Quality Review Report

2018-2019

M.S. 442 Carroll Gardens School for Innovation

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 15K442

500 19 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11215

Principal: Noreen Mills

Dates of Review:
December 5, 2018 - December 6, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Kevin 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

M.S. 442 Carroll Gardens School for Innovation 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.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<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>Well Developed</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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding Well Developed</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 Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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 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 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 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>Area of Celebration Well Developed</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 Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership as lead teachers play an integral role in key decisions.

Impact

Teacher instructional capacity has strengthened while implementation of both the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts have been promoted. Teachers play an integral role in focusing on the instructional goals as well as building schoolwide coherence to support student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies teams met as a combined entity to focus on their goal to increase collaboration between the departments to support schoolwide coherence of the teaching of literacy. The teams used a Looking at Patterns in Student Work protocol, an agenda, and a note catcher. Teachers were timed as they examined three different student work samples, one at a time, and answered questions on the note catcher that included: “What do you see?”, “What does this student understand?”, “What does this student not understand?”, and “What steps could the teacher take next with the students?” Teachers then shared out with a partner or trio their findings based on their review of the student work keeping their responses aligned to the questions. Members of the team noted that student work showed evidence of clear claims, attempt of a counterclaim, and use of transitional phrases. As a result of this inquiry team meeting, this team agreed to next steps for instructional adjustments to meet the needs of the students whose work was reviewed by the team, including building student skills for strategic decisions about sequencing and ordering, organization through a graphic organizer and developing elaboration strategies.

- Teacher team meetings have strengthened teacher instructional capacity. A math teacher reported that the math department embeds writing in math as the team redesigns the curriculum, resulting in alignment across grades and courses. A science teacher spoke about the impact of the science department team’s work, including aligning their work to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), along with standardizing language across the grades by relating it to experiences from previous grades so that students can access the academic language. Student achievement is noted by increases this year in the ratings of student mastery as compared to last year. Growth in science is 92.7 percent this year as compared to 91.58 percent last year. There is also a higher percentage of students meeting or exceeding in math. Visual art, music, and technology courses show a higher percentage of students at the meeting and exceeding levels relative to the standards.

- Distributed leadership is exemplified in the work of the lead teachers from each discipline, including department leads, a peer collaborative teacher, a district master teacher in technology, a model teacher, grade leaders, and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) coordinators. Teacher leaders provide support by leading cycles of learning walks and inquiry cycles and creating a formalized structure for professional learning focused on the school's instructional priorities. Teachers meet in department meetings, inquiry teams and grade meetings to collaborate on best instructional practices. Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Nest meetings occur weekly to collaborate about best approaches for students in the ASD Nest Program. The academic cabinet also meets weekly. During each team meeting, teacher leaders follow protocols for collaborative decision-making, looking at student work and data analysis.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, which is when students choose to apply their new knowledge and skills to a real-world context, and creativity is fostered through access to a variety of media.

Impact

Across classrooms, student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. Although students are grouped with opportunities for discussions, student discussions at high levels of ownership were apparent in some but not the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- During a seventh-grade ELA class, students sat in trios as they worked on writing and developing claims about whether white bread or wheat bread was better, developing strategies writers use to create an argument and writing their paragraphs in their notebooks. Some students finished early and waited for the next step in the lesson. However, the lesson lacked structures for peers helping peers, as some students had their hands up for a while as they waited for the teacher to come and help them, thus missing out on students taking ownership of their work. During a sixth-grade tech class, a teacher worked outside of the classroom in the hallway with pairs of student pairs working together using iPads to program robotic devices to follow a defined path on the floor outlined with blue tape. Students worked together troubleshooting their tasks and progress. The teacher offered specific short NEST questions to get them to think about what they might try next.

- During a sixth-grade social studies First Humans vocabulary lesson, students worked together in groups to organize vocabulary words into categories of their choice. Questioning from the teacher was teacher-to-student and missed opportunities to promote more student-to-student discussion. At one point a student shared out from his table how they had organized the word claim and another student later identified the same word as a problem for their group to organize; however, students did not have an opportunity to share out in a whole classroom setting the findings of each group to extend the learning for all.

