Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 144 Col Jeromus Remsen
Elementary 28Q144
93-02 69 Avenue
Queens
NY 11375

Principal: Reva Gluck Schneider

Dates of Review:
February 26, 2019 - February 27, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Adam Breier
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. 144 Col Jeromus Remsen 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**

### Instructional Core

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Area of Celebration**

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

**Findings**

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations.

**Impact**

Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness. Supports ensure that students take ownership of career choices, each new grade, and middle school choices.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Through the use of a variety of tools that includes letters that are either printed and delivered home through distribution to students or sent digitally through email, text messages, phone calls, and various social media platforms, school leaders and teachers communicate with parents and have partnered with them to support their children’s success. Parents shared that through the structures used to share information about their children’s academic progress, along with the materials they receive from teachers and school leaders, they are able to use strategies to help their children at home. Some of the tools parents spoke about were weekly lists of site words that are sent to the parents of kindergarten students, letters sent home at the beginning of math units that detail the goals and objectives of those units, as well as resources parents can use to stay abreast of their children’s work, and reference cards that explain each level of reading, as well as tips for parents who wish to help strengthen their children’s reading level while at home.

- One parent discussed the value of her use of the math manipulatives and worksheets that were sent home, as well as the detailed description of how students arrived at incorrect answers on exams. These tools have enabled this parent to help her child in a targeted way that resulted in improved grades. Another parent shared that his child was struggling with letter pronunciation. In addition to receiving the services of a speech therapist, a teacher made the parent aware of a mobile app that guides users through pronunciation activities in the form of games. He stated, “In just a two-week period, we already saw a great difference because of what the teacher shared with me!” All parents came to quick consensus on the regularity with which teachers and school leaders communicate with parents and the positive impact that this has had on their children’s academic progress.

- Parents also help organize the annual Career Day event, during which students explore future career options. Parents recruit presenters and serve as presenters themselves. Career representatives at past Career Day events have included nurses, doctors, FBI agents, social workers, and musicians, as well as various uniformed employees of New York City. Parents and students all praised this event for inspiring students to take ownership over their career direction. Students spoke about wanting to become veterinarians, doctors, and journalists. A parent shared that after watching a husband and wife team conduct a mock trial, her child came home with questions not only about how people become lawyers, but also about the judicial system. Another parent praised the event, sharing that her child came home afterward and stated, “I think it’s interesting that there’s so much we can do!” Additionally, workshops and orientation sessions at the start of the year prepare incoming students for the expectations of school, as well as transition students from one grade to the next.
Area of Focus

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts, with an emphasis on the use of text-based evidence. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined.

### Impact

While there is a consistent focus on academic vocabulary in curricula, integration of the math instructional shifts does not currently result in coherence across grades and subject areas. Additionally, instructional materials are adjusted for students with varying needs; however, this practice does not consistently ensure the same level of access across curricula.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and integration with the instructional shifts. Evidence of integration of the instructional shift focused on supporting students’ vocabulary is present across grades and content areas. Additionally, the requirement that students ground their reading and written work in textual evidence can be seen in curricula. For example, in a grade-four social studies lesson plan, students must prepare to debate the benefits of being a patriot leading up to and during the American Revolutionary War and support their positions using evidence from a previously conducted research project. In a grade-five lesson plan, students need to use evidence to support their argument as to why the bodily system about which they are writing is the most important in the human body. In a grade-two reading lesson plan, students are to use evidence from the text to support their determination as to what life lessons have been learned by a main character.

- Math lesson plans include activities that require students to answer questions from multiple perspectives and show their answers in multiple ways. A grade-three lesson plan includes an activity in which students are to tabulate the number of items presented to them and represent that number both as a fraction and as plotted on a number line. A grade-four math lesson includes a task in which students are to rename mixed numbers as fractions, as well as rename fractions as mixed numbers. In a grade-one math lesson plan, students are to add ones or tens to a two-digit number, and then explain the process they used in conversation with other students. However, apart from the integration of instructional shifts, there is no current evidence of a strategic, coherent integration of those shifts across content or grades.

