Quality Review Report

2018-2019

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Brooklyn
NY 11229

Principal: Ellen Quigley

Dates of Review:
January 23, 2019 - January 24, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

### Instructional Core

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 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>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations aligned to their instructional focus to the entire staff. Staff systematically establishes a culture of college readiness that communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact
Staff-led support and training contribute toward a culture of mutual accountability for the entire faculty. All students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have implemented several structures to communicate high expectations to meet the school's instructional vision on student engagement and assessment-based instruction, and have provided support for their teachers and other staff members throughout the year. Weekly communications using 206 Happenings provide reminders connected to the instructional focus. The faculty binder includes explanations on how to implement balanced literacy components and guidance on maintenance of student portfolios. Professional learning plans and study groups in math and literacy have supported teachers' understanding of how to use math notebooks, develop writing strategies, and enhance the level of questioning and discussion. Other professional learning connected to planning and assessment has focused on ensuring learning objectives are connected to grade-level assessments and lead to clearer targets for students to use as they self-assess in class. Teachers reported that the continuous communication and support from school leaders and from their colleagues on teacher teams have increased their own level of engagement in meeting the schoolwide expectations. Overall, shared structures for communication and support are ensuring that all staff is meeting the expectations for instruction.

- Shared accountability is leading to all staff members fostering practices in meeting the school's instructional and assessment goals. The instructional cabinet, as well as vertical and grade-level planning, ensure a common message throughout the school and provide teacher-led support structures to staff that are yielding growth in teachers' and other staff members' practices. Content-area ambassadors are leading professional learning sessions, including intervisitations, where teachers have an opportunity to reflect on their practice. Additionally, school leaders conduct learning walks and collect students' work on a monthly basis and then provide teachers with feedback on the quality of the tasks and their use of the rubric to provide students with feedback. Revisions that teachers made to the curricula based on school leaders' comments reflect the integration of suggested improvements into the units, such as revised learning objectives. This demonstrates that teachers are taking ownership to further support the school’s instructional focus.

- All students are taking initiative to ensure their readiness for the next grade level, college, and career. Student-led conferences enable students to reflect on their strengths and growth areas across subject areas, and occur throughout the year. Additionally, students shared that schoolwide initiatives and programs that teach effective notetaking, time management, and study skills help them to be more prepared to meet grade-level standards. This year, students are participating in three college-level courses taught by their teachers to expose them to different career options. According to students, this opportunity has heightened their awareness and work habits toward becoming college-ready and has increased their willingness to develop next steps toward meeting these expectations.
Findings

Across classrooms, teacher practices are aligned to the curricula, but in a few classes do not currently reflect a set of coherent beliefs to ensure that all students are academically and productively challenged to meet and exceed the instructional shifts.

Impact

In a few classes, there are missed opportunities for high levels of student thinking and ownership of their work products and discussions that would reflect academic challenge for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- As part of the school leaders’ instructional beliefs, students learn best when they are provided academically challenging activities to allow for productive struggle and differentiated instruction. Additionally, there is a focus on developing clear learning objectives and allowing for student choice, which leads students toward full engagement in the instructional shifts, such as real-world application and text-based evidence. In a social studies class, student groups worked on researching different amendments to understand and make real-world connections to determine why the Bill of Rights is important to their freedom. In one group focused on the second amendment, students analyzed a text and used evidence to support their reasoning why they agreed or not with the right to bear arms. Across groups, students were able to use text evidence to pose counter arguments to the question of whether their amendment was important to their freedom. Similarly, in a fifth-grade math class, students worked in groups to add fractions with sums larger than two and critiqued each other’s use of strategies that demonstrated their abilities to apply multiple strategies and defend their answers.

- However, in a few classes, there were missed opportunities for teachers to coherently build upon the instructional shifts. In a science lab, students were completing an experiment by building a simple motor as part of a review. Using several materials including a battery, paper clips, wires, and other items, students were asked to build the motor and develop a hypothesis on how an electric motor is able to spin. During the lesson, students completed the experiment either individually or with the help of their group, yet a few students were unsure of the goal of the activity and how it connected to the real world. Similarly, in a literacy class, although students discussed multiple texts on a shared nonfiction topic, the graphic organizer used limited some students from being further academically challenged to develop claims about the theme of their books.

