Quality Review Report

2018-2019

J.H.S. 074 Nathaniel Hawthorne
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 26Q074
61-15 Oceania Street
Queens
NY 11364

Principal: Anthony Armstrong

Dates of Review:
March 13, 2019 - March 14, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Daniel Kim
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. 074 Nathaniel Hawthorne serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>To what extent does the school...</em></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>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings
Department and grade teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work utilizing the Shared Dilemma and Problems of Practice protocol to hone instructional practice. Distributed leadership structures are embedded through the Teacher Ambassador program.

Impact
Teacher team work results in shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During the teacher team observation, science department teachers utilized the Shared Dilemma protocol to examine the schoolwide instructional focus on teacher assessment practices around student feedback. Teachers analyzed a representative sample of students’ work products around a chemistry project-based learning assignment. Teachers collected their noticings on both the work and the teacher feedback to the students and proceeded to ask clarifying and probing questions to understand the work context. They then offered possible instructional changes, including articulating not only the glows and grows, but also specific and concrete strategies for the student work to improve as part of the feedback. Comments included co-constructing the rubric with students, and building in more time for peer assessments so that the students have multiple check-points before the final project. The meeting concluded with plans for instructional suggestions to be applied and additional data collected for future presentations to their colleagues. Consequently, this instructional focus has resulted in improved student science performance across different grades, ranging from a six percent to ten percent increase relative to unit pre- and post-assessments.

- There is evidence of teacher inquiry across the school that is in alignment with the schoolwide instructional focus on examining assessment practices for student feedback. The Teacher Ambassador team, composed of representative teachers from each of the three grades and across content areas, utilized the Problem of Practice protocol and conducted instructional rounds to examine teacher practices around assessments and its use for student feedback. Notes include low inference recordings within classrooms, and identifying patterns and trends for practices across grades and subject areas, such as, “In 16/16 classrooms, students received feedback from their teachers to correct/revise their work at the following levels: inspired improved quality (three classrooms); guides (eight); informs (two); judges (three).” Through this work, teachers examined the ways and the extent to which student performance information is given and received between teachers and students as well as student-to-student. This work has resulted in improvements in teacher practice around feedback, with interviewed students during this review unanimously stating that the feedback they received from peers and teachers helped improve their work.

- Distributive leadership structures are embedded within the school through the Teacher Ambassadors, who in addition to conducting intervisitations as noted above, they serve as peer mentors to colleagues within their grade, facilitate grade and department meetings and drive instructional changes that impact students across the school. The Teacher Ambassador team determined the need for a schoolwide instructional focus on student feedback as an outgrowth of their involvement with the teacher team inquiry work and by looking at data from instructional walkthroughs of their colleagues’ classrooms. Interviewed teachers articulated meaningful teacher voice in schoolwide decision making as a strength of practice in the school.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies such as student discussions and the use of scaffolds such as online translation platforms and individual task prompts consistently provide multiple entry points into academic tasks and student discussions.

Impact

Students, including English Language Learners (ELLs), and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks such as creating their own tabloid covers. However, there are missed opportunities to elevate the thinking of those performing above standards and build student ownership of their learning experiences.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently emphasize student-to-student discussions to promote higher order thinking skills and to provide peer feedback. For example, grade six students worked in groups of four to represent the results of their research on aspects of ancient Roman civilization, such as attire and food in a collaboratively created mosaic. Students reviewed key information about their focus topic, discussed what information to present, debated on how to display their knowledge within the framework of mosaics, and articulated how each person would be involved in the presentation. Students were observed utilizing online translators and glossaries, as well as task-scaffolds that outlined the steps to complete the work.

- Teachers utilize various scaffolds such as online platforms, tasks focusers, discussion reminders and graphic organizers to support multiple entry points for ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, students in a grade seven chemistry class conducted research, created an online slideshow and presented their research findings for one element from the periodic table. Students utilized various scaffolds, including a Chinese-language based online slideshow platform, task organizers and guiding questions for their slides, as well as public speaking supports within their peer presentations, who in turn provided feedback around the content and manner of the presentation for future consideration. Students were observed utilizing online translators and glossaries, while such supports for ELLs and students with disabilities for access were consistently visible across classrooms, high quality extensions for those who were already performing at or beyond the learning objective was not evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

- In some classes, student work and discussions reflected not only high levels of thinking but also ownership of their learning experiences. Students in a grade eight science class worked in groups to create an environmental solution project, designing solutions that they could apply in real-life. Students peer-managed their own teams, creating, assigning and tracking their own work. Each team was led by a student ambassador, who facilitated the group work such as conducting research around plastic use and water pollution and designing a project that they could implement within the school and beyond. One group focused on addressing single-use plastics, collecting plastic bottles in school for repurposing, creating a peer awareness campaign which were evident in the hallways, as well as conducting outreach to local elected officials to support the ban on plastic bags. However, such student ownership of their own work was evident in some, but not the vast majority of the classrooms visited.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects and for ELLs and students with disabilities. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using various sources of data such as in-class student work, and student performance on online diagnostic and assessment platforms.

