Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 203 Floyd Bennett School
Elementary 22K203
5101 Avenue M
Brooklyn
NY 11234

Principal: Yocasta Dominguezmiller

Dates of Review:
February 27, 2019 - February 28, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jerry Brito
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. 203 Floyd Bennett School serves students in grade PK 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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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### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that strengthen teacher instructional capacity and identify adjustments or change factors, to move student progress. Distributed leadership structures are embedded schoolwide.

Impact

Professional collaborations among teacher teams result in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional collaborations promote the adoption and implementation of best instructional practices schoolwide. In one fourth-grade teacher team meeting, the focus was looking at the effect of using pattern blocks in solving fractions by analyzing student work products. Prior to analyzing selected work products, the Math Ambassador, or team facilitator, modeled a math thinking routine that was used with a group of students that was independent from the inquiry focus. After modeling, teachers had a brief discussion on the benefits and challenges of using this strategy in their classrooms. Next, team members looked at fourth-grade student work products centered on the use of pattern blocks to solve word problems involving fractions. Team members discussed their noticings, which included such observations as the student understanding how to use pattern blocks, but had issues articulating their understanding. Analysis of the work led team members to find that use of pattern blocks was helpful. However, one special education teacher expressed concern that the use of blocks was distracting for her students. Overall, team members agreed to incorporate pattern blocks in teaching fractions as a change factor to be incorporated into future lessons across the grade.

- English as a New Language (ENL) and students with disabilities inquiry teams are in place to ensure instructional coherence between grades with a focus on these two sub-groups. For example, the ENL vertical team consists of teachers from grades across the school. In an October 2018 meeting, ENL vertical team members decided to implement sentence stems after analysis of schoolwide literacy unit assessments indicated that English Language Learners (ELLs), had difficulty completing tasks without scaffolds. Team members agreed upon a set of graphic organizers that focused on the use of sentence stems that would be embedded in literacy lesson plans. A review of student work products before and after the implementation of sentence stems indicated its efficacy in facilitating student understanding. Overall, the inquiry team work across the school has markedly improved student performance as measured by a schoolwide online diagnostic tool.

- Teachers make key decisions that directly impact curricula development and student learning across the school. School leadership uses content-area ambassadors and teachers on the school's ENL and student with disabilities vertical teams, and grade-level inquiry teams to focus on inquiry work in which different strategies are discussed, implemented and analyzed for targeted student groups. Strategies deemed to be effective, such as using open number lines to teach place value, are then implemented schoolwide and changes, known as change factors, are made to the curricula and are then implemented and memorialized in curricular documents after school leadership's approval.
Findings
Curricula and academic tasks related to analyzing text evidence consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Curricula and academic tasks focused on analyzing text evidence have yet to incorporate ways in which they are consistent in their accessibility so that all students are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, especially related to analyzing text evidence, across grades and subjects. In a first-grade writing unit, students are tasked with developing an opinion writing piece in which skills such as identifying and applying how writers use text evidence to support a position are emphasized. Learning tasks include the use of model texts and technology to further student understanding of the conventions of opinion writing. In a fifth-grade social studies unit, students are learning about the development of nations using Mexico as a case study. Students are expected to engage in skills such as analyzing texts such as *Countries of the World: Mexico*, a study of Mexico’s economy, and a look at the different perspectives of the peace process during Mexico’s early years. In reviewing curricular documents, there is an emphasis on providing students tasks that require in-depth analysis of texts and the application of higher-order thinking skills in order to complete assignments.

- Though there is an emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills evident in unit plans and lesson plans, it is not clearly evident how subgroups, including ELLs and students with disabilities, have access to these higher-order tasks. In a fifth-grade math unit plan, students are tasked to develop their understanding on how to divide fractions and how to apply this in solving word problems. In the unit plan, there is a section devoted to providing scaffolds for ELL students, including the application of a word definition map for students operating at a higher proficiency level. However, there is no equivalent section for students with disabilities. In a fifth-grade science unit, students are learning the different characteristics of molecules and how they relate to real-world substances. A section of the plan focuses on providing scaffolds such as visual representations, modeling, and vocabulary supports. However, there is no indication of the target groups that would make use of these scaffolds. A review of curricular documents found inconsistent evidence that ELLs and student with disabilities are provided access to rigorous habit and higher-order skills.

- Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work products. The school incorporates changes to grade wide lesson plans, known as change factors, by analyzing student work products. In a second-grade math unit, teachers implemented the use of a change factor of problem-solving anchor charts after an analysis of work of targeted groups found that the implementation of this strategy increased student performance 30 percent among the lowest performing students. Similarly, in a fifth-grade math unit plan, three-act tasks are used after analysis of student work products found an increase in student performance. An analysis of curricular materials found the change factors are regularly implemented after an analysis of their impact on student performance.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

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<th>Rating:</th>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs centered on student work groups that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Additionally, teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

### Impact

Students produce meaningful work products and are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills while working in small groups.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, the belief that students learn best through targeted, small group activities was evident. In one fourth-grade math class, students were tasked with solving multi-step word problems involving fractions and also creating their own word problems. The lesson comprised of six small groups with the teacher working with one of the groups. In the group meeting with the teacher, students were using sentence stems in order to support their understanding of how fractions add to a whole. In another group, students were working on developing a fraction word problem based on a chocolate cake recipe. In a first-grade social studies lesson, students were learning how maps could be used to find out information on a community. Students worked in small groups in which each group was given a different map to analyze such as a New York City Transit map and a Central Park Zoo map. After a given period of time to analyze their respective maps, representatives from the groups were called up to present their finding. In all, small group work was evident across classrooms, which aligned with the school’s belief on how students learn best.

- Across classrooms, teaching practices were focused on providing students multiple entry points into accessing the curricula. In one fifth-grade special education math lesson, groups of students were working on word problems centered on multiplying fractions with the purpose of creating work products that will be analyzed by other students during a gallery walk. Each group had a different word problem that varied in complexity commiserate with the group’s proficiency level. One student worked on adding and subtracting whole numbers with regrouping. In a first-grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, groups of students were working with varying literacy strategies with the goal of developing automaticity in their reading. In one group, the teacher worked directly with students to develop their understanding of high-frequency words. In another group, students worked on prediction using the book *Curious George Ride a Bike*. Across classrooms, students were presented with strategies and scaffolds appropriate with their proficiency level to allow them access to the curricula.

- A review of classroom practices schoolwide revealed a use of i-Ready, an online diagnostic and teaching tool to further provide students multiple entry points into the curricula. This online tool provides literacy and math lessons based on student proficiency levels. The tool also has lessons in literacy and math for students to engage in and the tasks change with respect to rigor in real time in alignment with student progress. It is a schoolwide expectation that one instructional group in each lesson is focused on using i-Ready. For example, in one first-grade literacy lesson, a students in one group were using i-Ready to develop his/her understanding of sequence in their reading.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Common assessments, such as i-Ready diagnostic data, are used to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Across classrooms, teacher assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers use checks for understanding to make effective adjustments to meet all student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff analyze common assessment data in order to identify high-need subgroups and develop intervention plans to improve student performance. For example, an analysis of i-Ready math and literacy diagnostic data revealed that Black and Hispanic students lagged behind other sub-groups with respect to reading comprehension. The school developed an action plan in which student performance data was disaggregated to inform different teaching strategies, including guided reading and various scaffolding techniques, to provide targeted instruction for the identified subgroups. In addition, the school looks at diagnostic data to inform student groupings schoolwide and appropriate adjustments to instruction, which the school calls change factors. For example, an analysis of Fountas and Pinnell, (F&P), data along with i-Ready data in literacy at the beginning of the school year demonstrated that 32 percent of students in kindergarten, first and second grade were below grade-level in phonological awareness. The school employed an intensive intervention program, which resulted a 13 percent drop in the number of students scoring below expected proficiency rates in phonological awareness. Overall, common assessments identify subgroups needing intervention services and the types of interventions to be employed.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding are conducted to provide support and inform differentiated instructional activities for groups of students. In a fifth-grade math class, student groups were working on math word problems differentiated based on the groups’ proficiency in the application of fractions. Students are to take their solutions and prepare them for a gallery walk so that other groups can see the results of the work conducted. As students prepared for the gallery walk, the teacher checked in with each group. Prior to beginning the gallery walk, the teacher stopped the class to comment how she noticed that students were not labeling their steps clearly, which will cause confusion among students during the gallery walk. The teacher told the class to clearly label their steps prior to beginning the walk. She proceeded to check in with the groups to ensure that this was taking place.

- In a fourth-grade math class, students were working in groups on multi-step work problems. The lesson comprised of five student groups. Each group worked on developing their own math word problems, and certain groups were provided scaffolds such as graphic organizers with sentence prompts. The teacher worked with a group of English Language Learners (ELLs) in which pre-cut sentence strips were provided. As groups worked, the teacher stepped away from her group to check in on the rest of the class. In checking over the work on one student, it was evident that she was having troubles understanding how to construct a sentence related to her group’s task. The teacher pulled this student into her small group for further targeted work.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through the school's morning message. The school staff consistently communicates expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback about their children’s academic performance and progress.