- During an eighth-grade earth science class, a student modeled at the board longitude and latitude and the lesson then transitioned to a task that asked students to chart data from earthquakes and volcanoes onto maps along with identifying longitude and latitude. Despite some students sitting in groups, each student worked individually plotting the same data for fifteen minutes of the instructional time. The lesson did not include options for students to discuss and share information as they analyzed the data. During a seventh-grade math lesson about proportionality, students were paired as the teacher asked questions and dug deeper for student understanding. A variety of students answered questions. However, the lesson evidenced a teacher-centered approach with a teacher-to-student questioning routine that did not include more student-to-student class wide exchange.

- During a sixth-grade math lesson about number lines, students had opportunities to go up to the front of the room and model their thinking and list the relevant vocabulary words in a T-chart. Students also worked in groups with peers on their number line worksheets. During a seventh-grade science class lesson about rocks and weathering, students were asked to turn and talk with group mates. The teacher referenced the learning objective, and asked various questions of the whole class. Students were able to respond to the teacher with their reasons and some used accountable talk stems to add on, agree or disagree with their peers. There were a number of teacher questions posed to students who had previously shared but not all students participated.
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**

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks that support learning across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

**Impact**

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills require that all students demonstrate their thinking, have access to the curricula, and are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Lesson plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits in the course of instruction. Learning objective statements in lesson plans include, “I can distinguish between descriptions of scientific facts and opinion about scientific topics.”, and “I can identify a character’s traits and point of view.” Additionally, students are required to consistently write and connect their writing to evidence from the text. Lesson plans regularly detailed high-level questions including asking students how they can use rational numbers to express relationships between quantities in order to create an emergency shelter, how can they develop a sense of their own story through reading and studying the memoirs and short stories of others, and how can they determine if a graph or table is proportional. Thus, rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills in the curricula are embedded in a coherent way across grades and content areas to ensure that all students must demonstrate their thinking.

- Social studies curriculum includes interpreting primary and secondary sources with writing tasks that give students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of learning outcomes. Math curriculum is designed to engage students in real world application as students are asked to not only explain how they got their answer, but to provide math evidence to support their thinking. Literacy is a focus in the science curriculum as students are required to use reading, writing, and speaking in completing their work. The science curriculum is designed so students can apply their understanding in authentic scenarios that connect their learning to real world contexts and the content is delivered in an integrated sequence across grades that builds year-to-year using strategies such as model-based instruction and inquiry labs to build student understanding and expect them to explain their thinking.

- Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning and refinement. This is evident in a seventh-grade science lesson plan that identifies differentiation based on specific learners receiving support with readings on weathering and erosion. Specifically, it includes teacher support as each student reads a paragraph out loud while filling out their reading organizers. A sixth-grade math lesson on real world positive and negative numbers includes three differentiated worksheets provided to specific groups of students based on assessment data. A seventh-grade math lesson includes separate tasks for approaching learners, meeting learners, and exceeding learners based on individual student performance on a mastery-based outcome assessment. The school also includes refinements in the curricula via “upgrades” for identified students, giving them opportunities to increase their academic scores on specific assignments and tasks by submitting a new version of the work. As a result of planning and revising curricula and academic tasks, all students, including the lowest and highest achieving students, are cognitively engaged.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas using a mastery-based grading system.

Impact
Assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers adjust curricula and instruction and inform teacher team inquiry work as a result of assessment data.

Supporting Evidence
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable and meaningful feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. Some examples of that feedback were: from an eighth-grade math lesson that said students are reminded that the exponent tells them how many times to move the decimal; on a social studies assignment students are prompted to be more specific in their captions to connect it to Civil Rights for an exceeding score; and from a literary essay students are asked to make sure their claim is clearer and to explain what the evidence shows. Students spoke about the meaningful actionable feedback they received from their teachers and indicated that almost every teacher uses Google Classroom feedback to help them in improving the quality of their work. As a result, teachers are providing feedback to students regarding their work that allows them to improve the overall quality.

- The school uses a mastery-based grading policy. Teachers at each grade level identify learning outcomes and key skills based on New York State standards for each unit of study. Mastery-based grading allows teachers the opportunity to inform students when they have successfully mastered a learning outcome or to note the specific learning outcomes where they need to make improvements. Additionally, teachers use rubrics to evaluate student work across subjects. This includes a mass and acceleration lab rubric, a civil rights graphic novel rubric, an eighth-grade force diagram model rubric, and a sixth-grade Technology, Entertainment, (TED), presentation rubric. One student reported during the student meeting, “The rubrics show why I have to do better. It helps me to ask for some help. I can tell you about the rubric in ELA, so the rubric tells you what’s meeting and exceeding. I got a grade I liked. I did get one approaching to meeting or exceeding, the rubric helps me to see what you need to get to exceeding.”

