Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 011 Kathryn Phelan

Elementary 30Q011

54-25 Skillman Avenue
Queens
NY 11377

Principal: Elizabeth Pena Jorge

Dates of Review:
March 7, 2019 - March 8, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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

### Instructional Core

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>Area of Celebration</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 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>Additional Finding</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 school leadership utilizes a theory of action along with strategic structures to inform the school’s approach to culture-building and social-emotional support.

Impact

The school is a safe and inclusive environment that meaningfully involves student voice demonstrated by their active involvement in creating a more inclusive student culture in the cafeteria. Students are well known by at least one adult through programs that support social-emotional learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Students’ social emotional support begins every morning as students are greeted by administrators and teachers. Every classroom in the school has a mood meter posted in the room where students can identify their feelings throughout the day. Teachers use reward systems in their classes to acknowledge and encourage positive behaviors. Student’s support for each other further adds to the social-emotional wellbeing of all learners. During the meeting with students, all students shared how well they get along and support each other across grades, some referencing the buddy reading program where students from upper grades read to students in the younger grades. “We love to be a big buddy to the younger students, they are called little buddies” one student explained. This allows them to act as leaders and mentors for the younger students and adds to their positive self-esteem.

- There are a variety of structures in place that support students’ social-emotional needs. Many of the classes in the school utilize Sanford Harmony, a social-emotional teaching program that cultivates healthy relationships between children. Additionally, many of the classrooms use restorative circles as a way to support students in conflict using an intentional systemic context to dialogue as equals. All classrooms have a “How Do You Feel Today” chart that allows students to share how they are feeling each day by pointing to an area on the chart. Both teachers and students shared they are positive that there is at least one adult that students can go to when they need someone to talk to at any given time. All health lessons are now aligned to social emotional learning. This was done in order to add an additional layer of support for all students.

- All students reported a positive and safe school culture that actively welcomes their voice. Students start the day by conducting morning announcements. Students and teachers shared that many of the clubs that are currently in existence are due to active student involvement. The books teachers select and purchase for the class libraries come as a result of student input. This year the purchase of the “Captain Underpants” series was directly due to student voice. Students are actively involved in the school’s annual culture night. The food creations, dances and authentic dress of the event are student generated. Recently students voiced their discontent about being told where to sit and not being able to move around the cafeteria and sit with friends. As a result, school leaders and students collaborated and now they are able to freely move about and may sit with friends during their lunch periods. The school store that is open multiple times each month is the result of a sixth grader’s idea, which was implemented with his active involvement.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Although actionable feedback is provided to students, clear next steps are not as yet provided to ensure student mastery across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics that are created across grades and subject areas. Students use rubrics as a guide and many times as a checklist when addressing their task. Teachers use the language of the rubric to provide students with actionable feedback. On a student's writing assignment the feedback included praise for the use of transition words and dialogue. Next steps suggested using quotation marks when there is a dialogue and adding more details by stating “What was she sick with?” and “How did your dad handle it?” Feedback to a student on a math assignment praised the student for being able to correctly answer the problem and for adding great details. Next steps suggested drawing a picture to represent the fraction answers. However, there was evidence that some feedback provided simply stated “Good Job” or “Excellent” and as yet does not provide the necessary steps to ensure that all students would achieve mastery.

- Teachers used a variety of ways in order to check for student understanding. In many classrooms teachers conferenced with students and groups of students and often times memorialized those conferences by using a checklist or taking anecdotal notes. Teachers often used the data they gathered to make an adjustment or remind students of patterns and trends they were seeing. For example, during a sixth-grade social studies lesson, the teacher circulated around the classroom engaging with students and asking questions. The teacher stopped the class and reminded them of the areas they should concentrate on and shared important points that he heard while engaging with the students. In many classes students used assessment rings that were green, yellow and red. Green stated “Good to go,” yellow read “Getting there” and red informed the teacher that the student needed help as it read “I’m stuck.” These frequent checks for students’ understanding promote improved student learning.