- Across classes, students worked in groups or with partners. However, in a few classes, students were not provided with opportunities to further engage and take ownership of the lesson. In a math class, the teacher conducted a whole-class lesson using a math word problem, where students needed to use their understanding of operations and number sense to compare differences in length. Although the teacher asked a student to engage in the lesson by solving the problem with the class, the majority of the lesson was student-teacher-student directed, which limited the degree of ownership that students were able to take when solving the word problem. In another math class, the lesson focused on finding distance and midpoints, and the teacher primarily led the lesson with little engagement from the students. In a social studies honors class, student groups conducted research on different religions using primary and secondary sources to complete guided questions and a graphic organizer. Although students worked in groups to learn about the different religions, some students were unable to speak to the purpose of the research, which limited their ability to take ownership of the process.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards, and strategically integrate text-based answers with a variety of sources and real-world applications that coherently embed rigorous habits in tasks.

Impact

Purposeful curricular decision-making leads to coherence across grades and subject areas and to tasks that foster all students’ abilities to demonstrate their thinking and promote college and career readiness across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula reflects an intentional focus on integrating text-based answers and writing from sources across grades and subjects. School leaders and teachers determined this focus based on their review of schoolwide data that reflected the need to reinforce these instructional shifts. In a social studies lesson plan, students are required to determine the success and failures of specific amendments in the Bill of Rights and express their arguments to their classmates with evidence from research they conduct online and using texts. Similarly, in an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan, the task focuses on students finding meaningful quotations from different sources to persuade their reader to believe their arguments on chocolate milk in schools.

- A purposeful decision to reinforce algebraic concepts across grades is reflected in the school’s math curricula based on a review of middle school math data. Lower-grade curricular units have been adjusted to include unknown numbers and number bonds. Additionally, fluency concepts are reinforced and real-world problems are used to support students’ math applications in tasks across grades. In one grade-two task, students would use fluency sets to practice and review sums and differences with totals through 20. Students would then be expected to solve a word problem that focuses on determining monetary amounts. In a seventh-grade task, students are to solve word problems based on real-world scenarios focused on selling prices, including mark-up and mark-down concepts, using algebraic and numerical approaches. Overall, the curricula are coherent across grades.

- The vast majority of unit and lesson plans include tasks that embed critical thinking and research skills across subjects and grades for diverse learners. In a fifth-grade lesson plan, the task focuses on students reviewing different solutions for solving a problem and comparing the two methods to determine their effectiveness. In a second-grade math plan, the task requires that students are paired to discuss and explain a good way to think about dollars when a problem asks you to count many different bills and you need to determine how to organize them so they are easier to count. In a social studies unit, one of the culminating tasks asks students to compare and contrast two or more belief systems developed in the Eastern hemisphere and their influence on contemporary cultural practices and current events. Overall, the schoolwide curricula include tasks that foster higher-order thinking and ensure that all students demonstrate their thinking.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create curricula-aligned rubrics that are used for student self-assessment. They also create other assessments and consistently check for understanding through student conferences.

Impact

Students are provided with actionable feedback regarding their level of achievement. Teachers make effective in-the-moment adjustments that meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula-aligned rubrics and checklists are used across classrooms to gauge student understanding and are used as the basis for feedback in support of their next steps. A review of student work reflected teacher comments in the form of strengths and areas for improvement with next steps. One student narrative included feedback that read, “I love how you used dialogue in your writing. Next time, write about how your problem was solved.” On a math task, a teacher’s comment reflected, “Your thinking is clear and labeled. I noticed that you used a tape diagram to support your thinking. Next time provide an explanation using math vocabulary.” Across classrooms, there were similar patterns in the quality of feedback, thus supporting students’ next steps toward improving their academic achievement.

- Students shared that they understand the grading policy and their performance levels using their rubrics. Additionally, students were able to understand their next steps based on their teacher’s feedback. Using his feedback from one assignment, one student shared his next steps would be to add more text evidence and provide more background details for the reader on an ELA reading response. Another student shared a similar response, stating that she needed to add more text evidence to support a claim in her essay. Others students agreed that their feedback provided them with next steps, reflecting that across classrooms, students are receiving supportive comments about their work.