Impact

A diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across grades and subjects for a variety of learners. For example, plans for a grade seven English Language Arts lesson focused on making inferences, based on how authors use humor and situational irony in their writing as part of their craft. Plans involved students watching several vignette scenarios, discussing within their group whether or not it was situational irony, and applying their knowledge to a common text, the "Random of the Red Chief." Tiered supports for students with disabilities and English Language Learners included student discussion facilitators as group leaders, vocabulary preview sheets, scaffolded questions for those developing mastery, as well as discussion prompts that structured student reasoning and analysis of the text.

- Educators design curricula in a way that allows access for a variety of learners using student work and performance on assessments such as an online pre-, mid- and end-of-year assessment platforms, schoolwide short constructed response assessments, as well as in-class assignments. For example, lesson plans for a grade eight writing lesson drew upon student performance from the previous writing assignment, as well as their current level of comprehension as measured by an online assessment platform, used to form specific groups around their targeted needs. Targeted needs in student writing included addressing unclear claims, evidence without contexts, repetitive phrasing or transitions, or lacking advanced analyses. Plans included the teacher highlighting positive trends and strengths in student writing, and students working to address specific areas of growth around a symbols investigation. All students were to be given their essays back with symbols, with students tasked with finding the meaning of the symbols across the group by peer-reading each other’s essays within their symbol groups.

- Plans for a math lesson in a multi-grade Academics, Career and Essential Skills class was an outgrowth of teacher observations relative to student in-class performance and areas in which students struggled based on an online diagnostic tool and growth lessons, leading to the formation of three groups of students. One group’s learning target included constructing teen numbers; another focused on solving addition and subtraction word problems; a third group was to work on solving one step word problems with multiplication and division. Planned supports included groupings with a peer tutor, using manipulatives, utilizing electronic tablets, 1:1 instruction with the teacher as well as problem solving supports such as the circle the key numbers, underline the equation, box math action words, evaluate, and show your work (CUBES) strategy.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use grading policies, online diagnostic platforms, rubrics for discussion, short constructed responses and project based learning to create a clear portrait of student mastery and track student progress through the Feedback Log. Teachers use these common assessments to adjust curricula and instructional decisions.

Impact

Educator’s assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement of all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, indicating a demonstration of increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- Educators’ curricula-aligned assessment practices and schoolwide grading policies provide actionable and meaningful feedback across content areas across the vast majority of classes. Teachers use in-class discussion rubrics, grade-wide math online diagnostic assessments, English Language Arts, (ELA), unit-based short constructed response rubrics and performance based learning project rubrics in social studies and science. Through these assessments, students receive teacher and peer feedback that is then recorded by students into their personal Feedback Log that allows them to track their own performance across units and subjects throughout the year. Such practices create a clear portrait of student progress and mastery as well as a structure for clear next steps for both students and teachers.

- Interviewed students unanimously shared that feedback from their peers and teachers made sense for them and they were able to apply meaningful suggestions in not only their current classes but also in different contexts and other content areas. Students shared feedback such as: selecting better vocabulary to better express ideas in specific areas to making writing more powerful; trying different math strategies that would prove to be easier to comprehend and master; speaking clearer and more slowly during a presentation, which the student was able to apply in both science and in theater; being less repetitive in science writing, which was then applied to argumentative writing in an ELA class.

