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

I.S. 318 Eugenio Maria De Hostos serves students in grade 6 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](http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm).

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
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<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>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</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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</tbody>
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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</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders prioritize the use of resources that are well-aligned to the school's instructional goals and action plans. Teacher time is purposefully structured to maximize teachers' capacity to achieve the goals.

Impact
Strategic alignment of resources to support the work of teacher teams, along with enrichment and extra-curricular activities for students, has resulted in meaningful student work products and improved instruction that engages all students in rigorous academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence
- In articulating its vision of success for all learners, the school's leadership team states that, "If teachers plan and implement cognitively challenging reading and writing tasks, with opportunities for questioning and student discourse, then students will be able to think critically, thereby achieving improved performance in class work, discussions, essays, reports, and formal and informal assessments across all subject areas." With that in mind, school leaders structured the school day to create additional time for team meetings by all staff and budgeted funds for ongoing professional learning, for all teachers to meet the prioritized instructional foci. As a result, teachers have access to professional learning sessions twice per week, prior to the beginning of the school day. School leaders also added intervention periods during the school day, for students who are not making adequate academic progress or need more targeted support. This move, which allows students receiving academic intervention to still be able to participate in an afterschool program of their choice, aligns resources to the goal of educating the whole child.

- To ensure that all students are successful and have ample opportunities to participate in music, arts, sports, and technology programs, school leaders dedicate significant funding to extra-curricular, enrichment activities and academic support for all students. Students and families overwhelmingly agreed that provisions for shop classes and a sizable after school program, in the school's budget, "is what the school does best." Many students and families reported that the school has a robust enrichment program, which was a key factor in students' decision to attend the school. School leaders and staff attribute the finding that 83 percent of all students maintained an average daily attendance rate of 90 percent or better in 2018, to the school's investment in extra-curricular activities. This was 3 percent higher than the City average in 2018. At the time of the review, many students were engaged in school day electives and after school events and clubs, including a significant number of students involved in the band program.

- To accomplish the goal of planning rigorous academic tasks for all learners, school leaders structured the school schedule to provide teachers with not only increased opportunities to attend grade level meetings for common planning and collaborative inquiry, but also for departmental collaborations linked to other professional responsibilities and schoolwide goals. This allows the inquiry teams to meet on a regular basis to refine curricula and plan supports for a variety of learners. Teacher teams use the additional planning time to share best practices in pedagogy and to add high level questions, scaffolds, rubrics, and assessments, to lessons for engaging all students in challenging tasks. Teachers report that the opportunity to work collaboratively as a result of strategic scheduling of common preparatory time, has allowed them to meet pedagogical expectations and improved their professional practice. This was evidenced by 100 percent of all teachers rated effective or highly effective in domain three, instruction, on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, by the end of the 2017-2018 school year.
**Area of Focus**

| Quality Indicator | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Proficient |

**Findings**

Teacher teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that are linked to a problem of practice, and consistently focus on ways to improve curricula, instruction and student achievement schoolwide. Consistent analysis of work products and assessment data for groups of targeted students, is an essential component of team meetings.

**Impact**

Teachers’ participation in inquiry-based, professional collaborations supports implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and instructional shifts, and results in increased instructional capacity for teachers; however, it is not yet resulting in improved achievement for all learners, nor mastery of goals for some groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, professional collaborations focused on school goals, such as the implementation of the Common Core and instructional shifts across grade levels and subjects. Teams of teachers share work products, such as unit plans and student materials, at team meetings and other professional learning sessions. The teams also ensure implementation of instructional foci by using identified academic vocabulary across core classes, analyzing data to plan interventions for at-risk students, and collaborating on revisions to curricula, instruction, and instructional resources. School and teacher leaders provide guidance and support for the teams, by facilitating the meetings and peer-to-peer coaching, and sharing data from instructional walks, to inform next steps for the inquiry and professional collaboration cycles. These activities have improved teacher capacity, with 100 percent of all teachers being rated effective or highly effective by the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

- Teachers reported that teamwork has strengthened their instructional practice by allowing them to learn effective strategies that they implement in their classrooms. At meetings, inquiry teams identify a problem of practice to guide their work. For example, in response to English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, and students achieving below their peers on the New York State English Language Arts (NYSELA) and math assessments, school leaders and staff analyzed student data and work samples, and determined that those groups of students did not meet mastery expectations for constructed response questions on the New York State assessments. To address that finding, school leaders and staff made writing across the curricula an instructional focus, schoolwide, and identified instructional strategies, such as annotation practices and added use of informational texts to be used across classrooms. While these strategies led to shared improvements in teacher practice, there was no data reflecting mastery of goals by the targeted students.

