Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 316 Elijah Stroud
Elementary 17K316
750 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11238
Principal: Olga Maluf

Dates of Review:
February 28, 2019 - March 1, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Debra Tasioudis
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. 316 Elijah Stroud 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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<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>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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<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>1.4 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>
<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>
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</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>
</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>Developing</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings
Rubrics and other assessments are aligned to the curricula across grades and subjects. Checks for understanding through questioning, exit tickets, and students’ self-assessment, are commonly used assessment practices across classrooms.

Impact
Written comments and conferences with teachers provide students with actionable feedback, including next steps to help them improve their work. Teachers use data from checks for understanding and students’ self-assessment to make on-the-spot adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- During a meeting with students, the students stated that teachers routinely share assessment results with them and advise them about actionable next steps. In describing feedback provided on a math assessment, one student shared that, “In math, I can see my progress towards goals from the feedback I get on my assessments and we keep track in our folders.” Feedback with actionable next steps to students, was also provided in other subject areas, as evident on reading and writing work products seen in classrooms and shared in the meeting with students. Additionally, students confer with their teachers about their monthly mini-reading quizzes and receive compliments and next steps, orally and on sticky notes, to improve their reading. Similarly, students use rubrics or checklists in completing writing tasks and teachers provide them with actionable glows and grows on their work. In a piece of fiction writing, a student received a glow for including dialogue and a grow which requested more details about each of the characters and the setting.

- Across classrooms, teachers commonly use questioning and exit tickets to assess students’ learning. Teachers and students shared that the results from these checks for understanding are used to group students after the mini-lesson or for the next day’s lesson. In a math lesson on comparing two-digit numbers, at the beginning of the lesson the teacher asked students questions such as, “What does compare mean?” and “What does greater than mean?” The teacher and paraprofessional listened in on conversations by pairs of students, taking notes on the students’ thinking as they shared ideas. Once the students went off to work at their tables the teacher and paraprofessional used data from this quick check to adjust the lesson, in order to address the observed needs of these students and others in small groups.

- In a reading lesson on using “expert words” to identify the topic of a book, the teacher conferred with students and made a sticky note of next steps for herself, in relation to each student with whom she conferred. As students shared their descriptive words about the topic of their book, with one another, the teacher used a mid-workshop interruption to allow a student to share information from his discussion with a partner, making clear that the student showed his partner the “expert words” in the text and connected them to the topic of the book. This adjustment to the lesson was effective in meeting students’ learning needs, as it prompted other pairs of students to go back into the text to find and use evidence to support their thinking. Similar on-the-spot checks for understanding, with follow up adjustments for individual or small groups of students, were in use across the classes visited.
Findings

Teachers engage in professional collaborations, only a few of which utilize an inquiry approach connected to implementing Common Core Learning Standards. Teams, including a Collaborative Action Research Project (CARP) team, discuss students’ work and analyze data on students’ progress towards goals.

Impact

Although the use of an inquiry approach is evident in the work of a few teacher teams, the work of teacher teams does not yet typically result in improved pedagogy or progress towards goals for targeted groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a Collaborative Action Research Project (CARP) team that uses an inquiry-based approach to focus on critical thinking and improving instruction in English Language Arts (ELA). The team, which is comprised of teachers, school leaders, and a staff member from the Department of Education’s central office, is focused on ensuring regular use of higher-order thinking questions, in teachers’ assessment of student learning and students’ questioning of texts. For example, the CARP team examines students’ questions from their application of the reciprocal reading strategy, reviews student work to revise teachers’ assessment and questioning practices, and then connects this work to the Danielson Framework for Teaching component that is focused on student engagement. This inquiry-based study of selected strategies that are linked to school goals and to the Common Core, has strengthened the instructional capacity of some teachers. In a meeting with the CARP team, teachers noted that the work of the team pushed them to re-evaluate their practices, in relation to the assessment of reading, teaching strategies, and alignment of curricula to the Common Core. Teachers also indicated that their inquiry work involved additional reading in the field, which helped them to adjust student tasks for improved alignment to targeted Common Core shifts. Similar inquiry-based practices were not reflected in meeting documents that outlined the work of other teams across the school.

- Meeting notes and discussions with teachers about the work of grade-level teams, demonstrated that the teams regularly focus on revising curricula and improving instructional practices but did not consistently utilize an inquiry-based approach to their work. In a question and answer session with teachers, there was evidence that the fifth-grade teacher team had recently reviewed data from a mock State exam, to identify trends across the grade and instructional next steps. Members of the third-grade team shared that they meet regularly to discuss where they are in the units and reflect on strategies to further align instruction to the Common Core, through the creation of an online drive of curricular resources. Meeting notes from a lower-grade team demonstrated that one week the team focused on reviewing the new writing unit, updating rubrics for an International Baccalaureate (IB) unit, discussing pacing for reading and writing units, and on recording reading data. The next week, the team focused on creating re-teach lessons, based on a review of reading data, and discussed updates in IB planning and expectations. While these meeting records provide evidence of professional collaborations focused on curricula and instruction, they do not demonstrate application of an inquiry-based approach.

