Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 121 Nelson A. Rockefeller
K-8 21K121
5301 20 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204

Principal: Anthony Mungioli

Dates of Review:
April 10, 2019 - April 11, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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


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></td>
<td></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>Area of Focus</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>
</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</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 schools 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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

Structures are in place, such as advisory for middle school students and weekly meetings by staff members to monitor students in need, so that each student is known well by at least one adult who impacts student academic and personal behavior. Student voice is meaningfully involved in the decision-making and school improvement process.

Impact

The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support results in a safe environment, with students involved in decision-making. Students’ academic and personal behaviors are positively impacted by interactions with adults.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures are in place focusing on student-centered learning that promotes healthy student development and academic achievement. This is supported through monthly schoolwide class activities and assemblies on a different value and life skill, such as respect, communication, perseverance, and goal-setting. Students and parents also report that they feel welcome at the school and supported through workshops and events such as Science Saturdays. Students also spoke of open communication with school leaders, referring to the school’s suggestion box where they are able to offer ideas, such as using banana peels as part of the school’s compost to help take care of the school’s garden.

- Students described how they contribute to the decision-making process through structures such as student government, comprised of students nominated and elected by students, and the Green Team, a citywide initiative focused on strengthening student awareness about the environment. As part of a project-based learning unit, students created proposals for developing the school’s outside space. During a presentation from the Green Team, students noted their work designing and expanding the school’s hydroponic lab inside the building to reduce the school’s carbon footprint. Team members manage the care of the plants located throughout the building as well as the school’s Green Store at lunch and after school, where students can sell their plants and are supported by a staff advisor. Students shared that as a result of their work with the Green Team, they have a better understanding of nature and how their work impacts the air quality of the school. It is evident that the school’s approach to culture and socio-emotional support results in meaningful student voice in the school improvement process.

- Students reported that there is at least one adult at their school who knows them well, referencing advisory classes for seventh and eighth grade students as an example. Time is spent in advisory learning about study habits and how to manage stress. School leaders and staff members spoke about the structures to ensure all students are supported by teams. These include the Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Nest Team and the School Implementation Team, comprised of school leaders, teachers, guidance counselors, occupational therapists, and other school staff, who meet weekly to identify students in need of additional support. They follow-up on these students by identifying the best means to support them and developing an implementation plan. Some interventions have included incorporating coping strategies and teaching social development units focused on positive social skills, teamwork, and group problem-solving as part of project-based units across content areas and grades. As a result, student academic and personal behaviors are impacted, as evidenced in i-Ready reports that document improvement in math and English Language Arts (ELA) interim assessment results.
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings
Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Curricular alignment to project-based learning, the Common Core, and the instructional shifts results in coherence across grades and subject areas, promoting college and career readiness for all learners. Academic tasks ensure all students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans consistently challenge students to develop rigorous habits in the course of instruction, and learning targets are included in lesson plans. Examples of these include, “I can utilize the main idea and the gist about my trade to create a help wanted ad with my group that describes the trade, identifies the skills needed, includes vocabulary, explains why it is important, and is enticing to my audience,” and “I can educate others about the effects of pollution on animals, habitat, and earth by researching my topic to gain an understanding of pollution.” Additionally, lesson and unit plans also include a description of the relevance and rationale for the lesson and unit and incorporate the instructional shifts of applications and writing from sources. Examples include, “The lesson is relevant to students in the class because the set of skills being developed is directly connected to their smoothie sale project. Building an understanding of simple business applications will help them determine if they are making a profit from their current sales and how to improve their findings,” and “Students were asked to design a green space that benefited the whole community. Students will have their own voice and choice in their design as they keep in mind the needs of the community and the site conditions.” The curricula purposefully align to key project-based learning standards and integrate the Common Core and instructional shifts.

- Lesson and unit plans reflect full integration of project-based learning design elements as well as instructional shifts embedded in the Common Core across content areas. For example, lesson plans in English emphasized the value of writing from sources in developing an argument through identifying claims, including text-based evidence to support those claims and addressing counterclaims through topics such as how can communities help immigrants adjust to life in the United States. One example of the inclusion of the mathematical instructional shift of mathematical application requires students to understand the concept of data, how to collect, organize, and display data, and how to interpret and draw conclusions from the data. Across all grades and content areas, there is a written scope and sequence that integrates the project-based learning design elements and instructional shifts, resulting in coherence that promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- A review of curricular documents demonstrates academic tasks that ensure all students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged. In a second-grade literacy class, the lesson provides supports for students depending on their reading level, including the use of a graphic organizer, sentence stems, and strategic groupings of students based on data about their reading levels. In a science lesson plan, students have access to resources such as content and academic vocabulary help cards, a student handout that highlighted steps for success, and a teamwork rubric. In an ELA lesson plan on advocating and informing others about the importance of reducing pollution, students have a choice of how they can present their learning, through visual or written products. Through the refinement of the curricula and academic tasks, all students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving, are cognitively engaged and have access to the curricula.
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 when they are the center of learning, have access to the curricula, and direct the learning process. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact

Teaching practices across the vast majority of classes reflect school beliefs that students learn best by doing through project-based learning, student choice, and applying their learning to real-world experiences. Student work products demonstrate high levels of thinking, participation, and ownership across content areas and grade levels.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers post the day’s learning target that describes what students will work on during the lesson. Examples include, “I can make a line plot to display a set of data that is measured in whole numbers and fractional units,” “Students will learn about major food preservation methods and their relationships to the conditions that encourage or inhibit growth of microorganisms,” and “We can read to understand the point of view of a main character and how they respond to the major events within the text.” There is also evidence of student ownership of learning during group work, with students completing a group work checklist. The checklist requires students to self-monitor and reflect on their work as a group, including whether all members are doing their work for the team on time, are listening to the ideas of their teammates, are sharing their ideas with the team, and are treating their teammates with respect. Thus, these teaching practices reflect a coherent belief across the school that students learn best through ownership of their learning.

- In a fifth-grade math class, students worked in small groups to organize and analyze data they collected from a student survey about the shoe sizes of the students in the class. Based on their analysis, they drew inferences, including how the data would be different in a lower grade level. Each group created a line plot and organized the data from smallest shoe size to largest. After completing their line plots, groups reviewed the checklist to ensure that their line plot had a title, that the data was listed from least to greatest on the number line, that the recorded data matched the data displayed on the line plot, and that the Xs lined up neatly so the line results were clear and easy to read. Likewise, during a lesson in a second-grade class, students worked in groups to design plans for the school’s outdoor green space and shared their rationales for their design decisions with each other. Similar lessons across grades and content areas also reflected high levels of student participation and ownership.

- A third-grade lesson focused on students’ advocating for and informing others about the importance of reducing pollution in their school community resulted in students’ self-directing their learning. Students had previously researched the effects of pollution on animals, different habitats, and plants, and now created public service announcements or posters about these effects or developed interview questions to collect data across the school about student awareness regarding different types of pollution and their impact. Students stated they like being able to choose their focus and could speak to the purpose and criteria for the assignment. During an eighth-grade math lesson, students learned about systems of equations and applied their understanding of linear equations to determine the break-event point of their smoothie sales, assessing whether they are making a profit or need to make adjustments to their business model. Across the vast majority of classrooms, there is evidence of student choice and ownership.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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 or create assessments, checklists, and rubrics that are aligned with the school's project-based curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. In addition, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers' assessment practices result in effective instructional adjustments to meet all students’ needs and articulate to them what their next learning steps should be.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments that result in actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement. Examples of these practices include a steps for success checklist for writing an opinion paragraph, project-based rubrics, teamwork rubrics, and writing rubrics. Examples of teacher feedback include, “Good job on your conclusion. Next time, try to put the evidence in your own words,” “Great job using personal information. Now try to use a diagram and at least 3 precise descriptions,” and “You should be so proud of this field journal. Not only did your fun personality come through in your writing, but you also included accurate descriptions and facts about organisms in the rainforest. To go even further you could add sketches of the organisms you wrote about.” As a result of using rubrics and checklists aligned with the school's curricula along with meaningful and actionable feedback, teachers are garner information about student achievement and progress toward mastery.

- Through chapter tests, end-of-module assessments, running records, and performance tasks as well as curricula-aligned, project-based learning unit assessments, school leaders and teachers have a clear picture of student progress towards mastery. This allows them to track student progress in levels of mastery, near-mastery, and needing remediation in particular standards. This analysis is conducted throughout the year and is monitored by the school's data team and school leaders. One of the identified areas of need through this analysis was in vocabulary. As a result, teachers have implemented instructional strategies including frontloading, pre-teaching academic and content-specific words, making words visible through pictures and examples, and holding students accountable for using vocabulary. Teachers were able to speak to the identification and monitoring of specific students they supported in their movement towards mastery. As a result, students are showing progress in moving from remediation to near mastery and mastery in math and ELA, as shown in grade level team interim data analysis. Ultimately, this will impact student performance on City and State assessments.

- Students reflect on their work and identify next steps. An example from one student states, “My strength in literacy is I wrote good details from the text. My next steps in literacy is to cite text evidence to support my details.” Another example states, “Next steps: We both have to contribute in painting the earth. We also both have to find the information for the layers of the earth together.” In meetings with students, they articulated that they self-assess their progress on a regular basis across the majority of grade levels and content areas. In the vast majority of classrooms, checks for understanding were observed, such as mid-lesson interruptions, exit tickets, and conferencing, resulting in re-teaching or adjustments in student grouping. As a result, students are aware of and can describe their next learning steps, and teachers make meaningful instructional adjustments based on their assessment practices.
## Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 3.4 High Expectations | **Rating:** Well Developed

### Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations focused on a project-based and student-centered curriculum and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations for a path to college and career readiness to families.

