Quality Review Report

2018-2019

School for Human Rights, The
Secondary School 17K531
600 Kingston Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11203

Principal: Michael Alexander

Dates of Review:
December 12, 2018 - December 13, 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>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
</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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 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 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>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
</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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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing communication, feedback, and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, including staff memos and the teacher handbook. School leaders and staff communicate high expectations to families associated with college and career readiness.

Impact

Ongoing communication and support from school leaders have increased teachers’ understanding of expectations regarding teaching and learning as well as their accountability for meeting them. Families are provided with ongoing information and feedback about student progress toward goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide feedback to teachers from frequent classroom observations utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric and evidence from the classroom that supports the rating, along with actionable next steps so that teachers clearly understand expectations. The *Advance* observations also include evidence of the impact of the school’s work in the various domains of the Danielson *Framework* during professional development (PD) on teacher practice. An example of actionable next steps from one report states, “You asked several questions and students provided cogent answers. However, there was no student to student interaction. Interactions were mainly questions from teacher to student and back to teacher. Please use the carousel method to foster more robust student-to-student interactions and conversations.” Teachers report that based on their observations and the feedback provided, their instructional practices are growing and becoming more student-centered. They also noted that they are held accountable by school leaders for growth in their practice.

- School leaders convey high expectations to staff through the school’s staff handbook, memos, and staff development. The staff handbook outlines expectations around grading and attendance, lesson and unit planning, and classroom and behavior management. A weekly calendar reminds the staff of school procedures and upcoming events. Administrators also require and review course syllabi and curriculum maps at the beginning of the school year. Teachers are given the opportunity to participate in professional learning with a focus on data analysis, content specific training, use of academic language, and positive behavior supports. Teachers also participate in professional learning opportunities provided by the superintendent and field support center. Through training and professional learning, school leaders are building a culture of high expectations.

- Partnerships with families support students in their progress towards college and career readiness. Parents reported that they worked with the school in determining the school’s goals, and there is strong parent involvement in the school’s School Leadership Team and Parent-Teacher Association. Parents commended the staff’s communication via letter, email, and/or phone calls as well as the online grading system. In addition, parents are pleased that the school provides students with before school, afterschool, and weekend tutorials, offers workshops and meetings to inform families about high school requirements, and helps prepare their children for the college entrance process. Parents reported that staff members are always available to speak with families, they feel welcomed when they come to the school, and the school staff listens to their concerns. Consequently, school leaders and staff support families in understanding expectations for college and career readiness and in understanding student progress.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

While the majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that are connected to school goals and the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards, the systematic use of protocols by teacher teams to analyze student work and assessment data is not yet evident across all teams.

Impact

The work of teacher teams is not yet resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence or mastery of goals for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers participate in professional collaboration on teams, and the inquiry approach is developing across teams, but this is not systematically occurring across all grades and content areas. School leaders described that the majority of teachers are participating in inquiry work to support the school’s instructional focus of student use of evidence in argument, but the level of systematic inquiry varies. School leaders are working with lead teachers to support the growth of the inquiry process during the school year across all teams. Teams identified instructional strategies to focus on over the course of the year, such as grouping, accommodations for groups of students, and the use of student self-assessment/peer assessment. There is evidence in agendas and minutes that the impact of these strategies are monitored but are not fully implemented across grades and classes. Because the depth of inquiry across teacher teams vary, there is not yet instructional coherence across the school.

- A review of the agendas and minutes of inquiry teams shows that grade level and department teams meet on a regular basis. While there is some evidence of teams’ identifying standards students struggled with on previous assessments, there is limited evidence of how team members are identifying and addressing next steps systematically, such as choosing interventions to address achievement gaps, or selecting specific students whose progress to monitor. An example from the grade eleven-twelve inquiry team notes shows that the team is utilizing a protocol for examining student work and taking low inference notes when discussing student work samples and discussing teacher practices. Though there is evidence in the minutes of specific next steps and an ongoing inquiry focus in some teams, this is not yet evident across the vast majority of teacher teams. Consequently, the impact of these professional collaborations is not yet resulting in building instructional coherence or increased student achievement.

- During an observation of the grade nine-ten inquiry team, members analyzed student work utilizing the tuning protocol. As part of the protocol, one member presented student work and a dilemma to the team. Then the rest of the team reviewed the work, asked clarifying questions, and had a group discussion minus the presenter. The conversation next progressed to a whole group discussion including the presenter, resulting in a reflection on the process by the group. The team had a written agenda and norms that were reviewed at the beginning of the meeting. During the meeting, the group provided feedback to the presenting teacher. Suggestions included sharing teacher expectations to students at the beginning of the assignment and providing additional scaffolds for groups of students. The inquiry team noted they had only used this protocol a few times and they were still developing an inquiry focus for the year. As a result, analysis of student data and work by teacher teams is not currently resulting in mastery of goals for groups of students.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills with an emphasis on the school’s instructional focus on using evidence in arguments.

