Quality Review Report

2018-2019

J.H.S. 104 Simon Baruch
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 02M104
330 East 21 Street
Manhattan
NY 10010
Principal: Rocco Macri
Dates of Review:
November 14, 2018 - November 15, 2018
Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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

J.H.S. 104 Simon Baruch 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Rating</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>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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools 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 Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborations on grade or content teams as well as by houses focused on instructional coherence across the grades. School leaders embed teacher leadership opportunities in the school.

Impact
Professional collaborations result in schoolwide coherence of instructional practices that lead to increased student achievement across all grades and content teams. Effective teacher leadership allows teachers to play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry collaborations that have resulted in schoolwide coherence of teacher practices. For example, teacher teams promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts by conducting mini-lessons and stations. A grade six English Language Arts (ELA) team analyzed student work using a protocol. Teachers compared a student’s writing to a baseline assessment and teachers realized that students need mini-lessons to learn to include dialogue and use details in their writing. Strategies such as using visuals and real-life applications were discussed to help students make their writing more interesting. Teachers decided to use the Teachers College *Up the Ladder* lessons so that students get more practice writing narratives and build from what they know. They decided to conduct mini-lessons to have students focus on smaller chunks of their writing and zoom in so that students tackle one issue at a time to build stamina and write better conclusions. In addition, teacher teams for ELA and math focus on creating stations so that learning is meaningful for their students.

- The math and science teacher teams meet as a grade on a weekly basis to plan lessons that adhere to the Common Core and discuss student performance. For example, in a meeting, the school leader modeled a grade seven chemistry unit task of predicting what different jars contained, give a reason, and then discuss how students could prove their predictions. Teachers decided that they can use the task as an introductory activity to gauge students’ prior knowledge of forming a hypothesis. In a grade eight math team meeting, teachers discussed historical data on the Algebra Regents and discussed how these scores correlated to grade seven scores so that more Regents classes would be offered. According to teachers, the work of teacher teams has strengthened their capacity and become a factor that has resulted in the steady increase of student achievement in ELA and math over the course of three years.

- Teachers are provided with opportunities to lead initiatives in the school. For example, a teacher conducted a study on school climate. The teacher collaborated with other teachers to conduct “climate walks” to observe student-student and teacher-student interactions. The teachers gathered data and concluded that more social emotional learning professional learning opportunities for teachers were needed. The school leaders supported the initiative and teachers attended professional learning opportunities and came back to the school and turned the training. As a result of this work, the faculty created posters that hang in each classroom about the schools’ universal rights and responsibilities. Included in these posters are the rights for students to feel safe, have a clean school, to learn, to be respected, and to be heard. Teachers stated and all present agreed that they initiate schoolwide events such as celebrations of diversity through the work of the culture committee. School leaders stated that teachers have played an integral role in selecting the ELA curriculum and making decisions that affect student learning.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create content, unit specific rubrics, and checklists that are aligned to the curricula. Teachers consistently use questioning, conferring, student reflections and discussions to check for understanding.

Impact

Consistent use of rubric aligned glows and grows provides students with actionable feedback on their performance. Teachers use formative assessment data to plan targeted instruction and tasks that meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, a review of student work products evidences the use of rubrics to assess student learning and provide actionable feedback. Rubrics are aligned to the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) and the math curriculum. A review of student work on bulletin boards and in portfolios evidence feedback provided to students on rubrics. For example, in a grade eight memoir unit the students were graded on the ending, organization, craft, and conventions. Students were graded on the continuum of grade six to grade nine. In addition to the grade received, the teacher wrote that the student used higher-order thinking vocabulary and figurative language as well as next steps to improve on conventions. In a grade seven math task, the students were provided with feedback for each short response question and a rubric to grade the student on computation, organization of ideas, mathematical terminology, and explaining. In a social studies task on creating postcards from the past, the teacher used a rubric to grade students on the introductory paragraph, body, and conclusion. The teacher wrote feedback to the student with next steps and words of encouragement.

- Teachers use checklists and student-reflections to provide actionable feedback. In a student journal, there was a checklist for the students to use to describe a character using textual evidence. The teacher checked off the components of the assignment that the student completed and marked those that the student needs to include in his next assignment. Another checklist that is used is to highlight the specific qualities of an Excellent Reader’s Response. In a grade seven math task, the students were graded using a standards-based rubric. A grade six student stated that the rubric helped because it showed what a good personal narrative would be like to achieve a better grade. The student added that the feedback reminded her that she needs to include details in her essay.

