Quality Review Report

2018-2019

J.H.S. 383 Philippa Schuyler
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 32K383

1300 Greene Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11237

Principal: Jeanette Smith

Dates of Review:
December 18, 2018 - December 19, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
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<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>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<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>
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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>
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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>Area of Focus</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>
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**Area of Celebration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

The school's approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional learning focuses on positive supports and incentives to reinforce behavior students should demonstrate, resulting in a safe and inclusive environment. Structures are in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

**Impact**

The behavioral expectations and inclusive culture of the school are conducive to student and adult learning, where students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcome and valued. Guidance and supports are aligned with student learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school’s collaborative focus on being a “Schuylerite” and the use of a positive behavior support system and restorative practices support student learning. At the beginning of the year, school administrators review the behaviors expected by students, and the staff reinforces these throughout the year. Posters of student behavior expectations appear throughout hallways, classrooms, and offices to remind students they are to be prompt, prepared, presentable, and respectful citizens. A rubric supporting these behaviors and the school’s motto, “To Whom Much is Given, Much is Required,” was developed by administrators, counselors, teachers, and paraprofessionals and shared with students. Students who demonstrate these positive behavior traits can earn Schuyler Bucks from staff members that can be redeemed for activities, such as movie afternoons, dances, lunch time celebrations, and dress down days. Through the school’s collaborative efforts around positive behavior supports and restorative practices, the school’s environment supports student learning.

- Student voice is welcome through structures such as student government. Each official class elects a class representative. Class representatives are eligible to run for positions on the Executive Board, including president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Student candidates deliver speeches to the entire student body and all students participate in electing the officers for the Executive Board. The class representatives and student Executive Board meet monthly with the principal to discuss concerns and student interests. Students spoke of the impact of the class representatives and Executive Board on finding ways for students to help keep the school environment safe and clear for all students. In addition to student government, seventh and eighth grade students can enroll in advisory classes that meet once a week, where students can raise topics of interest, such as how to avoid conflict. Through the school’s structures such as student government and advisory, student voice is supported and valued throughout the school.

- Students reported that there is at least one adult who knows them well. The school has deans and counselors as well as grade level teacher teams. All of these support student academic and social-emotional progress, part of which includes a process to refer students to the pupil personnel team for additional support. The school deans conduct regular check-ins with students at-risk for social-emotional or behavioral issues, including the use of intervention services and de-escalation strategies. Several staff members are trained in restorative practices and the school has partnered with several community-based organizations in supporting the social-emotional needs of students, including the New York City Commission of Human Rights. Seventh and eighth grade students can enroll in a peer mediation class taught by a staff member and receive certification as a peer mediator. In addition, designated teachers provide lunch time academic and enrichment support that is open to all students. Thus, the social-emotional needs of students are met through multiple staff members who coordinate and support the development and advisement of students.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that are loosely connected to school goals and implementation of Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams analyze assessment data for students they share.

Impact

Teacher teams across the school do not consistently utilize the inquiry process when looking at student work, and the current team meeting structure has not yet typically resulted in improved teacher practice or progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in professional collaborations, and the inquiry approach is developing across teams, but this is not frequently occurring across all grades and content areas. School leaders described that while most teachers meet for professional development (PD), student work is reviewed only once or twice a month. School leaders are currently working with grade level teams and training them in the inquiry process. Leaders are working on expanding this professional collaboration process and providing additional time in the schedule for teams to meet more frequently in the coming school year. Because the majority of teachers are not currently engaged in structured collaborations on a frequent basis and school leaders acknowledge this is a goal towards which the school is working, the instructional capacity of teachers is not being fully strengthened at this point.

- A review of the fifth, sixth, and seventh grade team agendas and minutes shows that while teams meet weekly, these meetings often focus on topics such as students’ emotional and academic progress, logistics and planning for the upcoming administration and scoring of student assessments, and school events and activities. Team meetings do not regularly focus on the inquiry process. Teachers reported that administrators develop the agendas and facilitate the teacher meetings, with some input from teachers. While there is some evidence of teams identifying standards students struggled with on previous assignments and/or assessments, there is limited evidence of team members identifying interventions to address achievement gaps or selecting specific students to follow and monitor their progress. There is also limited evidence that teacher team discussions are connected to the larger school goals or implementing the Common Core. Consequently, the impact of these professional collaborations is loosely connected to either building instructional capacity or improving student progress.

- During an observation of the seventh-grade math inquiry team, members analyzed baseline data and focused their discussion on math standards for expression, exponents, ratios, and proportions. The team had a written agenda and group roles that were reviewed at the beginning of the meeting. During the meeting, the members of the team reviewed the student baseline data, the do now prompt, and exit ticket data. The team also discussed concerns about students who are continuing to struggle with these types of problems. However, the data reviewed was several months old, and it was not evident how their current discussion about do now and exit ticket data connected to previous discussions about student mathematical thinking or data collected from previous assessments. As a result, the analysis of student data and work is not currently resulting in progress towards goals for groups of students.
### Additional Finding

#### Quality Indicator:

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<thead>
<tr>
<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 Common Core and integrate the instructional shifts, using curricula from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) and Connected Math Project 3 (CMP3). Across grade and subjects, curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined for all students.

