Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S./I.S. 323
K-8 23K323
210 Chester Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212

Principal: Linda Harris

Dates of Review:
January 17, 2019 - January 18, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Sonja Webber-Bey
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

<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></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects,</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>and/or content standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all</td>
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<tr>
<td>learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices,</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
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### School Culture

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Proficient</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>
<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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional development begins with each classroom being identified with a personality that represents the school’s motto, “Winners and Achievers.” Structures such as the club program are in place to ensure students are known well by at least one adult.

Impact

The school’s safe and inclusive environment promotes students and adults treating each other with respect and valuing student voice. Counselors, social workers, and teachers coordinate support around attendance and social-emotional necessities that result in the academic and personal growth of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders embrace and support the implementation of the school’s approach to building culture through their motto, “Winners and Achievers”. Each classroom has a display outside their door highlighting someone who they feel represents this through personal accomplishment. One classroom was dedicated to Temple Grandin, a professor who was diagnosed with autism as a child. There is an essay posted about the professor’s life, photographs of several books she wrote, along with a photo of the school’s first grade teacher in her college graduation gown, and several photographs of individual students in the class. Other classrooms are dedicated to such personalities as Dr. Seuss, Michelle Obama, and Katherine Johnson. Postings also often include two flyers that have photos of students, reader of the month and mathematician of the month. The school has a character education program that focuses on a word of the month and a book of the month. The school community shares the theme through class presentations during assemblies.

  The book being read for January 2019 was *I've Seen the Promise Land*, by Walter Dean Myers.

  Teachers, parents and students report that understandings developed from books such as this have led to a more inclusive culture in the learning environment.

- Each class is represented on the school’s Student Council by sending their class president or vice president to bi-weekly meetings with school leaders. School activities and events, such as cultural assemblies, crazy hat day, Hollywood Night, Dress to Impress day, dance shows, talent shows, outreach to a local women’s shelter, and an international fall feast, are discussed and council members take an active role by helping across the building with planning and hosting. Each year members from the school’s constituent groups, including teachers, parents, students, and the afterschool partner, collaborate to sponsor a Christmas day meal for community neighbors. Each child that attends goes home with a coat and a present. Student Council members lead the Pledge of Allegiance each day, make other schoolwide announcements, and organize parent call lists to recruit their support and involvement. Student voice is welcomed and valued daily.

- School counselors, along with an additional counselor assigned during the day by the school’s community-based organization (CBO), participate in morning class meetings. Classes on grades kindergarten through fifth grade meet once per week. Classes on sixth through eighth grade meet every morning. Other staff, such as custodians and kitchen staff, become involved in a structured initiative wherein adults become ‘champions for children’. Thus, the school ensures that each student is well known by at least one adult. This is also supported by the club program. Students reported that they each choose three clubs they were inspired by or in which they are interested. They are then assigned to one of their choices. The clubs meet regularly and students get to know staff members that are not their teachers. One teacher remarked, “Middle school teachers will work with elementary students who will eventually become their students. You get to know them personally.”
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create rubrics and assessments aligned with the school’s curricula, but are not yet providing feedback that offers a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding, however there are missed opportunities for student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers’ actionable feedback is on completed student work products; however, it is not yet provided on all assignments, missing opportunities for it to be being meaningful towards improving student achievement during in-class learning, and providing students with clarity around their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use assessments that are aligned to their curricula, such as *Journeys* unit performance tasks, *EngageNY* modular assessment opportunities and *GO Math!* unit exams. A first-grade teacher’s assessment binder contains a graphic table she created to record each of her student’s scores from an end-of-unit exam along with the percentage scores from a beginning-of-the-year pre-assessment. This information on student learning outcomes enables her to know their present functioning level in order to adjust instructional decisions at the classroom level; however it does not present a clear portrait of student mastery towards proficiency for specific grade standards.

- Students expressed consensus that rubrics are helpful. One eighth grader reported that students receive rubrics before they start an assignment stating, “Rubrics help by letting us know what to do to get a higher level”. On student work displayed in a second-grade class, a four-level rubric sheet was highlighted in several boxes for each student’s work product. However, the language of the explanations in each section was not student-friendly, and the written teacher feedback comments lacked specificity. For example, “Great work. You showed tremendous effort. Please continue to work on taking your time in expressing your work.” Across classrooms, use of rubrics vary and all students are not yet getting meaningful feedback regarding their achievement.

- Teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding, such as teacher questioning during small group work, students giving a thumbs up or thumbs down, and exit tickets. During a second-grade reading lesson focused on locating details of a text, the teacher asked the whole class, “What else do we know about the coat?” She underlined three descriptive phrases on a whiteboard, then signaled with a thumbs-up motion. Of the twenty-two students present, more than half also signaled with a thumbs up, others showed no signal, and the teacher went on to the next part of the lesson. Across classrooms, teacher checks for understanding did not yet vary and at times did not lead to instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

- Across classrooms visited, there was student self-assessment in a variety of forms. In a third-grade classroom, students used a colorful, student-friendly tool written in ‘I can’ statements with provision for them to shade in various versions of smiley faces to represent their understanding of appropriate verb usage. In a seventh-grade class, students recorded their assessment results in a chart that identified questions by state standard indicators rewritten in student-friendly language with room to plan follow up action. Students participating in a small group meeting could report about levels of success in learning, but all could not yet speak of their next learning steps.
**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 faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and include the instructional shifts, such as academic vocabulary, text-based answers and math fluency. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

**Impact**

Curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members ensure that across grades and subjects curricula are engaging and rigorous for all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs), and students with disabilities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and faculty meet in teams to plan common units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and that integrate the instructional shifts. For example, the middle school English department met to include their English Language Arts (ELA) teachers in designing a balanced-literacy approach to instruction that includes a reading skill of the week, a grammar focus, monthly writing foci, use of *Wordly Wise*, a vocabulary enrichment program, ‘must have’ written lesson elements, and an agreed upon number of postings within the classroom environments, such as accountable talk prompts, their ELA prototype, a sit up, lean forward, ask and answers questions, nod your head, and track the speaker (SLANT) poster and the character program’s word of the month. Supplemental resources, such as *Collections* and *Code X* offer additional text selections that correlate with the themes teachers are using from the core *Expeditionary Learning curricula*. The Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) literacy coach also supports the work of curriculum design to align to the standards and promote college and career readiness.

- For the 2018 - 2019 school year, the school is targeting a balance of literary and informational texts, use of text-based answers, writing from sources, developing academic vocabulary, building fluency, and selecting higher levels of *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) questions to deepen student understanding. In a grade five ELA lesson plan, specific academic vocabulary such as beaming, dwarfed, perch, snug, procedure, and transferred, was identified for review in an informational text, “Quest for the Tree Kangaroo” from the *Journeys*’ program anthology. After completing research using various leveled materials, the task would require students to complete a cause-and effect graphic organizer, replete with details by citing text evidence.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) eighth-grade science lesson plan, student groupings were to carry out an investigation on rock classification. Justification for each rock identified had to be in writing with supporting evidence from classroom resources. The plan listed accommodations for several students who had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Each teacher and the paraprofessionals assigned to the class was assigned a role to support small group discussion and use specified strategies. The exit ticket assessment required students to include their understanding of how rocks change over time. The homework for the lesson connected to a real-world experience asking students to investigate the materials of which their local street is made. Students were to analyze its elements, provide supporting evidence, and describe the process by which they infer the street was made. An English as a New Language (ENL) teacher described her support for teacher planning to address ELL students’ needs, using a backward-design approach, so all lessons consistently emphasize student use of rigorous habits and higher-order skills. With this, some classes had prepared adjustments of the task for ELL students such as re-prompting to a word wall and use of sentence frames that support student access into a lesson.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best through student-centered classrooms which are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the instructional shifts, and provide multiple entry points for all learners.

Impact

Across classrooms, tasks and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation so that all students produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school shares an articulated belief about how students learn best. The school principal described her outlook regarding the students as, “It’s their classroom. I expect to see students navigating around the classroom.” Instruction at the school is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and within classrooms, teachers are giving explicit instruction, modeling for students, creating small groups, and making connections to the real world.

- Across classrooms, explicit modeling followed the ‘I Do, We Do, You Do’ approach, had students working in small groups and differentiated activities were provided. In a sixth-grade class, when asked how the teacher helps struggling students, one student replied, “My teacher will go up to them and help them learn by giving them an example. If there is a whole group, the teacher works with all of them. She will teach them again. She would try to break it down for them or put it into a series of assistance.”

- Multiple entry points into the curricula appropriately support students so they will become “Winners and Achievers”. For example, in a seventh-grade ICT math class, students worked in small groupings to solve problems involving percentages for discounts and tax. The two teachers and two paraprofessionals each supported one of the created groups by focusing on assigned leveled practice for a specified math standard. A few students worked independently at their desks. The worksheets were differentiated containing some with multiple problems to be calculated to build fluency and some that contained a step-by-step model problem on the top. Other worksheets chunked the examples only showing one example on each side of the papers. Another set of worksheets had several word problems on a sheet, and in addition, some of the worksheets were also in Spanish. Instructional-anchor charts were posted around the classroom and several students referred to them during the small group work time. All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, participated, demonstrated thinking skills, and produced meaningful work.

- In a fifth-grade ICT science class, students worked together in six small groups conducting an investigation into pure and mixed substances. There was a text available, Made of Matter, a routine sheet with step-by-step instructions, several class-generated anchor charts posted, and vocabulary terms defined on a word wall. When the class’ attention was regained as a whole, the teacher cold-called a series of multi-leveled DOK questions to several students, while the special education teacher took informal observational notes. One student glanced at the vocabulary word wall when responding to a question about the properties of molecules. Another student referred to specific text evidence when describing the change in texture that his group’s material had undergone. Students remained engaged throughout the lesson and shared their thinking.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff as determined by Danielson Framework for Teaching. Staff members consistently communicate expectations connected to a path towards college and career readiness to parents through workshops on rigorous habits and offer ongoing feedback and supports for their children.