- During the meeting with students, students were asked to share their experiences with rubrics and teacher feedback. Students explained that rubrics are used “A lot in writing and reading”. Students shared how rubrics help them understand what is needed in order to receive a three or a four on a project or assignment. Teachers provide feedback on rubrics and circle the areas that they successfully complete and those areas that they did not complete. Although rubrics are used more frequently in literacy classes they are employed across all subjects. One student shared how in social studies they have rubrics to use for writing assignments. Many other students shared that rubrics are used in their classes.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and integrate key instructional shifts, with a specific emphasis on questioning and discussion, which are the key areas of the instructional focus. Rigor and higher order thinking skills are emphasized and embedded throughout all curricular documents.

Impact
There is coherence across grades and subject areas that promote college and career readiness for all students. All learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities must demonstrate high levels of their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents evidenced alignment to the Common Core and the integration of questioning and discussion. One social studies lesson plan identifies a list of differentiated low and high-level questions that will be assigned to students according to their group. A first-grade math lesson identified varying questions based on Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels. Questions included, “How do I know how many tens and ones to draw” and “What strategy will I model to answer the question?” In addition, other lesson plans included sections of the lesson where students will create their own higher and lower order DOK questions that will be answered by other groups or individual peers.

- Curricular documents outline how lessons will be differentiated for groups of learners. One math plan describes that students will work on tiered tasks in their math groups in order to practice solving addition word problems using strategies they have learned, such as the three read protocol. In a second lesson plan addressing a flash debate, students would have access to note catchers and graphic organizers. It noted that teachers would scribe for any student who struggles to gather their thoughts into writing. Lesson plans for integrated co-teaching classes include grouping for explicit differentiated reading levels.

- Lesson plans evidence provisions for students to engage in discourse and work collaboratively. A fourth-grade plan details how students will meet with a member of the opposing viewpoint to present their evidence, and defend their argument. Students are required to respond and explain to their partner what he or she thought was their strongest most compelling argument and why. In a third-grade ELA plan students will engage in discussions with partners in order to answer questions such as, “What can you do if you are reading a story and you come to a word that you don’t know?” Turn and talk sessions were frequently embedded in reading lessons using questions that required discussions such as “What would make you feel empathetic” and “How do you know that the animal is moving swiftly?”
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Across classrooms, teacher practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school’s belief that student’s learn best when they engage in collaboration and differentiated tasks.

Impact

Student work products reflect high levels of meaningful thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout many of the classrooms lessons were connected to real-world issues and areas that connect to students personally. For example, during a kindergarten social studies lesson, students were able to identify the job of a dentist and how to keep their own teeth clean and healthy. There were several opportunities for students to engage in discussions where they could be overheard stating “Dentists keep your teeth from getting cavities” and “Dentists keep your teeth clean.” During the lesson, students were able to reflect on their experiences when they visited the dentist. There is a belief that students learn best when lessons are differentiated to meet each student’s learning style. During a third-grade literacy lesson, the teacher developed skill based learning groups, provided enrichment activities for higher level students and translation components for English Language Learners (ELLs), while maintaining a high level of rigor for all learners.

- Student work products on display evidenced high levels of student participation. Examples include book reviews with student artwork, and detailed information on each of the books read supported with text-based evidence. Math work products were rigorous as they challenged students to find the errors in sample problems and students were able to explain the process they used to identify the errors in each problem. Students read the problems three times and identified what the problem asked, what they were to figure out, what numbers were important to the solution and ultimately drew a picture to solve the problem.

- Student collaborations and discussion were seen across many of the classrooms visited. During a fourth-grade social studies lesson students sat in groups as they researched the concept of the stock market, and decided which stocks they should purchase. Students used the Internet to research the stocks, discussed a particular stock’s history and why it would or would not be a good idea to purchase that stock. Students were overheard saying, “This stock has been unpredictable and this would be a risky purchase.” During a second-grade math lesson students worked in groups as they worked on each of the assigned activities. One group had to arrange coins from least to greatest, circle any amount that was equal to one dollar and identify the total amount of money in their bag. Student discussions such as, “two quarters is fifty cents” and “we have a total of one dollar and thirty five cents” were heard reflecting their thinking and the learning taking place.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire school staff. Using data from frequent portfolio reviews the school effectively and systematically communicates academic and behavioral expectation to all students and their families.