### Impact

Curricula promotes college and career readiness for the majority of students. A diversity of learners has access to the curricula, and tasks are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core and New York State content standards, where applicable, as well as the integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. For example, ELA shifts incorporated include writing argumentative essays and using text-based evidence, while math instructional shifts include applying the concept of systems of inequalities to real world scenarios. English unit plans and lesson plans are aligned to the TCRWP curriculum, with a focus on narrative, short fiction, argumentation, and literary analysis, and math units and lesson plans are aligned to the CMP3 math curriculum, supporting productive struggle and multiple pathways for problem solving. The school also ensures curricular coherence with the Common Core-aligned Passport social studies curriculum and the New York City science scope and sequence. Thus, with a focus on critical thinking and the application of new learning, the school’s curricula promote college and career readiness across grades and content areas.

- Lessons and units are refined for students with disabilities and describe the strategies used to ensure access to the curricula. An example of this is the annotation strategy described in an eighth-grade ELA argumentative writing unit plan that has students reading passages and identifying the author’s claim, reasons, and evidence given in the text. As part of this strategy, the teacher first models the annotation strategy and then provides an opportunity for students to practice annotating on their own, using highlighters and sticky notes to mark each of these components in the text with the assistance of the teacher. The use of such strategies to analyze the text ensures that a diversity of learners has access to cognitively engaging tasks in the curricula.

- Tasks described in unit and lesson plans are cognitively engaging. In a sixth-grade social studies lesson plan, the learning target of the lesson is, “The students can analyze the effects of geography on development in Mesopotamia by completing a chalk talk with their group.” The lesson plan question states, “To what degree does geography determine culture?” In the associated unit plan, the literacy practices emphasized in the unit include citing specific textual evidence to support the analysis of primary and secondary sources, determining the central ideas or information of a source, providing an accurate summary of the source, and determining the meanings of words and phrases as they are used in the text(s). During the unit, students will make predictions about the lives of early humans by completing an anticipation guide, explaining how the first humans were found by analyzing images and text and hypothesizing about the purpose of early tools. Students also will use text-based evidence to complete an essay outlining their positions on whether or not the Neolithic Revolution was beneficial to society. As a result of the cognitively engaging tasks developed in this and other similar curricula, such as the synthesis of multiple primary source documents and the use evidence to support a claim, college and career readiness is promoted for the majority of students.
Findings

Across the majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs around learning targets, informed by the instructional shifts. Across classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices foster higher-order thinking and ensure that all students have access to the curricula. All learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, learning targets are posted and referred to during lessons. Example include, “I can use systems of inequalities to analyze real-world situations,” “I can engage in a class debate by arguing my position and using my debate plan,” and “I can determine central ideas and information about the Progressive Era by analyzing a variety of primary source documents.” Learning intentions are written from the student’s perspective and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students are to own their learning. These intentions were referred to by classroom teachers throughout several observed lesson. During classroom visits, evidence of targets being met was observed in student interactions and during small group and whole class discussions. As a result of the student-centered language used to describe the learning intentions across classrooms, students are supported in participating in their own learning processes.

- In a seventh-grade social studies class, students participated in a Socratic seminar about the 13 colonies, about which colony they would choose to live in. They provided evidence from their choice of primary source documents as well as the textbook. As the students in the inner circle discussed which colony they would live in and why, students in the outer circle took notes on their graphic organizers about what they observed, provided feedback to their assigned partners, and eventually rotated to the inner circle. In a sixth-grade ELA class, students worked in small groups to identify the text features observed in mentor informational texts. Based on their reading indicator scores, students were grouped heterogeneously, and each group looked at different pieces of informational text. Based on these and other examples, teaching strategies used in lessons provide multiple entry points and ensure all learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

- In an eighth-grade general science class, students worked in small groups on a lab focused on investigating the influence of dominant and recessive traits by analyzing Punnett squares, creating Punnett squares to determine the genotype of offspring, and determining the phenotype of offspring by calculating probabilities. This lesson included enrichment and remediation activities that students could select, based on their needs. Students with disabilities and ELLs needing additional support used question and discussion starter prompts as scaffolds to help them complete the analysis questions. In an eighth-grade Algebra class, students were grouped by their need for enrichment or remediation as they worked on leveled problems focused on solving systems of equations. In a seventh-grade Integrated Co-Teaching ELA class, the teachers provided specific students with a note catcher and a checklist that included guided questions and sentence stems to support their participation and organization. Thus, the use of scaffolds such as student choice, strategic grouping, leveled questions, and graphic organizers supported students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, in demonstrating higher-order thinking skills.
**Additional Finding**