Impact

The school leaders’ system of accountability ensures that staff implements schoolwide instructional expectations. School staff implement workshops for students and their families that make them aware of their children’s progress towards achieving school expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- All faculty members receive a staff handbook loaded on a USB at the beginning of the school year. It communicates high expectations from school leaders and includes information on roles of staff members and setting up a system of accountability for achieving expectations. It includes the school's mission and the principal’s vision. In addition, there are monthly What’s Happening newsletters from the principal. Further information about expectations are shared at professional learning sessions, which provide training for target areas. Staff emails communicate expectations from the assistant principals. Expectations are heard at staff morning meetings and through daily schoolwide announcements for both teachers and other staff.

- During a teacher meeting, one teacher spoke of a communicated schoolwide expectation, which was to increase students receiving Level 3 and Level 4 on the ELA state exam. She was making reference to a Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goal: “By June 2019, teacher team members will collaboratively analyze student assessment data to build teacher capacity as measured by a 3 percent increase in students scoring at level 3 and 4 on the NYS English Language Arts and math test respectively.” Other teachers in the meeting agreed that training was being provided to achieve those expectations.

- School leaders and staff begin communicating expectations connected to a path to college and career early in the school year with a Smart Start Orientation for parents of students 3-K through kindergarten. A Back to School night for families includes information regarding curriculum and promotion mandates. To support students in meeting school expectations, parents have opportunities to understand the importance of meeting their children’s needs by attending workshops given by Champions for Children. Topics include, What Families Need to Know about Special Education, Self-Management, and Self-Awareness. Parents-teacher conference announcements are another way in which information regarding curriculum and promotion mandates are provided to families.

- Feedback to individual families about their child’s progress towards meeting expectations takes form in the use of Class Dojo, an internet platform, where parents gain access to grades, assignments, and teacher comments. On Tuesdays, there is an open door policy for parents to meet with teachers for updates on progress. On the first and the 15 of each month, the school opens access to classrooms so parents can sit in during instruction. College and career readiness takes the form of behavior-management skills in the early-childhood classes, ‘I can’ statements start in second-grade classes, curricula syllabi are distributed to parents in fifth-grade classes, and a college research project engages students in the eighth-grade classes. Parents consistently are offered ongoing feedback about their children’s engagement and progress not only by teachers, but through communications with school counselors, service providers, the parent coordinator, the Single Shepard counselor, and other school staff.
Findings
The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations where they consistently analyze data and examine work products for students they share. Distributive leadership structures are in place providing seamless attention to school goals.

Impact
Inquiry meetings strengthen and improve the instructional capacity of teachers, promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the achievement of school goals. Teachers’ consistent use of both informal and formal leadership structures ensure they have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams analyze student work via grade level and subject teams that exist across the building. A meeting protocol was developed to introduce topics, review work samples, share noticings, anticipate impact by grade levels, identify student needs, share instructional strategies, agree on next steps, and establish a topic for the next meeting. A middle school math teacher team met to review seventh-grade student work requiring addition of fractions. The protocol was followed. One teacher shared that it appeared students knew the steps to follow for the addition of fractions. Another teacher extended, “I’m frustrated that so many are not applying the basic rules”. The lead teacher for the meeting remarked, “According to state rules, if students write linear equations and the equal signs are not inserted correctly, they cannot get full credit.” The group agreed to give a rules test, focus instruction on deepening math understanding, have students share their thinking, and then retest the group with similar problems to see if there would be improved student learning.

- School leaders and faculty have formed study groups to strengthen their involvement in a culture of professional inquiry, on topics such as questioning and discussion techniques. Study groups enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill, and build relationships among colleagues. These groups, as well as the grade and subject teams, are building the instructional capacity across the building. The physical education teachers have incorporated professional learning into their lessons that now include a specific skill-base, a word of the month, and elements of the character education program. An eighth-grade math teacher shared about one of his teams, “We redesigned our curriculum prototype to include reteaching opportunities, certain days to teach needed skills that we identify.” Lead teachers offer additional occasions to foster effective teaching practices by organizing grade-team lunch and learns.

- Teachers agreed that the team initiatives have nurtured informal collaborations, so that although one faculty member may be the lead for a certain initiative, other faculty pledge support. One teacher advanced, “Many of us have worked together for years.” One science teacher commented that he was building his knowledge about New Generation Learning Standards based on feedback from the school’s ELA teachers regarding appropriate language structures. Formally, school leaders have three math lead teachers, kindergarten through grade two, grades three to five, and grades six to eight, and similarly, three ELA lead teachers, who are part of the instructional cabinet meetings with school leaders. Additionally, these lead teachers provide a structure for ongoing team meetings and serve as a conduit for teachers to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.