- Teachers regularly analyze and discuss data from various assessments to make adjustments to instruction and curricula. Teachers within teacher teams utilize the data to spot trends and patterns around instruction, sharing ideas, lesson and strategies such as visual supports and tiered texts to address and speak to specific pedagogical approaches. For example, artifacts from the ELA department team reveal teachers examining student performances on the unit-embedded assessments on persuasive writing and aligning student work to the schoolwide short constructed response rubric. They noted that grade eight students were repeatedly using generic sentence starters such as “the text says” when adding text evidence. This prompted instructional changes in grades six and seven, including mini-lesson shifts, additional teaching points and changes in mentor texts for the unit. Such instructional adjustment based on common assessment practices has led to a schoolwide four percent increase of students performing at Level 3 and/or 4 in both New York State English Language Arts and math. In addition, all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, have achieved a positive growth in average proficiency level in each of the last three years as measured by both New York State English Language Arts and math tests.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and teachers consistently communicate instructional high expectations to the entire staff through Principal Newsletters and individual, grade and faculty meetings. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students through Feedback Log processes.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for staff expectations, and students receive individualized and focused feedback and support so that they own their educational experience in preparation for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate high expectations for all staff through discussions at faculty conferences, weekly Principal’s Newsletters, individual and grade meetings, and a New Hire Handbook that details expectations related to instruction, professional development (PD), and school operations for new teachers. School leaders meet regularly with teachers individually to engage in reviews of professional growth, expectations for high quality teaching, follow-up based on attended PD as well as plans for strategic assignments for intervisitations to support expectations for planning. To expand capacity in delivering effective instruction, all teachers receive written and one-on-one feedback on their performance in relation to best practices highlighted by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams collaborate to develop and share curriculum maps, common rubrics for assessments, share assessment practices, and analyze student work through a variety of means including online platforms, which helps to build capacity to meet high expectations for instruction, communication, and professionalism by all. Interviewed teachers related that colleagues hold each other mutually accountable not only for consistent pacing, but also through vertical department conversations so that colleagues across the grades share knowledge and expertise for application within their own classrooms.

- Teachers and staff systematically communicate a culture for high expectations for all students through student handbooks that outlines the school grading policy, expectations for honor roll, behavior, logistical procedures and building resources for additional support. Individualized feedback and guidance towards next steps are embedded through student Feedback Logs, where students synthesize feedback from peers and teachers, create goals, and formulate their next steps that is the most impactful for them. Interviewed students unanimously knew what the expectations for their work, articulated goals that they were working on based on peer and teacher feedback, and expressed concrete ways that they can improve their work. A student shared, “I know that my teachers expect a lot, because they give me feedback that proves to me that they have high expectations, and believe in me that I can get better than what I was before.”

- Interviewed parents also noted their children’s ownership of their learning and preparation for the next level. A parent of a grade eight student noted that her child invested a tremendous amount of time on her environmental Issues project, managing a team of fellow students online and in school to launch a school improvement effort for additional trees and plantings. The parent described her daughter coordinating the different tasks of her team members, reaching out to local home improvement businesses, the school parent-teacher association as well as television programs that support such projects. Another parent noted the change in behavior of her grade six child this year from the high expectations set from teachers, stating that while previously doing homework was a challenge, now her child is “making an investment in maintaining integrity with his teachers, that it was his responsibility and care that his work gets done.”
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers, such as teacher ambassadors, support teacher development for all teachers. Teachers receive feedback that accurately captures their strengths, challenges and outlines their next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

School leaders and ambassador teachers’ engagement in strategic frequent cycles of observations related to teacher practice and the analysis of student work results in teachers receiving feedback that articulates clear expectations for their practice that both supports teacher development and aligns with individual teacher and department professional goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders strategically assign all walkthroughs and observations to the administrator who has an instructional expertise in that content area. In addition, assistant principals loop with students from year-to-year, utilizing multi-year experiences as part of feedback, helping to build schoolwide coherence. Observation reports specifically articulate student work products through direct student quotes and lesson transcripts. Further analysis of student achievement is deepened at teacher team meetings that identify patterns and trends for individual and groups of students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, on benchmark assessments, and specific instructional moves for groups of students. Teacher peers, as teacher ambassadors, also conduct informal instructional rounds of observations, which serve as the basis for colleagues to support each other through facilitated professional development (PD), mentorship and intervistations that build instructional practices.

- Written feedback accurately captures strengths and challenges as identified within each of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components, including concrete next steps that improves instructional practice. For example, one teacher observation report noted a developing practice in designing coherent instruction and engaging students in learning. Feedback for next steps following a 1:1 conference between the administrator and teacher included, “Consider how else you can present content in addition to guided notes. Students could have interacted with primary and or secondary sources to learn about the Mayflower Compact, identified the impacts of the compact on colonial America, or produced a critique of the compact.” A follow-up teacher observation report utilized quotes from student discussions to provide low-inference notes on the quality of student engagement, as well as note improvements in designing coherent instruction in the lesson plans, with both practices moving from a developing to a proficient rating. As a concrete next step linked to the schoolwide instructional focus for checks for understanding, feedback included honing group conference practices to further student thinking through questioning.

- Teacher feedback, which aligns with the schoolwide instructional focus as well as professional and department goals, supports teacher growth as evidenced by review of artifacts. For example, artifacts for a math teacher included individual goal setting towards further honing small and whole group student discussions and peer to peer feedback, which is linked to one of the three math department goals for student-led discussions. Additional artifacts for this particular teacher included observation reports with next steps to improve developing practice around engaging students in learning, teacher requests for professional development and using colleagues as resources, and a following observation with improved ratings that noted the increased instructional emphasis on process rather than product as well as students justifying their own work within peer to peer discussions.