### Impact
Communication and professional development around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward 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, and actionable next steps so that teachers clearly understand expectations. Those expectations focused on student-centered curriculum that embeds critical thinking opportunities are also communicated and supported through the professional learning handbook, weekly professional learning memos, and professional development (PD) throughout the year. In weekly memos, school leaders outline expectations for teachers and teams. For example, teachers are reminded about the common instructional priority on vocabulary based on the *i-Ready* diagnostic reports. Memos note that teachers need to prioritize the teaching of vocabulary through frontloading and pre-teaching as well as making it visible and accessible to students. As a result of feedback on observation reports, professional learning on questioning and discussion, student engagement, and data analysis, as well as school leaders’ frequent reminders about instructional priorities, teachers are supported in meeting the school's high expectations.

- School leaders work with stakeholders to ensure ownership for the school’s mission and vision, focused on student voice and choice and authentic learning experiences. Posters of the student-friendly version of the school’s mission and vision, “Scientists study the world, work together, solve problems, and make the world a better place,” are in classrooms, hallways, and offices and are referred to by school leaders, teachers, and students. The professional learning handbook outlines the theory of action about how students learn best through their development of self-efficacy and states that all students must be able to articulate their progress toward mastery and describe their next steps. Through clear and frequent communication, staff understand the high expectations of school leaders.

- Parents spoke of the partnership they had with the school and specifically referenced the school’s focus on project-based learning and social-emotional supports to prepare students for colleges and careers. Parents whose children formerly attended the school stated that their children were prepared for high school through access to project-based learning experiences and Regents courses in math and science. Parents communicated that they are supported in the high school application process through meetings and workshops. School leaders attend PTA and School Leadership Team meetings to inform parents of the progress the school is making toward the school’s goals and gather feedback and suggestions. Parents spoke positively about the availability of the principal and their communication about expectations with teachers and staff through emails, text messages, monthly calendars sent home, the online grading system, parent-teacher conferences, and events like Science Saturdays, that provide opportunities for parents to learn alongside their children. Thus, the school is successfully partnering with families to support students in meeting the school’s expectations.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in grade level inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that incorporate the analysis of student data to support the school's focus on project-based learning. Across the school, grade level teams engage in cycles of looking at student work to analyze assessment data and student work products, and to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Teacher engagement in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations 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

- Most teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, grade-level collaborations. In minutes from a first-grade meeting, members looked at student work samples from a personal narrative assignment about friendship. Based on their analysis, teachers decided to focus on the lowest performing group of students to provide additional supports in their future writing while giving higher performing groups opportunities for independent practice. Some of the writing supports they identified included word banks, picture prompts, and graphic organizers. In the minutes from a third-grade team, members reviewed the presentation rubric and discussed how to support students in their presentation skills by incorporating peer assessments and academic and content vocabulary, in alignment with the ELA instructional shifts. As a result of these professional collaborations, including all teachers in each grade level following the next steps determined in grade level meetings, there is evidence of instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners.

- A fourth-grade team was observed analyzing student work from a recent on-demand writing task for students they shared. The team utilized a student work analysis protocol that included reviewing the language of the writing prompt, looking at the rubric for the assignment, and then calibrating their scoring with selected student work samples. The team also analyzed whether students met the objectives of the assignment and identified and discussed student misconceptions as well as what elements of the task students did not demonstrate. The team observed that some students did not completely understand the prompt or write responses that addressed all aspects of the prompt. Teachers also observed that not all students completed their responses in the allocated time. As a result, the team determined that they need to practice on-demand writing earlier in the school year and develop scaffolds and supports to assist students in understanding the prompt, such as incorporating a planning graphic organizer. Team members explained that they determined their area of focus when looking at student work based on their analysis of the Measures of Student Learning assessment results from earlier in the year that showed students were not able to identify the main idea or use supporting details in their responses. They also stated that students are showing improvement in these two areas but perform better on process writing than on-demand writing. Consequently, the team has identified incorporating more on-demand writing as a next step.

- There is evidence in meeting agendas and minutes that grade level teams use a variety of data, including student work, performance tasks, rubrics, classroom practice, and data from grade level cycles of looking at student work. There is also evidence that the school’s Lead Instructional Team, composed of school leaders and members of each grade level team, supports the work of each grade level team in developing their areas of focus, identifying action steps, and monitoring student progress through those action steps. These structures have resulted in improved teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students, as evidenced in Advance reports and student work products.