Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 154 Queens
Elementary 25Q154
75-02 162 Street
Queens
NY 11366

Principal: Pamela Gathers Bullard

Dates of Review:
April 16, 2019 - April 17, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Robin Posner
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. 154 Queens 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Additional Finding</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</td>
<td>Well Developed</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</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Additional Finding</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>Area</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>Area</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area</td>
<td>Well Developed</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</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Area of Celebration

<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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations, both in content areas and grade levels, in which they systematically analyze teacher and student work and data. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning through embedded teacher leadership opportunities.

Impact

Teacher collaborations have strengthened instructional capacity resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased achievement for all learners. Teacher leadership and voice in key decisions regarding professional development (PD) and shared reading affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers systematically analyze data, teacher practice and student work for targeted groups across grade levels. For example, the English Language Arts (ELA) vertical team reviewed running record data. Teachers on each grade level looked for trends and patterns across the grade and within individual classes. A key noticing across grades was that the data was not giving them information on student comprehension. The team then researched different ways to gather benchmark data, decided upon a system, trained, implemented and then reviewed data again. Teachers were now able to gather data on student comprehension and use that to create small, targeted instructional groups. As a result of this work, there has been an increase in mastery of goals for students in the targeted groups as evidenced by benchmark data. For example, 15 percent of the English Language Learners (ELLs) targeted group went from a Level one to a Level Three on the New York State English Language Arts (NYSELA) assessment. Additionally, students with disabilities went from five percentage points to nine percentage points at or above grade level on the ELA assessment.

- The math vertical team looked at student work to assess students being able to explain their strategies and steps in a short-response format. Work reviewed showed that although students were able to structure their answers in writing for other curricular areas, in math, students were unable to explain the strategy they were utilizing. Teachers then implemented a checklist for math short responses that helped students format a written explanation. This raised students’ ability to explain their work as evidenced by a review of later exemplar writing work. As a result of this work, there has been growth in teacher practice, specifically designing and using student assessments and engaging students in learning, as evidenced by Advance data. Additionally, an increase in mastery of math goals for groups of students is evident by 61 percent of students being at or above grade level on math assessments as compared to 49 percent in previous years.

- School leaders and teachers are able to identify distributed leadership practices and structures that are in place. Teachers are part of the school leadership team, are grade leaders, mentors, act as leads during inquiry and provide PD to colleagues. Teachers cite involvement in designing and facilitating ELA curricula, specifically adding shared reading with additional lessons and resources and the purchasing of curriculum materials, turnkeying or providing PD to colleagues, and teacher ownership of the special education action plan as key areas in which they have had a voice in major school decisions affecting student learning.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers create and use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. In addition, teachers’ assessment practices such as exit tickets and turn and talk reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact
Although teachers check for understanding and provide students with actionable feedback on their academic progress, not all feedback to students is meaningful thus, leaving students unsure of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence
- Across grades and content areas, not all samples of student work products show teacher-written meaningful feedback on rubrics and checklists that are aligned to the task or curricular area. For example, teacher feedback on a math assignment included, “I love how you used multiple ways to solve. Next time can you show the relationship between the percentages of kernels to the number of cups used?” On other work, written feedback only included comments such as nice work or a smiley face. A student reported, “I got feedback on making sure I just retell the facts on a short response rubric and not make inferences.” However, that student was unable to articulate examples of implementing that feedback and other students shared a rubric for the same social studies writing task with no written effective next steps for improvement.

- Teachers use data from assessments and student work to provide students with verbal and written actionable feedback to support them in revising their work. Students and leaders shared that some teachers hold conferences with students during writing to review work and provide feedback. A review of student work provided evidence that some students apply teacher-recommended strategies and next steps in their work. However, students shared that most feedback they received is verbal and hard for them to remember resulting in students not being able to implement the next steps for improvement. Other students shared that feedback is often only a glow or a grow, not both, so they are unsure of how to implement feedback to drive their success on future assignments.

- Teachers check for understanding throughout daily lessons using strategies such as turn and talk, questioning and exit slips. Some, but not all, teachers make adjustments or redesign student groups according to checks for understanding during lessons. In a literacy lesson, students were broken up into groups either working at literacy centers or in a guided group with the teacher. The teacher had students in her group doing a picture walk to make predictions and help with comprehension. Although the teacher was asking questions about what the students were seeing, the questions were not targeted and did not provide students with insight into the purpose of reading the text. During a grade-one mini-lesson on complex characters in a non-fiction text, the teacher modeled for students via a shared text on the whiteboard and then asked students to jot down some noticings about the main characters on individual whiteboards as she circulated around the classroom commenting on responses. While this and other formative assessment strategies were common across classes, students are not always aware of their next learning steps.
Findings
Through horizontal and vertical teacher team inquiry work, school leaders and faculty have ensured that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Integration of the instructional shifts ensure that students are writing across content areas, using text-based evidence, and applying math to real-world applications across content areas. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged through differentiated groupings and leveled materials.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit and lesson plans show alignment to the Common Core, content-specific standards where applicable and instructional shift integration. A grade-four science unit plan includes planning for students to write a non-fiction text that includes captions and synthesis of information. ELA curriculum maps for all grades also evidence multiple units for which there is a balance between fiction and non-fiction along with consistent integration of the requirements for students to use text-based evidence in support of their arguments. Across grade levels, unit plans in math ask students to show their thinking and make real-world connections. In a grade-five math unit plan on fractions, students are required to make their thinking and processing visible through narratively describing the steps they are to take during a lesson on using fractions in cooking. In a grade-four math unit plan, students are to show their thinking when they solve perimeter and area problems in designing a backyard pool.