Impact

Curricula promotes college and career readiness for students in the majority of grades and subjects across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents reveals 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. Some of the instructional shifts in English include citing specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources and determining the central ideas of a primary or secondary source. In the curriculum map for eleventh grade English Language Arts (ELA), one of the key objectives states, “Identifying and analyzing central ideas of a foundational text, determining the author’s purpose, citing effective textual evidence to support an argument, analyzing an interpretation of a drama, determining themes and analyzing structure, and tracing and evaluating an argument.” One example of this objective was found in a ninth-grade ELA lesson focused on students creating a class presentation around the theme of freedom and incorporating text-based references and inferences to support their argument. Some instructional shifts in math include proving and using properties of triangle midsegments, proving theorems about triangles, incorporating close reading skills, and using visuals and graphs as tools to solve problems. Evidence of this integration was found in a lesson plan and unit plan for Geometry focused on students proving and using properties of triangle midsegments to develop generalizations and then confirming their observations. Integration of the instructional shifts in these and other lessons promotes college and career readiness.

- An evaluation of curricular documents revealed evidence of support for a variety of student learning needs. Unit and lesson plans for United States History state that students will individually analyze a political cartoon highlighting the conflict over the ownership of America during the period of Manifest Destiny from multiple perspectives. Students will then formulate questions about the cartoon and them. Next, the teacher will use these questions in guiding the class’s analysis of the cartoon, along with this larger connecting question: “There are three perspectives within this cartoon. Which perspective(s) does the cartoon support?” An Earth Science lesson plan stated that students will work in small groups as they determine the permeability and porosity of pebbles, sand, and clay, when water is slowly poured over each soil type. For this lesson, students were to be seated based on learning styles and pre- and summative assessment performance. Some of the strategies to ensure engagement with rigorous academic tasks include incorporating graphic organizers and working in small groups. Supports for ELLs include translations of primary source documents and sentence stems to support student discussion.

- Aims and learning goals in unit and lesson plans emphasize higher-order thinking skills. The objectives in a Living Environment unit stated, “Students will be able to: identify the respiratory organs/structures, describe the function of each organ of the respiratory system, explain how the respiratory system helps maintain homeostasis in the body, and use a variety of ways to review the respiratory system.” The learning objective in a Government lesson stated, “Students will be able to analyze the law-making process of the US Congress and evaluate the role of compromise in the lawmaking process.” Consequently, the aims, learning goals, and academic tasks in unit and lesson plans emphasize higher-order thinking skills.
Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated set of beliefs that students learn best through argumentation and discussion. Across classrooms, teaching strategies provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices emphasize student learning through using evidence to support their arguments in writing and discussion. Groups of students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- During a lesson in Geometry class, students individually worked on a do now that focused on practicing their understanding of line segments and what they discover about the segment when it joins midpoint on two sides of a triangle. After measuring one triangle, they wrote down their observations, shared their findings with a partner, and came up with a generalization based on their observations. Questions they were asked to write responses to as they developed their generalizations included, “What did you notice about the lengths of the sides and the segments?” and “Can you make a general statement about midsegments based on the work you did above?” Students then measured a second triangle to test their generalizations and proved their theorems about triangles. In a Participation in Government class, students worked in small mock congressional committees to develop their proposals to present and defend their bills to the rest of the class. Students discussed whether or not Congress should revise the way a bill becomes a law, defending their arguments. Across most classrooms, teaching practices demonstrated alignment and reflect the belief students learn best when they are critically thinking and can develop and defend their ideas and arguments.

- In an eleventh grade ELA class, students offered peer feedback on rough drafts of their analytical essays. As part of the do now, students created a KWL chart focused on the elements of a well-developed analysis essay. The teacher then modeled with the whole class how to provide feedback using a sample student essay and the rubric. Students in pairs or triads then reviewed each other’s drafts of their essays to provide verbal and written feedback. Students who needed additional feedback or support on a particular part of the essay, such as providing additional evidence or clarifying their thesis statement or conclusion, were provided with sentence stems they could refer to when asking for or sharing their feedback with other students. Students were also able to move to the group that was working on a similar aspect of their writing to get focused support from peers and the teacher. The use of group work, teacher modeling, discussion stems, and student share-outs provided students with multiple entry points to the assignment.