- Across classrooms, teachers use checks for understanding such as the use of questions and conferring with students. In one grade six ELA classroom, the teacher paused the class after listening in on students turn and talk about their books' character traits. After realizing that students were describing a character rather than analyzing their actions and look for supporting evidence from their books, the teacher clarified that students default to describing the characters rather than analyzing the characters’ actions. In a math classroom the teacher observed students simplifying an expression but not knowing what to do after combining like terms. The teacher explained that they can use the distributive property. While across classrooms teachers checked for understanding and adjusted the lesson to meet all students' learning needs, there were missed opportunities for teachers to check for understanding and have students self-assess so that they are aware of their next learning steps.
School leaders and faculty ensure the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. There is strategic integration of the instructional shifts through purposeful planning of learning stations, extensions, and scaffolds in the curricula across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Purposeful planning results in schoolwide coherence in the curricula and the promotion of college and career readiness for all students. Across content areas, students consistently demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricula reflects the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. For example, a grade eight social studies lesson plan on the Age of Reform, integrates citing textual evidence to write a short feature article using organizers and notes from documents. In a grade eight ELA lesson plan, the students are charged with learning about characterization by finding a quote to support their description of likeable and less likable traits of protagonists. In a grade seven math lesson plan, students work in groups rotating through stations where they must write an explanation of the scale factor of two similar shapes.

- A review of lesson plans and units of study reflect the strategic integration of real-life applications, small group instruction using the TCRWP curriculum, math stations, and promoting student discussions. For example, in a grade six science lesson plan about understanding the causes of day and night using a student created 3D model of the sun and earth, students are tasked with completing a graphic organizer of their opinion about the seasons and how their opinion changes after speaking to a partner, after a class discussion, and what their final understanding is based on everything they have heard and new information they have learned. In a grade six and seven math lesson plans, the teachers use stations to help students learn about concepts such as simplifying algebraic expressions and scale factors. Lesson plans and units demonstrate coherence across subjects and grades of the instructional shifts such as real-world applications, using textual evidence, close reading, and academic vocabulary to promote college and career readiness for all students.

- Curricula and academic tasks are refined so that all students including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) are cognitively engaged and demonstrate their thinking. In a grade six math lesson, students used adapted assignments based on their level of understanding of algebraic expressions. The teacher planned for students to use different graphic organizers such as On a Roll With Expressions which directs the students to use dice to get a number to substitute for $x$ and $y$ and then find their value. In a grade six ELA lesson plan the teacher plans on meeting with students who are not using the strategy of Stop and Jot to model and provide scaffolds. In a grade seven ELA lesson plan, the teacher plans on supporting her high-level readers to track and jot a character’s actions over time and meeting with individual students based on pre-assessment data to support them using a character trait list with details and examples from the text. Curricula and academic tasks include the use of glossaries, and the use of visuals such as photos rather than quotes to identify Industrial Age issues through primary sources.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when they are challenged and make their thinking visible through discussion, collaboration, and exposure to rigorous learning activities. Students are provided with appropriate scaffolds and multiple ways to make their thinking visible.

Impact

In all classrooms, students work in partnerships, and groups, and are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their thinking using multi-modalities. All learners including ELLs and students with disabilities are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provide students with opportunities to turn and talk, work in groups and show their thinking. In a grade eight social studies lesson about the Reform Movement, the teacher depicted a photo of the living conditions from the Industrial Era and had students turn and talk about what the government could do to deal with the conditions at that time. Students discussed that there were handicapped individuals who could have benefited from government assistance. In a grade eight ELA lesson, students were grouped by reading levels and worked in stations to analyze characters. Students discussed in their groups different character traits and supported their claims by using quotes from the text. In a grade seven math class, students rotated through stations to review various concepts such as scale factor, ratios, and proportions. Students were assigned different roles such as materials manager, technician, and correctness coordinator. Teacher-made materials were available for students to work in groups and for students to collaborate with their peers to demonstrate their thinking.

- Across classrooms, students work in groups according to their Lexile levels and are provided with appropriate materials such as glossaries for ELLs, guiding questions, and writing supports including copies of the warm-up, graphic organizers, and notes for students with disabilities. For example, in ELA classrooms, students are learning about character traits and writing narrative essays. Students with disabilities and ELLs are supported with appropriate materials such as list of character traits, differentiated graphic organizers, anchor charts, and math manipulatives. Students in math classrooms have opportunities to solve problems in groups using manipulatives and to demonstrate their thinking by writing to justify their responses. In a grade six science classroom, the teacher used a model of the earth, sun and the moon to show students the rotation of the earth around the sun to help students understand what happens with the seasons.