- Curricula and academic tasks reflect planning so that diverse learners could have access. For example, a grade-four social studies lesson plan includes an assignment requiring students to write from a perspective that was scaffolded for students who require greater assistance than others. A kindergarten writing lesson plan includes three different levels of student groups, with students’ names, and the differentiated worksheets that would be provided to each group. However, there are also examples of curricula that exhibit planning for differentiation, though with less specificity. For example, a different kindergarten writing activity includes the names of students who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), though without indication as to how the lesson materials would be modified in order to help students meet the lesson’s goals. A grade-three math lesson plan indicates that student partnerships will be designed using data from a pre-assessment and that students requiring additional help will have six tools available for them to use, such as “task cards, white boards, and fraction strips.” However, there is no indication as to how these tools meet students’ specific needs or the students for whom they are intended.
**Additional Finding**

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best when they work within small cooperative groups, conduct peer-to-peer discussions, and instruction is student-centered. Students participate in discussions with peers within these groups.

**Impact**

Students across content areas complete meaningful work with and design work for their group partners. Student discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Cooperative groups were observed in a variety of classrooms. Grade-five students individually worked to determine why their assigned body system was the most important, with the goal of coming to consensus within their student groups, on which body system was the most important of them all. Second-grade students were in groups while engaged in an activity focused on identifying the life-lesson that a fictional character had learned. Third-grade students worked in groups to count the different colors of skittles in each of their individual bags, and create the fractions that would show this in a math class. Additional examples of students seated in groups were observed across grades and subject areas.

- Although across classrooms, students were assigned to work on tasks with members of their respective groups, there were also classes where students were directed to work in partnerships without a protocol that students could use to ensure that all students engaged with their partners. For example, students in a grade-three math lesson were directed to complete the same task, determining the fractions that would result from analysis of bags of skittles, although without the expectation that they engage in discussion over this work. Although the teacher instructed students to work with their partners, students shared that while they are able to help each other and will share their findings with one another, they are not conducting the work in partnerships. Additionally, one group of students in a kindergarten class conducted off-task conversations for the duration of the classroom visit, without being held accountable, while the students on the carpet were also off task, playing with the document camera.

- Although student discussions that involved high levels of participation were evident across classrooms, this practice was not observed across the vast majority of classrooms. For example, fourth-grade students discussed the reasons why they would prefer being either a patriot or a loyalist during the American Revolutionary War, in preparation for a whole-class debate. Students in a kindergarten class were asked to turn to their partners and discuss the steps they would detail in how-to pieces they were writing. First-grade students added one- and two-digit numbers while talking through their process with a partner. Additionally, examples of student-to-student discussion were evident in a class where grade-one students were writing poetry, as well as the grade-five science lesson during which students were debating the value of body systems.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

### Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists that are aligned with the school’s curricula to inform feedback to students. Teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

### Impact

Students utilize teachers’ actionable feedback to increase their achievement. Teachers use data from State exams and other teacher-developed assessments to design student groups and resources.

### Supporting Evidence

- Student work samples across subject areas contain teacher-written actionable feedback that students can use to improve their work. For example, feedback to second-grade students reminded them to show and explain their work, label place values, and use more than one method to solve equations. Examples of feedback on written assignments remind students to support their arguments with ample evidence, analyze, use appropriate transition words, and check their work for appropriate use of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Other examples include directions on how to further elaborate when writing summaries, and ensuring that page numbers are indicated when referencing sources.

- Students take pre- and post-assessments for units on writing, reading, and math. Additionally, students’ reading levels are assessed quarterly. Data from common assessments are used for various purposes. For example, common assessment data are used by teachers when designing cooperative student groups. Data are also used to determine how to schedule teachers’ classroom assignments so that the students who require additional supports as per their IEP, and those who demonstrate the need for additional supports as per common assessment data, can all benefit from additional teacher support during classroom instruction.