- While the CARP team members shared that they each identified three students from their classes, with whom they worked, in the team’s binder and other documents shared, there was no evidence that the team set goals for the targeted groups of students, leading to a review of data to assess their progress towards the goals. Other team records also demonstrate that though teacher teams look at student work, with an eye towards instructional next steps, the teams’ work does not yet typically result in progress towards goals for groups of students.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core and are focused on building alignment to IB standards. Tasks emphasize higher-order skills and require students to grapple with real-world problems and explain their thinking.

Impact
Curricula and tasks promote college and career readiness skills for all learners and reflect the staff’s focus on building coherence of curricula across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A discussion with school leaders referenced a dual focus on fluency and applications of real-world problem solving in math. Across lesson plans reviewed, there were tasks for students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to engage in applications of real-world problem solving that required them to explain their mathematical thinking and strategizing. This instructional shift is aligned to the school’s IB learner profile. A fifth-grade lesson plan focused on a standard for converting measurement units and the task required students to explain their mathematical thinking in models and in writing. Similarly, in a first-grade math lesson plan, students were asked to model and compare two-digit numbers, using a math talk prompt to engage in a discussion about the tools used to determine which number is greater than others.

- School leaders and teachers are highly focused on building coherence through the incorporation of IB content and standards into the school’s reading and writing curricula. This approach to building coherence was reflected in a fourth-grade unit on the American Revolution, which illustrated lessons and tasks that were aligned to the Common Core and included opportunities for students to engage in self-selected research projects that demanded higher-order thinking. The tasks required students to read and take notes across fiction and non-fiction texts and then produce written arguments supported by evidence from these sources. The number of these IB-aligned units is growing across the grades.

- Purposeful planning of higher-order thinking questions, including different questions for different groups of students or differentiated tasks for each group, was evident across lesson plans reviewed. For example, a lesson plan on understanding fractions as parts of a whole, included three differentiated tasks for groups of students with diverse ability levels to understand parts of a whole, or differences in fractions with differing denominators or numerators. All three tasks of were connected to understanding fractions but reflected varied levels of rigor. Tasks in science, social studies, and ELA lesson plans routinely required students to cite evidence from texts to support a claim or argument, as seen in a lesson plan focused on engaging students in determining character traits and explaining how characters change throughout a story.
**Quality Indicator:**

### 1.2 Pedagogy

**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and include mini lessons to promote student work time, which is a component of the school’s belief about how students learn best. During lessons, students are afforded time to engage in collaborative work, including discussions with peers.

### Impact

With teaching practices prioritizing dedicated time for students to complete tasks independently or in collaboration with peers, students’ work products and discussions consistently demonstrate high levels of thinking and participation in learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teaching practices reflect an articulated belief in the use of the workshop model, with a short mini lesson (no more than ten minutes) and most of the work period set aside for students to have time to engage in skills practice and share their work. In most classes visited, instruction reflected alignment to elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, with students working in small groups and pairs, after explicit teacher modeling and an opportunity for guided practice. In a math class, a teacher modeled a strategy for ordering fractions and then sent students off to practice in pairs. Students used cubes to create their own models for placing fractions in order, as the teacher had done, and discussed their findings with each other, agreeing and/or disagreeing with one another about their findings. Similarly, in a lower-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, the two teachers modeled reading behaviors and partner talk and then sent partners off to choose a comfy place in the classroom to sit together and work, posing and answering questions about the texts that they were reading. In both classes, the lesson wrapped up with an opportunity for small groups to share their thinking with the class.

- In a meeting with students, one student said, “I like that the lessons here are always hands-on. In our class, our teacher will end up doing a simple lesson that takes 15 minutes, but it will take an hour because it’s hands-on and we are allowed to have so much discussion.” This held true across classroom visits, where students had ample time for discussion in turn and talks at the rug or meeting space, and then time for small groups to work together and share their thinking during the work period. This was most evident in a fifth-grade math class where students converted units of measurement to solve problems, demonstrating high levels of thinking in discussions and in their written work. In a fourth grade writing class, students demonstrated high levels of thinking in the notes that they took from the texts that they were reading about the American Revolution, and in the synthesizing task that required them to review their notes and decide what details were important enough to be included in their writing.

- In one classroom, students took ownership of learning in a Socratic seminar, where they used evidence from literature to challenge each other’s thinking and posed questions to one another about character traits in the story, as well as about students’ beliefs about right and wrong. In one exchange, two students debated whether an object in nature could be owned or stolen. Another student interjected, not to agree or disagree with the speakers, but to push them both to find evidence in the text to support their arguments so that he might get help to make up his mind about the issue being debated. This high level of student-student discussion, with only minor redirection from the teacher, reflected the students’ ownership of learning, a feature that was not noted in lessons viewed in other classrooms visited.
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff, through professional learning and coaching. Families appreciate the ease of regular communication with teachers, through various means which inform them about college and career readiness expectations for their children.