Impact
School leadership provides training aligned with schoolwide expectations and has a system of accountability. In addition, the school leadership and staff help families understand their children’s progress toward those expectations using tools such as i-Ready.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders are consistently communicating high expectations to the entire staff through the daily morning message memoranda, which is placed in teachers’ mailboxes and contains the school’s instructional focus along with academic and school culture issues. In an October memorandum, teachers were given feedback on a recent learning walk conducted by the school leadership team which centered on the use of anchor charts within classrooms. The memorandum noted that there was inconsistent use of anchor charts to facilitate the teaching of the writing process. Teachers’ next steps were provided along with the date and focus for the next learning walk. In addition, the coach from the Center for Professional Education of Teachers at Teachers College, Columbia University provide on-going support and feedback through emails on teachers’ instructional practices. In a December 2018 email, the coach summarized a recent discussion regarding student assessment in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The coach also provided feedback on strategies that can be employed to monitor and support students in organizing their writing, including three different templates teachers can use to monitor different writing genres. Tips on the best way to provide feedback to students relative to their work products were provided. The results of these communications further emphasizes the principal’s high expectations around teaching and reinforces the importance of instructional practices to facilitate student progress.

- School leaders and staff focus on partnering with families to effectively communicate expectations to prepare their children for colleges and careers. The school has invested in i-Ready, an online diagnostic tool that monitors student progress in math and literacy and provides lessons that change in rigor commiserate with their proficiency levels. The school reaches out to families to provide information on i-Ready, how their children are progressing using the program and how they can use it at home. In February 2019, school leadership held an i-Ready Family Night in which children’s recent proficiency data was shared along with strategies parents can employ to support their children in using i-Ready at home. Parents also filled out a survey in which they indicated areas in which they needed more support, which is then used in facilitating future workshops. All parents interviewed agreed that the staff always partner with them to help them to support their children towards academic success. One parent of a fifth-grade student stated, “The school is always willing to engage with me about academics and behavior. They are always available.”

- School leadership and staff have systems of communication in place to inform parents about both academic performance and celebrations. Teachers regularly send out progress reports to let parents know about their children’s academic performance, including specific areas such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, the staff members hold regular workshops to highlight the school’s academic offerings. For example, the school’s guidance counselor held a middle school information night in which fourth and fifth grade parents were invited to learn about the middle school application process.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Through ongoing cycles of observation, school leaders support the development of all teachers with effective feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching that captures strengths, challenges and next steps.

Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development, with a focus on student groupings.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership, consisting of the principal and one assistant principal, support teacher development through the Advance observation process. The frequency of teacher observations is based on teacher preference as determined during the Initial Planning Conference (IPC). Both school leaders observe all teachers in alternating observation rounds. The principal makes it a point to supervise, observe and provide feedback to new teachers as well as teachers struggling in their instructional practice. The implementation of alternating observation cycles along with constant collaboration between both school leaders ensures coherence and improves teachers’ instructional practices schoolwide. School leadership also uses a tracking tool to determine how well teachers are performing when measured against the Danielson rubric.

- School leaders use classroom observations to focus on the schoolwide goal of increasing the efficacy of student groupings through the use of assessments. In one observation report, a third-grade teacher was commended for her teaching strategies that effectively engaged students in instruction. As a next step, it was suggested that the teacher identify her student groupings for every lesson and delineate the specific reason for each group. In a subsequent observation report, it was noted that the teacher was checking in on groups of students during the lesson. To further refine her practice, it was suggested that the teacher create a system of taking on-the-spot notes of her observations of individual and student groups. These notes can then be used to further target student academic needs. Thus, specific feedback elevated the teacher’s professional growth by further refining how she uses student work data to target groups of students.

- A review of post-observation feedback also reveals a focus on questioning and discussion strategies to enhance student participation. One observation report noted that the teacher provided students open-ended questions and reflection time to allow students to provide higher-order questions. It was also noted that not all students participated in the discussions, limiting the efficacy of the questions provided. As a next step, it was suggested that the teacher use equity sticks in which students’ names are written on Popsicle sticks. During class discussions, the teacher can pick equity sticks at random and have the student participate in the discussion. This would allow for an equitable distribution with regards to student discussion. In another observation report, students were engaged in a math lesson centered on the process in which multi-digit numbers are divided by a single digit divisor. The school leaders noted that student discussions were limited in part by the fact that there was no set discussion protocol evident either in classroom discussions or in classroom artifacts. As a next step, the teacher was instructed to create a discussion protocol anchor chart that would be accessible to students during classroom discussions. The school leader offered to help the teacher in creating the anchor chart.