use bar graphs to track their progress during the school year. An example of a student reflection on his progress states, “I would like to improve my reading by joining a book club and sharing my experience or trying to read double the pages I read usually.” Evidence of students’ use of these tools is posted on student work examples, and work folders. The students shared they receive feedback from both teachers and peers as well as self-reflect on the progress they made on an assignment and if they will achieve their goal. As a result of the use of rubrics, checklists and the tracking and reflection of student-developed goals, a clear portrait of student mastery across grades and subjects becomes evident.

- The administration of a baseline performance assessment in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, at the beginning of the year, provide data regarding the skill levels of each student and are used in the planning of instruction by grade-level teams. Teachers across grade levels also use conferencing notes, informal student observations, Teachers College reading benchmark assessments, GO Math! assessments, and on demand pre- and post-writing assessments to assess the progress of students during the year. Latest data indicates that using common assessments and providing multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning is resulting in increased student mastery across grades and content areas. The student average proficiency in both math and ELA is above the city average.
Additional Finding

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<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 using multiple sources of student data to personalize learning for all students and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations for the next grade level and college and career readiness.

Impact

Communication and professional development centered on high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward the next grade level leading to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating along with actionable next steps so that teachers clearly understand expectations. Those expectations are communicated and supported through the staff handbook, weekly memos, and ongoing professional development. Using data to inform instructional decisions is the year’s instructional focus and is consistently addressed and supported to ensure it is realized. As such, teachers are asked to use multiple sources of student data when adjusting lessons and to find opportunities to engage in increased student discussion and provide additional student choice. As a result of this strategic feedback and professional learning, teachers are effectively supported and are meeting the school’s expectations.

- School leaders consistently communicate the school’s focus of using multiple sources of data to provide personalized learning for all students. The school’s vision statement states, “We believe that all students need to be celebrated and held responsible equally for their drive to learn, working hard to attain knowledge, working well with peers as well as being able to apply knowledge and work independently utilizing Common Core Learning Standards and English as a New Language progression.” All teachers have a webpage connected to the school website and are expected to update their page on a regular basis. The teachers are also expected to give at least one grade every two weeks for work habits and one grade every two weeks for work in math, reading, and writing. Through this clear and frequent monitoring, staff fully understands what their school leaders expect.

- Parents spoke of the partnership they have with the school community and specifically referenced opportunities to visit classrooms monthly, use school and teacher websites and to attend monthly meetings with the principal. Parents stated that the principal and staff are always available and meetings provide opportunities for brainstorming and welcome their input. Parents are included in the goal setting and improvement process. The adoption of Project Citizen to cultivate leadership and responsibility across the school was suggested by parents and incorporated at the school three years ago. Meetings are held regarding the middle school application process and how to help support their students to reach their learning goals. School leaders attend Parent Teacher Association and School Leadership Team meetings and inform parents of the progress taking place at the school. Parents spoke highly about the school and home partnership that exists. They spoke positively of the communication from the school, noting parent-teacher conferences, emails, text messages, the school website, the online grading program, along with culminating events and performances such as the monthly Project Citizen Award ceremonies.
Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in weekly grade level inquiry-based, structured professional collaboration. Across the school, grade level teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data, student work products, and to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Teachers’ engagement and professional collaborations focused on reviewing student data has strengthened their instructional capacity and promoted implementation of the instructional shifts. Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers are engaged in weekly grade level, inquiry-based professional collaborations that focus on the analysis of student work and data. In minutes from a fifth grade meeting, teachers described their observations on the middle of the year ELA assessment and determined that students needed additional support in learning how to summarize and paraphrase, compare and contrast, and draw information from multiple print or digital resources. Additionally, data indicated that students needed to become more familiar with the vocabulary used in test questions. In minutes from a fourth-grade meeting, teachers discussed how to use models and partial products as a way to teach multiplying 2-digit numbers and implementing stations as a re-teaching strategy. The consistent in inquiry-based professional collaborations is positively impacting the development of instructional coherence and increasing all students’ achievement.

- A third-grade team was observed analyzing student work from a recent writing task with a focus on the peer feedback given by students and the impact it had on student writing between the pre and post assessments. The team utilized a student work analysis protocol that included the reviewing of meeting norms and roles of different team members, interpreting student work, and implications for classroom practice. The facilitator reviewed that the goal of the meeting was to revisit the use of peer assessment and feedback by reflecting on student work. Several student work samples coded by number to avoid revealing the identity of the students were reviewed. The pre-assessment writing sample, the text of the peer feedback and the post assessment that incorporated the feedback were included in the analysis. Overall the team determined that peer feedback was improving student writing and discussed additional strategies to strengthen peer feedback. Recommendations included providing a list of transition words students could refer to, models of feedback, a menu of feedback options, and the use of an editing wheel. Furthermore, the team decided to start this process with peer feedback earlier in the year to provide students more time to incorporate the practice in their learning.

- There is evidence in the minutes and agendas that teams use a variety of data including pre and post assessments, student work, assessments from benchmarks, and conferencing notes to address targeted students they share. Teachers explained that during grade level meetings they break down data by student subgroup and they use data to make adjustments throughout units to support the learning of individual students. The inclusion of more classroom resources that support interaction with academic vocabulary and complex, content rich non-fiction and fiction text that represent all cultures and backgrounds are examples of adjustments that were made. The analysis of classroom practices and assessment data indicate improvement in teacher practice, as evidenced in Advance and mastery of goals by groups of students.