Impact

Professional learning and collaborations with colleagues and coaches hold teachers accountable for high expectations for learning across the schools. Ongoing communication between families and staff helps families understand the progress their children are making towards meeting academic expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate high expectations to staff, primarily through professional learning, whether it be full days, a week during summer, or in sessions on Monday afternoons. Teachers engage in professional learning connected to expectations for implementing grade level initiatives and partnerships for the arts, into units and instruction for arts and theater. There are also professional learning days focused on reading, writing, math, and IB unit planning, that are supported by coaches who communicate clear expectations for planning and instruction in all content areas. Coaches plan alongside teachers, model expectations in lab classes, and help teachers to delve more deeply into planning for the implementation of specific instructional strategies, such as using questioning practices, emphasizing vocabulary and word work, and embedding opportunities for students to engage in self-reflection throughout the units. School leaders and coaches regularly discuss teacher practice and ensure that they are consistently communicating shared expectations and holding teachers accountable for achieving them. Coaches and school leaders also hold teachers accountable for high expectations by providing them with feedback on planning practices, based on reviews of lesson plans and units.

- Along with report cards, staff members send home three, interim student progress reports that include each student's performance level in reading, math, and writing. The reports also include goals for students, helping families to understand their children's progress toward expectations. Teachers across the school also use an online platform to communicate with families about the daily progress of their children and families praised the ease with which they can use the platform to communicate with the teachers and other staff. Families also shared that they appreciate that teachers make time to meet with them beyond regularly scheduled Tuesday parent-teacher time, and stated that some teachers often accommodate their work schedules, talking with them early in the morning or in the evening, to ensure that they are apprised of their children's progress towards expectations. In some classes, teachers also send home newsletters to reiterate learning goals and communicate other expectations, as well as to share information about resources and strategies to support families in extending learning at home.

- There are workshops to help families understand schoolwide expectations, including expectations pertaining to the curricula, the IB program, and the school's Autism Spectrum Disorder NEST program, which is an inclusion program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In addition, there are workshops about expectations related to the middle school selection and application process and programs for the gifted and talented. There are also middle school tours for all families and the first Saturday of the school year is marked by a schoolwide barbecue, where families are invited to share a meal while learning about curricula. Families shared that these events help to make the school's curricula and expectations clear and connect families to specific staff members who can provide them and their children with further support when they need it.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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**Findings**

Although school leaders support the development of teachers through observations of their instructional practices, feedback generated from the observations is not always specific, data-driven, and time bound. Feedback to teachers is sometimes unclear about the teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps, as related to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

**Impact**

Feedback from observations of classroom instruction does not always promote clear expectations that effectively support teacher growth and development.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There are cycles of observation that have provided most teachers with formal feedback on at least two occasions. However, from the observation reports shared, the feedback seldom referred to students’ work or data. Almost all reports included next steps to improve the teachers’ practice, but few were time bound or prioritized. One report offered the teacher many commendations but showed no next step. Another report cited four next steps but did not highlight any examples of the teacher’s strengths. In the reports which included next steps, it was seldom clear when the next steps should be implemented or when the observer might return to observe changes in the teacher’s practice, based on the recommended next steps. School leaders shared that they purposefully rotate the teachers whose lessons they observe, to ensure that teachers benefit from different perspectives. However, the observation reports reviewed showed little connection from observation to observation, to strengthen support for the teachers’ development and promote reflection across lessons.

- Ratings provided to teachers across all three school leaders who conduct observations, reflected some misalignment in capturing strengths, challenges, and next steps as related to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. One teacher received the highest rating possible for managing student behavior, but the evidence provided by the observing school leader did not mention a critical attribute of the practice at this level, which is that students participate in managing their behavior. Additionally, the same teacher received the highest rating for engaging students in learning, although the feedback provided on the teacher’s observation report contained no evidence of students taking initiative to improve the lesson, which is a hallmark of the highest rating in this component. This disconnect between ratings and evidence from observations of teacher practice, illustrated inconsistencies that resulted in limited support for the teachers’ development.

- Some next steps provided to teachers in feedback on their instructional practice, demonstrated that there was not yet strong alignment to some elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In observation reports, some teachers received high ratings in questioning and discussion techniques and demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, but feedback offered next steps such as, “Use wait time when asking follow up questions”, or, “Include instructional strategies in the lesson plan.” In these cases, the next steps recommended situated the ratings for both components at the lower end of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and thus were not aligned to the higher rating provided to the teachers. These misalignments resulted in feedback that did not articulate clear expectations or support the teachers’ growth via next steps that were aligned to the observed needs of the teachers.