Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 063 Old South
Elementary 27Q063
90-15 Sutter Avenue
Queens
NY 11417

Principal: Diane Marino Coleman

Dates of Review:
November 28, 2018 - November 29, 2018

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

P.S. 063 Old South serves students in grade PK through grade 5. 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>To what extent does the school...</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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## School Quality Ratings continued

### 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</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Throughout the vast majority of classes teachers use and create rubrics and assessments that are aligned to the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teacher’s assessment practices reflect a varied use of ongoing checks for understanding that include student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Teachers provide students with actionable and meaningful feedback and make effective adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students that allows students to be aware of their next learning steps.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the vast majority of classes, students are made well aware of their next learning steps. One of the ways that this is prominent is through the use of checklists. All students use portfolios that where they track all of their assignments and grades for each subject, and regularly check their portfolios to see their progress. Students were also seen using checklists in order to complete their assignments, and checklists are attached to all assignments prior to being handed in. Not only do students use checklists to self-assess their work, checklists are also used by peers in order to peer-assess student work products. During the meeting with students they explained how using checklists allows them to get the best grade possible. Students also shared that by using a checklist it allows them to go step by step to make sure they didn’t miss something before handing in their work. Additionally, teachers conference with students regularly during lessons and memorialize student responses and noticings in order to make adjustments to lessons. Many times during classroom visits teachers interrupted the class to address a recurring issue that was seen during conferencing. In addition, students were often seen working with peers that needed additional help.

- Rubrics are used throughout the vast majority of classes and feedback offered to students is aligned to all rubrics. In addition, one of the ways that written feedback is presented to students is directly on the rubric. All feedback reviewed is actionable and meaningful to students. Rubrics consistently highlight the student’s strengths and offer clear, actionable next steps. For example, feedback to a student’s writing assignment included praising the students for conveying their main idea and topic clearly and in a well-organized manner. The teacher also informed the student how she noticed that the student tried to revise their work by implementing feedback from their peers and the teacher. The teacher then offered the student a strategy he could use in order to ensure that capital letters are used correctly. The student then reflected in writing and explained how he would use this feedback in the future. This same practice was seen throughout the vast majority of classes.

- In addition to the questioning and conferencing with students that was seen throughout classrooms, teachers use many other tools to check for student understanding. During a third-grade literacy lesson, all students used an assessment booklet in order to inform the teacher if they needed assistance. For example, some of the pages in the booklet are color coded and have statements such as “I need help” or “I can help someone else.” The assessment booklet also included pages that listed accountable talk stems, checklists, and various strategies used depending on the subject. Other teachers used strategies such as thumbs up and thumbs down, peer assessment, and tool boxes that held tools that students can use in order to help them understand and solve a particular problem. One student shared and others agreed, “Our teachers are always making sure we understand something before they move on.” During the classroom visits there were several instances where the classroom teacher worked with a student or group of students based on the information they gathered while conferencing with students.
Area of Focus

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

Teaching practices are aligned to the school’s beliefs in how students learn best, such as differentiation, across many but not the vast majority of classrooms.

**Impact**

Students across many, but not all classrooms, create meaningful work products that reflect high levels of thinking, participation, and ownership through strategies such as student discourse.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During a fifth-grade reading lesson, students were asked to identify characters, their traits, and the setting in a text by referring to text details. During this lesson students worked in groups and shared responses such as, “Dialogue is when characters speak to each other, like in first person, second person or third person.” In addition, students could be overheard citing text-based evidence from their readings. During a kindergarten math lesson, students were also in groups and actively engaged in rigorous discussions. Students asked each other questions and offered feedback such as, “How do you know your answer is correct?” and “I liked how you used the matching strategy.” However, during a fourth-grade literacy lesson, students had limited opportunities to engage in discourse and the majority of the time was dedicated to the teacher reading aloud to the students. As a result, there were missed opportunities for students to produce meaningful student work products.

- Differentiating work for students is another way that staff believe students learn best. During a first-grade reading lesson, students worked in groups and each group had a differentiated task to complete. One group shared their opinions on the reading and analyzed the main character’s sequence of events, while a second group analyzed characters from the anchor text along with story elements and central message. Another group wrote an opinion piece on the character “Mean Jean” using the prior lessons character analysis assignment. During a third-grade writing lesson, students worked in groups and had differentiated tasks for each group along with a wide array of scaffolds such as labeling key details and scaffolded questions.