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and grading policies for each department that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teacher assessment practices, such as the use of checklists and glows and grows, reflect checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and make adjustments to instruction to meet the learning needs of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, rubrics and checklists are in alignment with the school’s curricula. A two-point holistic rubric used in a fifth-grade math class is aligned with the CMP3 curriculum. It evaluates the solution provided and the level of understanding of the mathematical concepts and procedures shown in the task by the student. TCRWP writing rubrics are used across ELA classes, with a rubric for a geography/travel-narrative project evaluating student work on the presentation of information and use of supporting details and examples. Student rubrics for group work were observed in classrooms, and there is a grading policy for each department that is approved at the beginning of the school year by the school administration and shared with students and parents. The majority of the academic grade in most departments comes from exams and projects, with a smaller portion of the grade coming from homework and class participation. Students also receive a separate conduct grade for each class based on their attendance, preparation, and adherence to schoolwide behavioral expectations. There is a schoolwide make-up work policy that is used for homework and projects. Most teachers at the school use an online grading program that both students and parents can access to view information about a student’s progress. The school’s use of approved department grading policies and rubrics demonstrates an alignment with the school’s curricula and helps provide feedback to students.

- Across classrooms, samples of student work showed evidence of teacher and peer feedback and students spoke of using feedback to inform their next steps during the student meetings. Lesson plans also referred to the grouping of students based on previous feedback. One example of teacher feedback stated, “Remember to stretch out important moments and eliminate unnecessary details.” Another example of teacher feedback stated, “Your story has clear transitions which develops a clear beginning, middle and end. Next time elaborate on inner thinking and character development to show what meaning you are trying to convey.” An example of peer feedback noted, “I saw that you organized your paragraphs. I think it needs a better ending.” Based on feedback from teachers and peers, instructional adjustments such as the grouping of students in classes are made to meet the learning needs of students.

- Students are provided with opportunities to self-assess their work, and reflections are used to revise lesson plans and group students that may need enrichment or reteaching. On a social studies essay about geography and its impact on society, students self-reflected and provided a glow and glow based on the feedback they received from the teacher. One student wrote about their argumentative essay, “I think I did really well on explaining my reasoning and by using examples. I think I need to work on my conclusion, since it does not really reflect the whole essay.” Another example read, “I had excellent vocabulary and transition words. I didn’t include any evidence to support the task.” Students also spoke about completing a self-evaluation reflection form after they completed each assignment in a unit, indicating whether they met or are working toward meeting standards. As a result, students are learning to reflect and own their learning, and teacher adjustments are made to instruction based on these reflections.
**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 and provide training and PD to the whole staff in alignment with the elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff also communicate with families about school expectations.

**Impact**

School leaders’ written feedback and constant communication have increased teachers’ understanding and awareness of the expectations for them around teaching and learning. Communication with families through letters, meetings, and workshops provides opportunities for them to understand their children’s progress toward meeting standards.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The principal uses the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to inform instructional practices and communicates expectations regularly to teachers and staff by reviewing the staff handbook at the beginning of the year and referencing it throughout the year via email, memoranda, and during teacher meetings. The principal also provides PD connected to the school’s instructional focus on students using discourse and discussion practices to increase critical thinking and the application of knowledge, specifically in the conceptual understanding of math. Professional learning cycles facilitated by school leaders and staff meet every five to six weeks. The topics that teachers can choose from include culturally responsive teaching, effective feedback, and using discussion and discourse to increase critical thinking. The principal and assistant principals visit classrooms and are working on calibrating their Danielson ratings and feedback to teachers. Dates of classroom visits and teacher feedback are recorded in *Advance*.

- School leaders support teachers in understanding their instructional expectations by conducting individual classroom walk-throughs followed by verbal or written feedback on what was observed, including identifying next steps and explaining what leaders will be looking for during the next visit. Teachers also develop their goals at initial planning conferences, and observation reports from *Advance* reveal feedback from leaders and next steps for teachers. A goal for one teacher stated, “Try to change students’ mindset to build more confidence in math.” Another goal stated, “Use a baseline to differentiate your instruction and use the data to create scaffolds.” An example of teacher feedback states, “Commendations: You have students explore multiple solutions to a problem. You relate learning from the previous days and connect it to the learning of the day. Recommendations: Have students use rubrics to assess their explanations and mathematical reasoning.” As a result of classroom walk-throughs and feedback focused on next steps, teachers have a clear understanding of the expectations for them around teaching and learning and are demonstrating growth in their instructional practices.

- Families learn about school expectations and requirements through letters, emails, phone calls, and parent workshops and meetings. Communication sent from the school is in both English and Spanish. Families communicated during the parent meeting that they check the academic progress of their children through Pupil Path, and most parents check the grades and attendance of their children on a weekly basis in addition to the report cards they receive four times a year. Parents also communicated that class expectations are sent home by teachers at the beginning of the year. They noted that phone calls and emails with staff members throughout the year assist in helping them monitor the academic and social-emotional progress of their children. Finally, parents commented that the school assists families in the high school application process and provides workshops on high school articulation, including holding one-on-one meetings with school counselors to complete the application.