- Assessments include department-wide common assessments aligned with State assessments and standards. As a result of the common assessment data, students in sixth and seventh grades receive two additional periods of targeted small group instruction for ELA and math, identified as “intensives.” Homogeneous intensive groups are created by identifying students across classrooms who are on the same ability level based on the mastery-based grading data, Teachers College running records data, and State test data. This smaller teacher-to-student ratio allows teachers to provide tailored instruction based on student specific needs. Groups change every eight weeks based on mastery data, running records data and other formative assessment data. Eighth graders also receive two periods of math intensives weekly, which allows staff to combine students in Algebra I from different sections together twice a week and support them with adjusted curricula.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff. Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness for their children.

Impact

Staff maintains and benefits from a culture of mutual accountability around high expectations through a co-teaching model across all classrooms. Partnerships with families support their children in their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal conducts frequent classroom observations providing feedback based on Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* using specific language from the rubric, specific evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, and actionable next steps. The next steps are then addressed in subsequent classroom observations. In addition, teachers receive a staff handbook from the principal that reviews areas of schoolwide foci such as classroom environment, grading policy, homework policy, intensives, mentorship, faculty professional development and family engagement time. A professional development calendar makes clear that school leaders support teachers in their understanding of expectations in addressing topics such as inquiry cycle check-ins, questioning and discussion, and inquiry grade-level and department analysis of effectiveness of the instructional strategies.

- All teachers hold each other mutually accountable to instructional expectations through a co-teacher model that exists in all classrooms across the school. Every classroom across the school features lessons that are co-taught throughout the day and the teachers display evidence of mutual accountability to each other in both classroom instruction and planning sessions. Teachers spoke about the importance of working with someone in their classroom who is “depending on you” and being accountable to that person. Further, teachers support each other in common planning sessions, inquiry work, and learning walks. A teacher reported that the professional development that the school offers has allowed them to take ownership of their professional learning while supporting mutual accountability of both teachers and school leaders.

- Expectations are effectively communicated to parents through monthly parent newsletters and weekly parent workshops. The school uses two digital systems to assist in communicating high expectations and allowing parents to track their children’s progress. The *Hive*, a program created in-house to track behavior and academic mentoring goals for students, and *Mastery Connect*, a gradebook that allows students and parents to be aware of their current academic standing in all classes, are vital means of communication. Additionally, Tuesday parent engagement time is used for in-person meetings with parents. Teacher mentors also help with parent communication, and function as the first point of contact for questions, requests or concerns. Parents spoke about receiving weekly newsletters and the school scheduling workshops. Another parent mentioned that the mastery-based grading helped her child have a better understanding of what was required and how she could help her child at home.
Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers with effective feedback that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Both formal and informal feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development to elevate instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class in support of the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included throughout the class-specific evidence that are directed to specific components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and included in the summary of each observation report. New teachers are supported with mentors and new teacher meetings. As an outgrowth of looking at observation data, PDs are planned to support teachers, including Mastery Based Grading, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Literacy: Questioning and Discussion Techniques, and Using Technology in Instruction.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps needed to improve their practice and impact on student success. For example, an observation report included feedback that prompted the teacher to think about the next level of assessment that included students using peer-to-peer feedback, both orally and/or written, by having opportunities to share student work on the Smartboard, and having students facilitate the peer feedback discussion. In another report, feedback referenced the questions that were asked and indicated that nearly all questions had one correct answer and were rapid-fire in nature. The feedback suggested that there needed to be more planning of opportunities for student-to-student discourse and time for small groups to work through a problem so students can share and discuss methods they employed to arrive at an answer.

- A teacher reported how she has grown in her practice based on feedback received in her observations. She stated during the meeting with teachers, “I get very clear feedback and it aligns to what I see in my classroom, we recognized similar things helping me find those growth steps, and articulate what highly effective looks like and sounds like.” Another teacher shared her impressions of the feedback she received in that it aligns to the Danielson Framework for Teaching domains, “Those four domains are very detailed and align with a teacher like me. I need to apply that to my instruction.” As a result, the school provides feedback that supports teachers’ professional growth and development.