- Teachers across classrooms consistently provide students with multiple entry points to ensure that students are cognitively engaged. Teachers use anchor charts and slide presentations to guide students and engage them in higher-order thinking skills. In a grade seven ELA class, students are provided with direction to use an anchor chart Tips for Taking Your Writing about Reading from Good to Great to support students to lift their levels of thinking as they read and write to show their best thinking in their writing. Using a station approach across math classrooms, students have opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking problems by collaborating with their peers. In a grade six math classroom, students are provided with different ways to show their thinking about simplifying expressions by combining like terms. As students worked on the station problem, they must demonstrate their thinking by answering questions on a recording sheet such as “How do you know that this expression can or cannot be simplified?” Students were provided with manipulatives and cards with visuals to help solve the problems and explain their thinking.
**Findings**

The school leaders and staff support a culture of learning that communicates to family’s high expectations for college and career readiness. The school provides ongoing information to families regarding student progress toward college and career readiness. House teams establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

**Impact**

Communication systems such as an online grade reporting tool and newsletters provide opportunities for families to understand student progress towards meeting standards. Through the house system, teachers closely monitor and provide feedback and guidance to prepare students for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers consistently communicate high expectations and ongoing feedback through PupilPath and frequent communication with families. Parents reported and all present agreed that all teachers are receptive to meeting with them to discuss their children’s progress. In addition, parents receive emails from teachers to inform them of progress toward goals. Parents also stated that the school provides workshops for parents on preparing for the high school application process starting in grade seven. During high-stakes testing season, parents of ELLs and students with disabilities are invited to attend workshops to inform them of these assessments. Examples such as these, shows that the school consistently communicates with families about having high expectations for students leading to a path of college and career readiness.

- School leaders prepare families for the school year by having a beginning of the year meeting to outline expectations and share information about the school. Parents are informed about the school’s expectations around writer’s workshop, the power of reading, school goals, classroom expectations, and attendance. Teachers reported and all present agreed that the school communicates frequently with parents through blast emails called *Baruch Blasts* and that because the grades are divided into houses, there is frequent communication among teachers themselves about the students under their care. Teachers communicate with parents about reminders and upcoming important events. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, which are conducted monthly as reported by parents and teachers, serve as a way to communicate goals and expectations. However, these initiatives have yet to demonstrate a successful partnership that results in success to support progress toward expectations around connecting student progress toward a path to college and career readiness.

- House teachers establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations by reinforcing behaviors using the *Baruch Universal Rights and Responsibilities* poster. This poster, which hangs in every classroom, outlines behaviors that are expected of the students and are tied to preparing students for their next level and life. Students get rewarded for exhibiting these behaviors and are provided with opportunities to celebrate their accomplishments. For example, students stated, and all agreed that the school recognizes exemplary behaviors such as being responsible and respecting the opinions of others. They are rewarded with incentives according to their grade levels. Students also stated that they receive feedback from their teachers and that the work they do in classrooms promote skills such as communication and being independent. Students stated and all agreed that during advisory they participate in ice breakers and fun projects such as door competitions and spirit week. Though there are universal expectations for all students and there is advisory once a week, the school is yet to demonstrate that feedback around guidance and advisement ensure that students, including the high-need subgroups, are supported, own their educational experience, and are prepared for the next level.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles and by facilitating teacher reflection and analysis of student data. Prompt written feedback captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Formal classroom visits result in written feedback for teachers that make clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a frequent cycle of observations used by school leaders. Teachers are supported in reaching their professional goals by having conferences with school leaders about their goals and then receiving immediate feedback from classroom observations. A teacher shared that her professional goal was to be able to have conferences with her students. The school leader provided an opportunity for her to visit a colleague and as a result she improved her practice. A review of observation reports used in *Advance* evidence the use of student work products and analysis of data. For example, one school leader noted that a teacher used data to strategically form small groups in her classroom with differentiated activities. A teacher who rated developing in engaging students in learning was provided with feedback about the pacing of the lesson and matching materials to the lesson objectives. The same teacher received an effective rating in the same component at a later observation after the teacher applied the feedback provided by the school leader of having a video clip and a graphic organizer for students to analyze a historical event.

- Teachers are supported with effective feedback from a frequent cycle of observations done by consultants on the new implementation of TCRWP. Consultants provide feedback to teachers that is meaningful and spirals. Teachers stated and all present agreed that they receive valuable feedback from consultants and that they model effective practices to implement reading and writing workshops in their classrooms. School leaders support teachers assigned to them according to subjects they have experience with or have extensive knowledge on. A teacher stated and all present agreed that feedback from a school leader was meaningful such as implementing math stations. School leaders provide professional learning around Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. A particular school focus based on *Advance* data has been on engaging students in learning. Professional learning opportunities provided by school leaders have given teachers ideas on best practice to increase student engagement in classrooms.

- To increase the level of student engagement, and as a result of the *Advance* data that engaging students in learning is a challenge for teachers, school leaders decided to collect data on the amount of time being spent on “do now” activities. The data was shared with teachers as well as a presentation of what student engagement should look like so that expectations around student engagement are clear. The data revealed that teachers spend a great portion of the period on the do now. School leaders and teachers reported that the data was powerful and that as a result, teachers focus more on having lessons that incorporate group discussions, stations, and questions to engage students in critical thinking.