Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 229 Dyker
K-8 20K229
1400 Benson Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228

Principal: William Kirk

Dates of Review:
March 6, 2019 - March 7, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Glenda Esperance
**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. 229 Dyker serves students in grade PK through grade 8. 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 |  | 
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| To what extent does the school... | Area | Rating |
| 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 | Additional Finding | Developing |
| 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 | Additional Finding | Proficient |
| 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 | Area of Focus | Developing |
## 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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Proficient</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>Proficient</td>
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<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>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

There are structures in place to ensure that the school is safe and the culture is inclusive. Teachers participate in professional learning around mindfulness and create intervention strategies to help support students’ social-emotional wellbeing.

Impact

School leaders and faculty have created a learning environment that celebrates the diversity of their students and promotes a tone that fosters respect for all.

Supporting Evidence

- The school hosts Respect for All assemblies focusing on anti-bullying and positive school climate for all grades. School leaders have also launched a school spirit and event committee. Committee members work collaboratively with administrators to create activities that speak to the core beliefs of the school, which call on students to respect themselves, their peers, and their school. School leaders also provide students in grades three to eight with personal agendas that spotlight positive character traits for students to emulate, such as fairness, caring, and citizenship. Students, staff, and community partners all contribute to the success of the annual family giving thanks dinner in November. Additionally, this year’s Lunar New Year festivities were expanded schoolwide to focus on valuing diverse cultures. These initiatives help contribute to positive school culture that is welcoming and inclusive.

- Teachers spend time at the beginning of the year gathering knowledge about the social-emotional and academic needs of students. They use questionnaires, learning inventories, and introductory activities to gain information about the diversity of the student population. In addition, the school has implemented elective classes that allow students to have a choice in programming that appeals to their personal interests. Students select from a menu of classes, such as the art club, soccer club, math league team, journalism, and coding. The electives were created to ensure that students had input into their programs and to provide a space where they could showcase their talents and interest.

- A list of “Positive Intervention Strategies for 229 by 229” was created at the June professional development (PD) conferences during the previous year. School leaders provide teachers with this, which notes ways in which students can be acknowledged and cared for by staff. Strategies include beginning the school year on a positive note, creating leadership roles for students in the classroom, and constantly praising students. The schoolwide mental health program, Thrive NYC, hosted a mindfulness training that assisted teachers in managing personal stress, sharing specific techniques for stress reduction. Paraprofessionals and support staff were also trained in these methods. School leaders believe that when teachers understand and are able to manage stress, they will better serve students’ social and emotional needs. Additionally, parents are provided with ongoing training to support social-emotional learning as well. Teachers facilitate these sessions during Tuesday parent outreach time, at back-to-school events, and during electronic communication. Consequently, professional development for the staff and school community supports strategies that foster the adoption of effective personal behaviors by students.
Findings

School leaders and faculty administer ongoing common assessments across grade levels and content areas. Students are provided with feedback on their work, and teachers’ in-the-moment assessment practices include tracking sheets.

Impact

Although there are common assessments administered and teachers conduct checks for understanding during lessons, feedback provided to students is not yet actionable and assessments are not used to measure students’ growth. Furthermore, the instructional decisions being made are inconsistent and do not yet support all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics are used to evaluate student work products, and they are customized across grades and content areas. School leaders indicate that teachers have begun to take criteria from rubrics and craft student-friendly checklists to guide students’ performance on learning tasks. For example, several student writing samples included a rubric which evaluated organization, evidence and details, word choice, and editing. In these rubrics, teachers indicated at least two specific areas which needed improvement. However, this practice is not yet occurring across all content areas. For example, in a grade seven class, students were given feedback on an autobiographical narrative essay. The teacher provided a grade on categories such as dialogue, story elements, transitions, and writing mechanics but did not provide tangible next steps that could be used to improve students’ performance on the task. Therefore, there was limited evidence of rubrics being used to provide actionable feedback to students.

- Schoolwide common assessments include beginning-of-year benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition to these, staff utilize content-specific assessments to track student learning. In English Language Arts (ELA), kindergarten through grade five use Open Court Reading curriculum-based unit assessments and writing tasks. In mathematics, beginning-of-year, mid-year, and end-of-year assessments, along with chapter tests and unit assessments, are aligned to the GO Math! curriculum. However, despite the use of these common assessments, the school was unable to produce data that measured the progress of the students or demonstrated whether they showed growth from the beginning of the year.