- The majority of teachers meet in grade level teams to determine ways to support students for whom they are responsible. Teachers use this time to analyze trends in student achievement data and student writing samples, and to adjust curricula for all grade levels and content areas. To support students with disabilities and ELLs, co-teachers utilize common planning time to design specialized instruction for these students. Through guidance from school and teacher leaders, co-teachers are supported in their work so that all groups of students are well supported to consistently improve their level of achievement. These practices resulted in an increase of 5 points in the percentage of students with disabilities meeting proficiency on the NYSELA exam from 2017 to 2018, but there was no improvement in achievement by ELLs. Thus, teachers' efforts to improve achievement by all learners did not lead to the expected gains.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders and teachers align curricula to the Common Core and strategically integrate the instructional shifts across grades and subjects. Rigorous habits and skills are emphasized and coherently embedded in curricula and academic tasks for all learners.

Impact
Coherence of curricula and instruction across grades and subject areas, promotes college readiness for all students. Lesson plans linked to Common Core-aligned curricula such as Expeditionary Learning and WordGen, require all students to demonstrate rigorous habits and critical thinking skills in work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) states that the engagement of students in purposeful discussions using questioning and discussion techniques, and the implementation of writing across the curriculum by embedding rigorous and relevant academic tasks within every unit of study, are instructional priorities school wide. Consequently, departmental teams strategically design tasks that require students to engage in increased writing across grade levels and disciplines. For example, to ensure rigor and alignment to the Common Core, the English Language Arts (ELA) department team uses the Common Core-aligned Expeditionary Learning curriculum which is supplemented by content from programs such as WordGen, to increase students' use of academic vocabulary and language across the content areas. Teachers also incorporate accountable talk stems and discussion strategies in their lesson plans, to encourage high level discussions in their classes. For example, the math team uses the Understand, Plan, Solve (UPS) protocol to create opportunities for students to rationalize their use of a given strategy, in peer-to-peer discussions.

- Content for high interest electives and shop classes are part of the curricula, to meet the goal of providing all students with access to relevant and engaging real world experiences and course work that foster college and career readiness. Students have access to courses, including computer science, that require them to engage in project-based coding exercises that involve higher order reasoning and synthesizing, to design computer applications. Students can also opt to take a chess class that emphasizes higher order thinking and metacognition. Additionally, students can take performance-based classes such as band, dance and robotics, that provide team building experiences, help students to develop positive peer to peer relationships, and motivate risk-taking in other classes. Students stated that as a result of taking elective classes, they feel compelled to participate in group discussions and collaborative tasks in other courses.

- Higher order skills and rigorous habits are promoted for all students, across grade levels and disciplines, through the implementation of school-wide practices, such as aligning essential questions, learning objectives, teacher questioning, and academic tasks to levels three and four of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge continuum. Having students think with clarity while identifying and considering multiple meanings, take and support positions in arguments, and engage in disciplined inquiry and thought, are departmental and schoolwide goals that were noted in a review of curricula for all learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs. This was evident in sixth through eighth-grade ELA lesson plans that required students to participate in a Socratic seminar. Accompanying materials for the task included bilingual sentence stems, note catchers, and participation rubrics, for students to monitor their level of participation.
**Additional Finding**

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

Teaching strategies align to curricula and schoolwide beliefs about best practices to maximize student learning across classrooms. Across classrooms, teachers consistently provide multiple entry points to lessons, using scaffolds such as graphic organizers and verbal and written prompts.

**Impact**

The alignment of teaching practices to the articulated schoolwide beliefs about best ways to foster learning, and the provision of multiple entry points to lessons with challenging tasks, result in all students demonstrating high levels of thinking in their work products across classrooms.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, instructional practices are aligned to the school’s beliefs about how students learn best. One of the beliefs reflected in the overarching schoolwide goals stated in the SCEP, is that pedagogy must engage students in purposeful reading, writing, and discourse across grades and content areas, to strengthen the capacity of all students to exhibit high-level demonstrations of learning in their work products. School leaders and teachers identified use of book clubs, Socratic seminars, and literature circles, as common strategies that align instructional practices to the articulated beliefs about how to best foster student learning and ensure that students are held accountable for engaging in rigorous academic tasks and debates, in sixth through eighth grade. In classrooms visited, most teachers were observed utilizing applications of these strategies.

- In most classrooms, lessons reflected teachers’ deep content knowledge and understanding of students’ diverse needs, resulting in rigorous academic tasks and activities across classrooms. Most lessons involved challenging academic tasks, with supports such as scaffolds, to engage all students, including students with disabilities, ELLs, and struggling students, in demonstrating higher-order thinking. In an eighth-grade ELA class, the teacher used a book club protocol that required students to determine if what was happening to the character in the novel which they were reading, was fair. Students were in ability-based groups and directed to push each other to look closely at the ideas expressed in the text. They were provided with graphic organizers to record their thoughts and the teacher checked in with the groups as they worked to complete the task. The teacher utilized purposeful grouping, by pairing high and low achieving students with one another, and provided sentence starters as scaffolds for students. When needed, the teacher provided individual students and groups with additional support by using verbal prompts and probing questions, such as, “Does anyone have a reflection that contrasts with this one?”, to further facilitate students’ reflections on their character.