- Student work products evidenced high levels of thought and rigor. For example, a third grade student’s writing assignment was a short story entitled “The Misplaced Books in the Library.” The story included the correct use of quotations, high levels of academic vocabulary and transition words. In addition the student’s writing established a situation, introduced characters, and included dialogue to the narrative. A second piece of student writing was a multiple-paragraph outline about Raul Wallenberg. The student’s writing was clearly organized in to paragraphs that included text features, appositives, definitions, facts, and details. Student discussions throughout classrooms visits also exhibited high levels of thinking and rigor as students used accountable talk stems in order to help facilitate discussions. However, there were missed opportunities in some classrooms to engage students in rigorous discussions that evidence high levels of student thinking and participation.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
All staff ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and strategically integrate instructional shifts, most notably writing across the curriculum. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
There is curricular coherence across all planning documents that includes a writing component across all subjects and grades. All students, including the highest-achieving students, have access to curricula that cognitively engages them.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a strong focus on writing throughout the school. As a result, there was coherence in planning that focused on writing throughout all of the planning documents reviewed. For example, a reading lesson plan evidenced planning for students to create a final single paragraph outline comparing old ways of life to new ways of life for one of the characters. In a kindergarten math lesson plan, students use dry-erase markers in order to write out their responses to math questions. Students also shared how writing is something that is done in all of their classes. One student shared “We even write in our gym classes too.” Teachers meet in vertical teams which allows for opportunities to analyze and adjust curricula in order to meet the needs of all students. A review of teacher team meetings showed how the math team has adjusted lesson plans several times to review areas such as academic vocabulary and conceptual understanding.

- Planning that ensures that all students will be actively and cognitively engaged was seen across all planning documents reviewed. Varying examples of graphic organizers are planned for in order to supply students with a scaffold that act as an entry point for all students. These organizers were seen in use throughout classrooms visited. A second-grade reading lesson plan included an outline grouping students based on skill. English Language Learners (ELLs) are supplied with individualized instruction to support students in areas such as understanding that some words are similar, but actually describe different things. All math lesson plans reviewed included planning for a variety of scaffolds such as cubes, ten frames and visual checklists. Additionally, all planning documents include a variety of low and high level questions used to engage students and add to the rigor of all lessons. In addition, questioning strategies for all students remain high, but offer those students that require it scaffolds that will assist them in answering the questions, such as vocabulary sheets and visual representations of the topic in the lesson.

- Throughout many of the planning documents reviewed there was evidence of planning for students to present and identify text-based answers. All of the literacy lesson plans included a section entitled “Cite Text Evidence” where it asks student to identify sections of the reading passages and identify the pages and illustrations that support their responses. Throughout the vast majority of math planning documents, the “We Notice/We Wonder” strategy is used in order to allow students to develop a deeper understanding of math problems. Also evidenced was planning that would ask students to explain whether they believe there is another way to better solve the problem or another way to check their work. Coherent planning such as this promotes college and career readiness for all students.
Additional Finding

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

There is a partnership between students, parents, and teachers that effectively helps to communicate all academic expectations and supports a partnership with families based on a unified set of beliefs towards next-level learning.

Impact

Parents work in partnership with staff and students to support student progress. Teachers and school leaders provide clear and effective feedback to all students so that students own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- Students take ownership of their progress through student-led conferences. All students have goals that they create with their teachers. Through student-led conferences students self-reflect on their progress towards their goals and share with their parent’s whether or not they have met, will meet, or need assistance meeting their goals. Students track their goals in each subject area and make adjustments with their teachers as needed. On every student desk throughout the school, students have taped a copy of their goals and reflect on their goals daily and throughout the school year. As students achieve their goals, new goals replace the accomplished goals.

- Parents are kept fully informed with respect to their children’s progress and what is needed for them to succeed and move on to middle school. During the meeting with parents they shared that communication is extremely strong in their school. Parents explained how the majority of teachers use apps that allow them to communicate and share student progress in real-time throughout the school day. Parents also shared that every Tuesday afternoon two students from each class conduct student-led conferences where students share work, their progress thus far, and what support they need in order to be successful. One parent stated, “Hearing my child’s progress directly from my child is very impactful, as it allows him to take ownership of his learning.” Data shows that there are two student-led conferences per grade every Tuesday, and most parents engage in two conferences per year. Teachers explained how in addition to these modes of communication, parents are welcome to stop by anytime and they are always willing to speak with them. Parents shared that teachers regularly share resources and tips to help support their children at home and this is used when helping their children at home with homework.

- Students are being prepared for middle school through a variety of ways. In an effort to prepare students for transitioning from class to class in middle school, staff have departmentalized the fifth grade so that students can get used to changing classrooms. In addition, an Algebra for All program that prepares students for middle school algebra has been implemented. Staff have a clear articulation process that prepares students and families for middle school. The school’s guidance counselor meets regularly with students to prepare them for next-level learning and conducts various trips to middle schools, including walking fifth-graders to the closest middle school to take part in an orientation. When asked about how the school prepares students for middle school, all students, including younger ones, shared how teachers regularly explain to them what they need in order to be successful in middle school, high school, and college. One student shared, “Our teachers tell us every day what we need to be successful in school and life.” Other students explained how teachers challenge them with “rigorous work, like sixth grade questions” that helps them prepare for middle school.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of all teachers with a strategic and effective cycle of classroom observations. Feedback to teachers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps.