- Common assessment data have also been used in the design of lessons to address the different topics in which students need additional support. Lessons are maintained in binders referred to as toolkits, and include topics such as using line breaks to convey rhythm and meaning, synthesizing point of view, and placing fractions on a number line. Other lesson topics include solving division word problems and two-step math word problems, synthesizing information from primary sources, and using multiple methods to solve a problem. Additionally, the toolkits include leveled-reading selections to support students of varying reading levels.
Findings

School leaders support teacher development for all teachers, including those new to the profession, with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

The results of teachers' timely implementation of strategies shared in written feedback are shared with school leaders. Written feedback to teachers make clear the expectations for teacher practice and provide examples of how teachers can meet them.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support teachers with effective feedback resulting from frequent classroom observations, including official classroom visits and unofficial classroom walkthroughs. Teachers share the results of their implementation of school leaders’ feedback, along with requests for additional next steps, on yellow post-its on a wall in the principal's office. These notes are regularly reviewed by school leaders, and follow-up conversations take place in order to support teachers’ growth.

- Observation reports include feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and weaknesses and are accompanied by next steps that teachers should take in order for them to improve their practice and positively impact student success. For example, in one observation report, both teachers in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) partnership were praised for the complementary teaching strategies that they employed. Feedback in this report included a suggestion that pre-assessment data be reviewed with students during the lesson to support their academic growth. Other examples of feedback guided teachers to structure small-group activities so that the directions would consistently be available to students, redesign a book walkthrough activity to improve pacing, embed additional self-reflection prompts, and appropriately differentiate questions for purposefully designed student groups.

- Feedback on walkthrough forms articulate clear expectations for teacher practice and support teacher development. For example, on one such form the school leader wrote, "Try giving more precise next steps to students as they leave the meeting area. This could be through a post-it, scheduled meeting, etc." Other examples include feedback on creating goals for students and how the use of a character web might have been useful in deepening students’ understanding, using additional wait time after asking questions before using additional scaffolds, having students ask each other questions to raise the depth of engagement in discussion, and creating checklists or other recording tools to embed assessments into a lesson so that the teacher would know which students are ready to take the next step in the lesson or require additional supports.
## Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Teachers’ collaborations within content teams and working groups focused on specific pedagogical strategies strengthen their instructional capacity. Teachers have a voice in key decisions, such as in the development of a lesson-planning resource.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The grade-four teacher team met to determine how to analyze students’ struggle with finding the main idea of a text. Team members decided that foci for addressing this issue would involve exploration of relevant academic vocabulary so that students are not confused by the wording of questions. Additionally, the team decided to explore reinforcing test-taking strategies, such as eliminating incorrect answers, making sure to complete bubble sheets effectively, not skipping questions, reading through all answer choices, and covering them to see if any stand out without being distracted by erroneous choices. Other possible strategies to be explored at future meetings will be reading comprehension computer games.

- Evidence provided by other teams reveals similar work involving their grade-level analysis of assessment data and planning to implement small-group instruction. For example, agendas from the grade-five team show that it launched the school year with an analysis of possible grade-level trends in reading and writing in order to form initial student groupings, assigned roles for each team member, explored non-fiction titles, and decided to focus on building students' use of figurative language in order to strengthen their written products. Agendas from other meetings also show that teachers are meeting to review planning documents, teacher toolkits, share resources, and explore areas of students’ struggles with reading, writing, and math.

- Teachers have a voice in making key decisions about learning at the school. This is evident through teacher leaders’ service on content-based vertical-articulation teams, which ensure coherence of instructional practices within and across grades. Teachers spoke about having a voice in the decision that led to the development of a resource to help them plan instruction for students of varied reading levels and skill sets who were in need of support. Additionally, teacher voice was involved in the decision to switch from one model of grammar instruction to another. Teachers also participate on teams, and facilitate workshops and a program designed to address the social-emotional needs of girls in grade-five.