- Multiple entry points to tasks were observed in a sixth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, where, prior to engaging in a Socratic seminar to debate the pros and cons of legalizing medical marijuana, students were required to close read informational text on the debate to provide access to medical marijuana in New York. All students were provided with “Building an Argument” graphic organizers, while students with disabilities and ELLs were given modified versions with additional information and prompts to facilitate access to the task. Students were observed using the graphic organizers and a common annotation strategy to annotate their texts. All students were provided with a self-reflection checklist to ensure that they were citing enough text evidence to support their responses.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use common assessment data, including data from school-developed quarterly assessments, to evaluate student progress towards learning goals. Rubrics that align with the curricula are used across grades and content areas.

Impact

The use of rubrics leads to effective feedback to students and teachers, regarding student progress and performance. Teachers use data from common assessments data to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across disciplines and grade levels, teachers use common assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the grade-level curricula, Common Core, and content area standards. Teachers align rubrics to the grade-level New York State assessment when applicable, or to the Regents assessments in eighth-grade advanced classes. For example, the ELA department created assessments that can be scanned into a software program to efficiently provide detailed data that can be disaggregated by subgroup, to provide a picture of student progress toward goals linked to the targeted literacy standards. While the math, science and social studies departments also use common assessments to make informed revisions to curricula, the data software program is not yet used by all teachers across all departments.

- A review of student work products indicates that students frequently receive rubric-based feedback from their teachers or peers, on the quality of their writing across subject areas. Students stated that the use of rubrics, checklists, and exemplars, in conjunction with teacher and peer feedback, has helped improve their writing and is preparing them for the New York State assessments and high school level course work. However, a review of student writing samples from across grades and subjects indicated that while feedback was consistently actionable, at times, it was not meaningful in highlighting students’ strengths and informing their next steps. This is consistent with the 2018 School Survey data in which only 68 percent of students reported that teachers gave them specific suggestions about how they could improve their work.

- Across grades and departments, teachers use common assessments to determine student progress towards standards and goals across content areas and to identify trends in student achievement and adjust curricula and pedagogy accordingly. School leaders and teachers reported that the decision to adopt brain-based learning strategies led to a revision of assessments to provide more accurate data to teachers and students. Similarly, the decision to increase writing across the content areas was made after an analysis of assessment data and student work samples, which revealed that students were struggling to reach mastery in writing. Additionally, an analysis of New York State and quarterly assessment data led to the decision to find ways to improve the quality of student writing and discourse across grades and subjects. To this end, teachers created more rigorous, relevant and engaging lessons with real life applications, by implementing specific strategies such as Socratic seminars and common annotation practices, schoolwide.
**Additional Finding**

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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**

Using electronic and traditional means, such as regular meetings with families, school staff consistently communicates to students and families, high expectations for college and career readiness by all students, with emphasis on a positive mindset towards students’ readiness for the next level.

**Impact**

Guidance and advisement systems for students and staff partnerships with families, result in all students being ready for the next grade and making progress towards college and career readiness goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- All staff members communicate high expectations for all students to be college and career ready and partner with families to support the students in meeting those expectations. The school leader hosts bi-weekly meetings that engage families in discussions about curricula, pedagogy, and college and career readiness goals. Families reported that school leaders’ expectations for all students to be well prepared for graduation and colleges and careers, have been clearly articulated to them. Families also noted that they receive regular updates on their children’s progress through a variety of means, including traditional report cards, parent-teacher conferences, regular progress reports, phone calls, email, and an online grading system that can be accessed via mobile devices. This has resulted in highly efficient communication between staff and families, regarding the academic and behavioral progress of their children, with families receiving messages and updates from school staff more quickly and regularly than before.

- The school’s leadership team and faculty are committed to not only communicating high expectations to students, but also to providing the ongoing guidance and advisement supports that they need in order to meet those expectations and take ownership of their academic work. Students reported that staff members regularly communicate the expectations to them and work with them to help them succeed in meeting all expectations. This includes the expectation for all students to be prepared for college and careers, which is embodied in the school’s vision of creating a growth mindset across the school, through the adoption of programs such as Leader in Me and The 7 Habits, that teach students about the importance of taking ownership of their work. Students reported that they believe they are being adequately prepared for the next level and data for the 2017-2018 school year showing an overall core course pass rate of 98 percent for ELA, math, science, and social studies, which is higher than the District and Citywide average, supports that conclusion.

- School leaders and staff use several data sets, such as end-of-unit tests, mini assessments, and quarterly content area exams, to inform conversations with students and help them monitor and accelerate their progress towards expectations, such as achieving mastery of learning standards and assessment benchmarks as part of readiness for the next grade. Teachers use these data to provide timely, targeted interventions to students who are at-risk of not meeting grade-level benchmarks and other expectations for next level readiness and preparedness for college and careers. This ensures that all students, especially those at-risk of falling behind or not meeting expectations, receive the support they need to be on track in making progress towards all expectations. Students stated that they are appreciative of the school leader providing an additional guidance counselor who offers personalized guidance and support to help them make informed high school selections and be fully prepared for a successful transition to high school.