- During lessons observed, teachers conferenced with groups of students to assess learning. However, across classrooms, there was limited evidence of adjustments being made to provide supports to struggling students and extension opportunities for high-performing students. In a grade four math class, the teacher tracked students using grade-specific geometry standards. According to the tracking sheet, four students were struggling with classifying 2D figures and lines of symmetry. However, there was limited evidence of this data being used to adjust the lesson to provide additional support to these students. During a second grade ELA lesson, the teacher tracked students’ performance on identifying fact and opinion. While a large number of the students demonstrated mastery of the concept, the teacher simply assigned more of the same task and did not make any in-the-moment adjustments to further challenge students.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders and faculty are in the process of integrating the instructional shift of academic vocabulary into Common Core Learning Standards-aligned curricula. Some lesson and unit plans are designed to promote rigorous habits and ensure that tasks are accessible to a variety of learners.

**Impact**

Across grade levels and content areas, lesson and unit plans demonstrate an uneven integration of the instructional shifts. Additionally, curricular documents reveal inconsistent practices of planning and revising to ensure rigorous habits and cognitive engagement for all.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Curricular documents include pacing guides and unit outlines highlighting topics being covered in specific content areas, a list of the standards being addressed, and pre-established benchmarks used to assess students’ progress in meeting the expectations of each unit. However, there was limited evidence of the school’s instructional focus on integrating academic vocabulary. In a grade five social studies lesson plan, students were to conduct a close reading of *The Great Migration: An American Story* by Jacob Lawrence. The plan placed students into six groups, with each given specific skills to work on. Group tasks included defining unfamiliar terms found in the captions of the images using context clues, citing textual evidence to support an opinion, and analyzing the images themselves. Students were to discuss their responses and work collaboratively to create and share a poster that incorporated academic vocabulary. However, the practices present in this lesson were not yet evident across most lesson plans. Only five of the ten lesson plans of classes visited included evidence of purposeful planning to integrate the shift of academic vocabulary.

- An analysis of lesson and unit plans across all content areas and grade levels revealed that there is inconsistent planning and revision of the curriculum to ensure cognitive engagement for all. For example, a fourth grade *GO Math!* unit plan included the standards and a suggested strategy that addressed only English Language Learners (ELLs). A grade six math lesson plan was designed to have all students work on the same set of questions, with minimal scaffolds for students in need of additional support. In a grade seven social studies unit plan, there was no evidence of planning for ELLs, students with disabilities, or high performers. A grade six science unit plan included a list of possible accommodations for differentiated instruction that offered supports for students with disabilities and ELLs. However, there was limited evidence that the suggested strategies were specific to the needs of the class or of individual students.

- Units are in the process of being designed to ensure rigorous habits for all. In a third-grade math lesson plan, students were required to work collaboratively to create math problems. Students were divided into groups based on their understanding of fractions from previous lessons. They had to create at least two questions, exchange them with peers, and then solve the problem. After students solved the problem, they presented their findings to the entire class. In a grade 6 science unit plan, students had to create a prototype of an energy solving device. Students completed the task in groups, and each group had to present their design to the class. However, the emphasis on higher order skills for all found in these lessons is not yet evident in curricula across all grades and content areas.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the shared belief that students learn best when there is inclusion of student voice through discussion and student choice. Teachers provide students with scaffolds to ensure there are multiple entry points to support to the needs of a wide range of learners.

### Impact

Teacher pedagogy is aligned to a set of schoolwide beliefs, and classroom instruction is meeting the learning needs of variety of learners, including ELLs, and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a kindergarten to grade two bridge literacy class, the teacher incorporated a wide range of supports to assist learners in acquiring a thorough understanding of adjectives. The teacher used a mentor text, *Go Away, Big Green Monster!* and a puppet to introduce the concept to students. Students were then divided into three groups based on individual needs. Students were given a worksheet that directed them to create monsters, and they then described their pieces using adjectives. They were also provided with graphic organizers as a visual aide. In addition, based on their learning style preferences, some students were given clay and other tactile materials to create visual representations that served as additional resources in completing the worksheet. The school’s speech pathologist was also present in the classroom to provide push-in support and team teach with the classroom teacher. The lesson design ensured that all students had access to instruction. Consequently, all students were able to use adjectives to describe their work, regardless of their academic levels.

- In a grade seven ELA classroom, students participated in a Socratic debate using findings from articles they had researched related to the question, “Is social media good for adolescents?” Students prepared their notes in advance of the discussion. During the debate, students cited evidence from their notes to support their stances to their peers. Students were provided with a rubric that required them to rate themselves as both speakers and audience members. They were also reminded to use the accountable talk chart posted on wall as a guide. After the seminar, students completed a self-assessment tool reflecting on how their performance could be improved. This tool helped ensure the participation of all students engaged in the class discussion.

- In a grade eight Integrated Collaborative Teacher (ICT) science class learning about the various phases of the moon, students were given three different types of worksheets to support the multiple learning styles in the class. To show what they learned about moon phases, students could draw, cut and paste, or write. In a grade five to six bridge math class, students worked on adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators. The teacher modeled the teaching point of the day using fractions strips and think alouds and incorporated manipulatives to assist students in grasping the concepts being presented. These pedagogical practices helped ensure that students had multiple entry points into the curricula.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations to faculty via staff handbooks, professional development (PD), and teacher observation feedback. School leaders and faculty provide parents with access to resources and workshops that support student success.