- Teachers check for understanding regularly, which provides opportunities for students to self-assess and fosters instructional adjustments. In a dance class, students learned the sequence of Fanga Alafia, a West African dance. During the class, once all students tried the dance first, the teacher noted that some students needed reinforcement and adjusted the lesson by choosing three students to model the dance for the other students to support their next attempt. In a math class, a teacher worked with students and used modeling and questioning approaches to adjust her lesson when students misunderstood the value of different coins. In another math class, students used a rubric to evaluate the quality of their partners’ responses when solving a problem and self-assessed using the rubric to determine their own next steps.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders’ feedback accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The leaders strategically manage and provide professional learning and succession plans that are developed based on teacher and student data trends.

Impact

Feedback from school leaders articulates clear instructional and cultural expectations for teacher practice. This supports their development, aligns with their professional goals, and leads to improved student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders continuously provide support aligned with the school’s focus on improving the quality and use of assessment-based instruction. Feedback provided in formal and informal reports integrates the school’s focus through comments in the form of strengths and recommendations with next steps. These may include an opportunity to attend a professional learning session, visit other colleagues, or engage with a text related to the growth area. In one report, the school leader recommended that the teacher use her data to determine whether students were ready to move out of pre-planned small group instruction and analyze the data to determine areas where students were getting stuck in order to develop adjustments and further adapt the task for the students. In the following report, this recommendation was implemented and comments reflected how the school leader continued with the assessment focus to further expand on the teacher’s practice. A review of other observation reports reflected a similar and consistent focus on assessment, thus demonstrating clarity connected to the school’s expectations on assessment.

- In the beginning of the year, teachers set professional goals connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and are provided with feedback to enhance their practices in this area. One feedback report noted that the school leader would be working with the teacher in developing challenging questions that allow students to cognitively grapple with tasks to ensure they are engaged, thus supporting the teacher’s goal to create an environment of respect and rapport. Another feedback report reflects how the school leader aligned her feedback to the teacher’s goal on planning for meeting students’ learning needs and styles. The school leader highlighted the teacher’s efforts to include scaffolds in math to support student learning needs and suggested that the teacher begin to use a gradual release approach. Collectively, teacher feedback centered on the school expectations, connected with teacher goals, and aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching foster professional growth and continuous learning throughout the school.

- Professional learning is strategically developed through a review of teacher observation data, students’ performance data, and a review of student work products. Resulting practices have led to the development of study groups across subject areas, with a focus on differentiation, best practices in assessment, questioning, and discussion to foster high levels of student engagement across the school. Professional learning cycle goals and study groups support the deepening and further expansion of the use of differentiated strategies and the planning of rigorous instruction. Additionally, succession plans include teacher training to build their leadership capacity and instructional coaching skills by refining their cultural responsiveness. A review of student work products reflects an increased focus on real-world application in math word problems as well as an improvement in both the quantity and quality of student writing as an outgrowth of increased instructional capacity.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based grade-level and vertical teams that consistently analyze assessment data and student work for identified students.

Impact

The professional collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and the successful implementation of the instructional shifts, leading to strengthening instructional capacity, and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly by grade level and by departmental vertical teams. During a recent math vertical team meeting, teachers reviewed data to determine the learning gaps between the elementary and middle school. Some of the shared areas that were identified in need of growth included division, order of operations, fractions, and place value. The team also determined that reteaching number systems at the end of sixth grade and introducing seventh grade concepts and math vocabulary would benefit students during the following year. A review of agendas in different grades reflected how teachers are using inquiry-based practices when reviewing data across the school to plan next steps in support of student growth.

- Teachers shared that data is consistently analyzed and reflected upon to determine next steps toward meeting the school’s achievement goals. All teachers agreed that they share strategies and target specific groups of students during team meetings to determine how best to support them to meet grade-level standards. To support students’ content area writing, teachers found that having students talk about their ideas and plan for writing helps increase the volume and quality of it. Thus, the sharing and implementation of best practices and new strategies help to further the progress of meeting the school’s academic achievement goals.

- During a team meeting, the fourth-grade ELA team discussed their previous review of data and student work from their most recent post-assessment and noticed that students demonstrated progress in their understanding of main idea, yet supporting details remained a growth area. The team determined that through small group instruction, they will revisit the concept and introduce new strategies and tools such as a checklist versus using the boxes and bullets graphic organizer they had already introduced in the unit. Additionally, the team shared that based on the types of responses provided, students would benefit from viewing videos on the topic of the text. As a team, the teachers agreed to implement the new strategies and bring back the resulting work for further analysis, thus promoting practices in support of student progress.