Impact
Training is provided that results in a culture of mutual accountability towards meeting expectations. Feedback and support is provided to students and their families so that all students own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development (PD) in the school is clearly supporting all teachers in meeting all school wide instructional expectations. Teachers and school leaders explained that this year there is a strong focus on questioning and discussion. During the first half of the school year, all of the PD opportunities for teachers addressed the instructional focus related to questioning and discussion. PD for the second half of the year is centered on strategies that will help teachers help students develop their own higher-level DOK questions. Teachers attended a “Refresher Danielson PD” that dealt with the teacher evaluation process that is collected and entered in Advance to ensure their understanding and support achievement of school goals.

- The school participates in programs at Woodside on the Move, a community-based organization that celebrates the diversity of the community and which helps immigrant students and their families’ transition to their new neighborhood. The school supports parents and students in the articulation process to middle school including organizing visits to middle schools they may attend. The guidance counselor meets with students and parents in grades five and six to discuss options for middle school applications. Furthermore, parents are surveyed in various languages at the start of the school year to determine how the school can best support them regarding special education and general education services. During the parent meeting, parents overwhelmingly stated how happy they are with the communication of all the information the school provides.

- Students track their progress throughout the school year, most notably by regularly reviewing their portfolios. During the meeting with students, several students shared that when an assignment is returned by their teacher not only do they place that assessment in their student portfolios, but they also take the grade and add it to their data sheet, which creates a graph that gives them a picture of their progress. One student shared “Any time we want to see how we are doing, all we have to do is review our data sheet and portfolios.” Students noted that the teachers make it clear what is needed to get high scores in class. Students agreed and explained how in order to be a strong reader you need to read a lot.
Additional Finding

<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 engage in professional inquiry-based collaborations. Distributed leadership structures are embedded throughout the school such as sharing best practices from other schools they visit.

Impact
Collaboration strengthened teachers’ instructional practices and resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence leading to increased student achievement. Teacher voice plays an integral role in key decisions made throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During one teacher team meeting, teachers discussed and analyzed student work products to provide targeted support for their second-grade math students. Teachers analyzed work products three separate times, each with a different focus. Through this process teachers identified a weakness in student stamina with large word problems. Teachers developed and implemented the “Three Read Protocol” positively impacting student work. One teacher shared that as a result of using the protocol her students are using math vocabulary more often than before. A second teacher explained that in the past students would panic at a problem when they saw too much reading but now students are more comfortable with comprehending word problems. By far, all teachers agreed that students are no longer rushing through problems. As a result of the collaborative work and coherent practice developed there has been an increase in their state math scores. To date students are at a 55 percent proficiency level, which is an eight percent increase over the last four years and three percent higher than local comparable schools.

- Distributive leadership is embedded throughout the school. This includes teachers attending PD and turn keying their learning to the entire staff. In addition, teachers visit other schools and bring their understandings back to their peers. For example, during an inter-visitation at a neighboring school, teachers saw a writing strategy and proposed pilot it in the second grade. School leaders agreed with the recommendation of the teachers and the program was implemented. In addition, the school has teachers who are grade leaders and act as a conduit between staff and school leadership helping to support their peers by sharing ideas with school leaders. Teacher voice is also heard in procedural decisions. Teachers shared a concern with a specific stairwell being too crowded during dismissal. They suggested using a different stairway to help alleviate congestion. This was implemented as part of the dismissal procedure with much improved traffic patterns.

- Teacher teams meet regularly and analyze student performance data. Minutes from one meeting indicate that the team created rubrics for specific performance tasks and implemented a variety of instructional strategies for improving student literacy. They reviewed student work to determine the success of the strategies and made revisions to their instructional plans. Increased student scores on the state ELA exams give evidence to the positive impact of the work of teacher teams. This past year student proficiency is at 55 percent an increase of 10 percent over the prior year which is also four percent higher that local comparable schools.