Impact

School leaders’ have created a culture of accountability set forth by clear expectations that promote teacher development and parental involvement in order to support student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate the expectations of the school to staff through the faculty handbook, emails, daily morning notes, grade level meetings, and morning announcements. Additionally, school leaders use PD sessions to support and strengthen teacher pedagogy, intentionally aligning these sessions to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. At the beginning of the year, school leaders hosted a PD series centered on unpacking the tool. After completing the first round of observations, administrators identified trends and used this data to hone in on the specific needs of teachers. This resulted in an emphasis on professional learning around planning and preparation, discussion and questioning techniques, and assessment during instruction. School leaders provide staff with next steps on an ongoing basis, with feedback on observation reports offering suggestions for pedagogical improvement. For example, as a next step for planning and preparation in one observation report, the school leader recommended that the teacher provide students with exemplars as reference materials to be utilized during independent activities. One teacher stated, “We ask for support and they make it known that they are here for us. They are always available to help.”

- Expectations for students are shared with families at the start of the school year during Meet the Teacher Night. During this event, parents are given information about schoolwide curricula and grade-specific, content-area expectations. In addition, there are on-going efforts to communicate academic expectations and student progress to families during PTA meetings and Parent Outreach Tuesdays, as well as through class newsletters. Parents are also encouraged to register and access the school’s online gradebook on a regular basis. Through this system, parents can monitor and track children’s progress in their classes. At the present time, most parents and students utilize this software to stay current about academic expectations and monitor progress.

- Staff partner with parents to keep them informed of schoolwide academic expectations via workshops and events designed to meet the needs of families. The school has hosted workshops on high school articulation for eighth graders and for parents of ELLs. To ensure that expectations are accessible to all parents, most communication from the school is translated into languages reflective of the school’s population. Additional school documents are also translated upon request. Moreover, school leaders have created a chart highlighting the primary home language of students in each class, which is distributed to the entire staff to facilitate communication with parents. The school website provides information about major content areas. For example, there is a math online family support link giving parents resources for the GO Math! curriculum. Other informational tabs address the needs of specific families, such as updates for ELLs and about eighth grade transition to high school.
### Findings

Distributive leadership structures, such as teacher-led committees, are in place, and teacher teams consistently engage in inquiry-based activities that strengthen the implementation of instructional shifts, such as building academic vocabulary.

### Impact

Professional collaborations result in improved teacher practice, and there are opportunities for teachers to have a voice in schoolwide decisions.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams exist from pre-kindergarten through grade eight, and each team has a specific instructional purpose. For example, the kindergarten team’s focus is to improve phonemic awareness, and the grade five team researches strategies that will help improve writing, with an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary. Each team meets on an on-going basis, sharing student work among its members and making recommendations to one another for improvement that will lead to implementation. Earlier in the school year, school leaders facilitated a professional learning session on the expectations for inquiry. During the training, teacher teams were provided with resources, such as, “A Practical Guide to Teacher Inquiry” and a checklist to guide their efforts in creating quality inquiry plans, emphasizing components such as focus, actions, questioning, and data collection techniques Teachers indicated their instructional practices are being strengthened through these team-based collaborations.

- The first-grade teacher team was observed reviewing student work products. The team’s inquiry focus was, “How can we improve vocabulary acquisition and usage across content areas?” which is aligned to one of the school’s instructional goals. Team members created a vocabulary unit and a variety of worksheets to help students with language acquisition. One member served as a facilitator and opened the meeting with a recap of the last meeting. The other members took turns presenting and sharing noticings from student work samples. Each member also brought a sample of the resources to help students, with one teacher sharing that she allowed students to self-select vocabulary building worksheets. Another teacher discussed using journals and implementing a word of the day. At the end of the meeting, teachers agreed on a set of next steps that included administering a vocabulary-based formative assessment at the end of the week.

- Teacher-led committees ensure that faculty members have a role in school decisions. Committees on curriculum and social events, teams for technology, professional learning, community service, vertical articulation, and English as a New Language (ENL), and the rooftop garden group meet with school leaders regularly to plan initiatives to support the mission of the school. For example, the vertical team ensures instructional coherence while the ENL team discusses student needs and provides instructional strategies to staff that help support student growth. For example, this team has opted to minimize the number of pull-out sessions and transition to a push-in model to increase their time supporting ELLs alongside classroom teachers. The social events committee worked collaboratively with school leaders to revamp this year’s lunar day festivities to ensure that the event aligned with the rich diversity of the school’s student population.