- Students in a ninth-grade Global Studies class participated in student-facilitated small group discussions about belief systems and religions. During the discussion, they were expected to reference the primary and secondary source documents they had read previously and take notes using a graphic organizer. Students then transitioned to a whole class discussion where they referred to their notes while sharing what their small groups discussed. They were also prompted by the teacher to refer to the text in their responses. During both the small group and whole class discussions, students were provided with guiding questions that varied in difficulty, such as, “What is the purpose of Buddhism?” and “How might the story of the Buddha’s life make us reconsider our understanding of success?” Students had the option of selecting which questions to respond to. Strategies such as choice writing prompts and opportunities to discuss and reflect on new information with other students provided multiple entry points into the curricula for students.
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 rubrics and incorporate the schoolwide grading policy into curricular documents, such as course syllabi. Teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding their achievement, and, as a result of assessment practices, make adjustments to meet the learning needs of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a standard grading policy used across grades and content areas that is referred to in copies of course syllabi that are reviewed with students throughout the year. The policy includes criteria about demonstrating different levels of mastery and the weighted categories of exams, quizzes, projects/papers, classwork, homework, and participation. Grades are entered into the school’s online gradebook, and students receive progress reports about their academic progress six times a year, per the written grading policy. The written school policy also outlines requirements about the amount and type of classwork and homework. It includes procedures regarding the completion of missing or late assignments, grade changes, modified assessments for groups of students, and credit recovery for failed courses. The grading policy is posted across classrooms throughout the school. The alignment of the school’s grading policy with the curricula across grades and content areas provides clear expectations for student achievement.

- Teachers use a variety of assessments to identify students’ strengths and areas for growth. Some of these include mock Regents and Advanced Placement (AP) exams, exit tickets, and skill trackers in mathematics. Rubrics are anchored in the Common Core, and students report that rubrics are used in most of their classes across grades and content areas for both teacher and peer feedback. In addition to evaluating students’ development of arguments, counterclaims, critical analysis, and the use to evidence to support their claims, rubrics also are used to measure student participation in class discussions and oral presentations, as well as for student self-reflection. Student work samples show feedback from teachers. For instance, on a science mystery assignment where students had to use evidence to determine the prime suspect, the feedback states, “Clear background information about each suspect. Next step: Answer the questions in your synopsis and be specific in your reasoning about the chosen primary suspect.” On an ELA essay, the teacher feedback states, “You have used transitional words to let the reader know the section of the essay you are discussing. Next step: You have listed several rhetorical strategies in your introductory paragraph, but you did not develop all of them in your body paragraphs. You only need to analyze 2 or 3. So next time, include, 2 or 3 in your thesis and then develop each in your body paragraphs.” Through the use of assessments and rubrics, students are provided with actionable feedback about their academic progress.

- During student meetings, students reported that they received teacher feedback, provided peer feedback, and completed self-reflections, do nows and exit tickets in most classes. Examples of checking for understanding were observed during lessons, including the use of trackers, mid-lesson interruptions, and exit tickets. Information from the checks for understanding impacted the grouping of students and the revision of lesson plans to include additional supports. As a result of ongoing checks for understanding and some student peer and self-assessment, teachers are making adjustments to meet the learning need of most students.

17K531: December 12, 2018
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

School leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from frequent observations. Feedback based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps, with a focus on questioning, student engagement, and assessment.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for instructional practice and supports teachers in reflecting on their own practices, resulting in pedagogical growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. These classroom visits are followed by a written assessment of the lesson and feedback. For example, one observation report reviewed a twelfth-grade ELA lesson that incorporated the use of a gallery walk and provided the following feedback: "Teacher provided instruction on participation in the Gallery Walk. All students participate in the Gallery Walk. Teacher allowed students to use their personal experiences in writing their personal statement. However, I would like to make the following recommendations. Please allow more time for student-to-student interactions." Another example reminded the teacher to include more formative assessments, such as having students write summaries at the end of the lesson. Through frequent classroom observations and specific, reflective feedback, school leaders support the growth of teachers.

- Teacher observation reports include language from the Danielson Framework for Teaching that supports the rating, along with actionable next steps designed to help teachers improve student outcomes. Specific feedback articulates clear expectations and supports the development of instructional practices with a focus on the Danielson components of questioning (3b), engagement (3c), and assessment (3d). An example of such feedback includes, "Areas for Growth: Communication with non-verbal student. The student did not raise his hand or write down any questions when he needed help. He shook his head when I asked him if he communicates when he doesn’t know something. Next Steps: Create a plan for working with non-verbal students." Another example of a next step reminded teacher to allow more time for student interactions and to call on students who were not participating during the lesson. A review of observation reports provided evidence of written feedback to most teachers that included areas for growth and next steps.

- Teachers meet with school leaders to develop personal goals for professional growth, identifying learning opportunities and ways school leaders can best support their progress. An example from one teacher’s PD plan includes, “Using assessment in instruction and use of data goal: teacher will prepare questions for different points of the lesson where students can monitor their own understanding of the topic. Peer assessment and feedback from peers and teacher. Learning opportunities include exit tickets, summary questions, and students will evaluate their work against a written rubric." Teachers identify benchmark data for monitoring progress toward their goals, and administrators provide feedback on goals, such as, “This is a good goal. It shows that you are thinking about graduation data and at-risk students.” A review of Advance data shows improvement in the areas of questioning, engagement, and assessment. Consequently, as a result of reflection and feedback from school leaders, teachers are demonstrating growth in their professional practice.