Impact

Feedback to teachers articulates clear expectations that support teacher practice and aligns with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are supplied with feedback that identifies teacher strengths, offers actionable next steps for teacher growth, and articulates clear expectations for implementation. For example, feedback for one teacher commended the teacher for the ability to model word problems and for the amount of scaffolds that were offered to all students. The school leader identified next steps that included eliciting more input from students during teacher modeling and to incorporate more manipulatives in order to help students understand and conceptualize their work. Feedback from a second administrator offered the same type of feedback in addition to sharing a website link that will help address the issue of students staying on task during the small group instruction portion of the lesson. In addition, other observation reports offer the option for teachers to visit their colleagues that have exemplified strengths in the areas that were identified as needing to be addressed. For example, the school leader offered opportunities to intervisit colleagues that effectively used higher level questioning techniques in order to increase the rigor of future lessons. Thus, feedback clearly articulates clear expectations for teacher practices and aligns to the needs of teachers and their goals.

- School leaders have an effective and strategic cycle of frequent classroom observations. Each assistant principal is responsible for a grade based on their subject knowledge and teaching experience, while the principal oversees all non-tenured staff and teachers that require additional support. School leaders conduct six to eight observations every month in addition to informal visits. School leaders norm each other using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in order to ensure that feedback has similar characteristics regardless of which administrator has conducted the observation. During the meeting with teachers, they shared how they enjoy when administrators enter their rooms. Several teachers pointed out that they look forward to the resources and other feedback they will receive. During post observation conferences, teachers and school leaders review student work products and data. Teachers expressed how the support supplied to them by school leaders has helped to promote professional growth across the staff, especially through practices like intervisitation.

- Feedback to teachers regularly align with teacher goals, as teacher goals are discussed during all post-observation conferences. Teachers shared that they refer to the teacher goal worksheet that they completed at the beginning of the school year. During post-observation conferences the teacher and school leaders discuss the progress they see toward their goals and whether or not the teacher’s goals needed to be adjusted. In reviewing the teacher goals worksheet, it showed how teachers added notes to each of their goals as a result of their post-observation meeting with a school leader. Notes indicated whether the teacher was on track or if the goal needed to be adjusted based on the meeting. One teacher shared that during a recent meeting with the principal, she decided she needed to adjust her goal of increasing student discourse by implementing Socratic seminars with both an inner and outer circle. During the meeting with teachers they explained how helpful it is for them to constantly be reflecting on their goals as it allows them to monitor growth and make adjustments regularly.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating: Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based, structured collaborations using the Looking at Student Thinking protocol and are actively engaged in a variety of distributed leadership opportunities.

**Impact**

Teacher’s instructional capacity is strengthened and there is schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teachers play an integral role in the decision-making process throughout the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers regularly attend professional development (PD) sessions on and off campus and turnkey their learning to their peers. For example, last year’s third-grade teachers attended several workshops on conceptualizing math word problems. This year components from this PD can be seen throughout all math classes. Grade leaders are teachers selected by peers and play an integral part in supporting teachers and school leaders. Grade leaders are a part of all team meetings, both vertically and horizontally. Grade leaders meet with school leaders once a month and share what was discussed during the teacher team meetings. For example, one of the areas that were discussed in previous meetings with school leaders is how teachers wanted to implement the W-questions strategies along with sentence expansions. As a result, these are both strategies that were consistently seen throughout classrooms and teacher planning documents. In addition, when asked how the W-questions help them, student responses included “It helps me to ask myself a lot more questions before answering the question” and “The five W’s is a way that we can be sure we get a lot of information about a subject.”

- The vast majority of teachers engage in professional structured inquiry sessions on a weekly basis. Teachers review student classroom data and work products as well as assessment data. Through these meetings, teachers make regular adjustment to their lessons in order to address the deficiencies they find during inquiry. For example, through teacher team work around the analysis of student writing, a decision was made to select a new writing program as teachers felt the current approach was not giving them the results they wanted on the state exams. Last year the math team identified a weakness in students conceptualizing math word problems and this year have created lessons that help to further develop those tasks. As a result, the math department has implemented a noticing and wondering protocol that allows students to break down word problems. As a result, the school saw an immediate increase in student math scores for third-grade students. In addition, the teachers and school leaders attribute the work on word problems to their three percent increase in ELA scores for third, fourth and fifth grade students. In addition, teacher’s instructional capacity has been strengthened. For example, while reviewing teacher observation reports improvement can been seen from one report to the next, most notably in questioning and discussion and managing student behavior.

- Distributed leadership is evident throughout the school through structures such as School Safety Team, Pupil Personnel Committee, and the Vertical Committee. Another example is the school’s professional development team. The PD team makes all of the decisions pertaining to the PD that teachers attend on and off campus, as well as about the PD that teacher’s turnkey throughout the year. For example, the team has focused on PD that is directly connected to the school’s writing initiative and the school’s new writing program. During the school visit the PD team met to discuss the latest PD sessions pertaining to the school’s reading program. Members of the team agreed that the sessions were very effective and decided that during team meetings teachers would discuss how to apply their new found learning into their lessons.