- A grade-one ELA lesson plan indicates that students have been grouped based on their most recent assessment data and that different scaffolds would be made available to specific groups based on that same data. Review of a grade-four lesson plan reveals that students have been assigned to groups based on exit ticket data. An ELA lesson plan includes readings that have been leveled to accommodate student reading levels and their accompanying worksheets have been scaffolded accordingly for each intended student group. Additionally, extensions of learning were planned for high-achieving students. For example, a reading lesson plan includes a challenge to complete a task across texts and content areas. A math lesson plan has differentiated challenge assignments that can be completed independently, with partners or in small groups.

- Lesson and unit plans reviewed are designed to support English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities and to ensure everyone is being held accountable to the same content standards and instructional shifts. Higher-level thinking questions ensure that students of all levels are being challenged with questions of varying depths. Similarly, lesson plans across content areas evidence planning for ELLs and students with disabilities through the availability of scaffolds, anchor charts, and vocabulary/translation resources. For example, an ELA lesson plan on writing non-fiction text includes differentiated anchor charts, paper choice, the use of tablets with translation available and student buddies paired up for language support. These scaffolds and supports are adjusted upon the review of formative and summative data such as running records or math chapter tests by teachers and leaders.
## 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 an articulated set of beliefs that include students engaging in productive struggle, and explicit teacher modeling informed by the instructional shifts that foster higher-order thinking. Teaching strategies such as small-group work and differentiated tasks provide multiple entry points into the curricula for most students.

### Impact

Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student participation and work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The instructional priorities for all classes include a focus on collaborative instructional groups with tiered activities that include differentiated texts, graphic organizers and questions. Additionally, the faculty emphasizes the importance that students are provided with opportunities for productive struggle and solving rigorous problems with multiple solution pathways and the support of multiple entry points. Most of these adopted priorities were coherent throughout classes and provided students with opportunities to produce meaningful work. For example, in an ELA class, students were working on using a sentence frame to write information gathered about a character in a non-fiction piece. The teacher modeled the strategy, the students practiced during a whole class mini-lesson and then went off into small differentiated groups to continue the work either independently or with the teacher. At the end of the group-work time, students were asked to do an exit ticket detailing the strategy they utilized. In a math class, students were working on solving story problems that involved finding a fraction of a fraction. The class as a whole were creating a garden. Each differentiated group had a different fractional piece of the garden. Students worked with their groups to determine the fraction and each group shared out a rule for multiplying fractions that they discovered with their group. Students were given graph paper and rulers to help them solve.

- Discussions in classes reflected an instructional focus on attempts at rich discussions. During a math lesson on area and perimeter, students were engaged in working in pairs and triads to determine what information they would need to gather to figure out the area and perimeter of a swimming pool. Students had to work together to cite a strategy, draw a visual representation, as well as the specific steps they would take to solve the problem. In a grade-one ELA lesson, students worked in partnerships to determine character patterns. Students were asked to turn and talk several times and those answers were shared out prior to continuing with the work.

- In classrooms, teachers provided multiple entry points into the curricula via the interactive white board, individual white boards, rubrics, checklists, and other scaffolds. In a grade-three ELA lesson, each student had a copy of the differentiated, paired texts that the group was working on to help each student locate text-based details. Students were asked to annotate the article individually by writing, drawing and labeling the text and then work with a partner to complete differentiated t-charts and review their work using a checklist.
Additional Finding

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<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 teacher leaders consistently communicate high expectations through a variety of documents and forums and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish partnerships with families and create a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations to students that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

High expectations create a culture for learning marked by mutual accountability and strong partnerships with families that support student progress toward those expectations while all students are supported with effective feedback and guidance, own their learning and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders effectively communicate high expectations around different facets of school life including implementation of social-emotional learning strategies, giving students the opportunity to practice their reading every day and smile. These are communicated via the staff handbook, PD and small meetings. Teachers receive ongoing training in these focus areas. School leaders hold teachers accountable through ongoing classroom visits, informal walkthroughs, and feedback that connects to articulated expectations for instruction and professionalism aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers hold each other mutually accountable through the work of teacher-led teams and professional learning. Teachers also work together on vertical teams to create the school’s curricula. As one teacher shared, “Everyone feels a sense of responsibility, and teachers really speak up about what’s going on in classrooms and across the school.”

- Parents shared that the school has helped their students plan and be prepared for their next level. Parents articulated that school leaders and teachers regularly partner with them in supporting their children’s progress. Teachers provide online and in-person communication via parent workshops, parent handbooks, memos, and the parent coordinator. Parents shared that newsletters are sent home monthly with information on instruction for the upcoming month along with suggestions for how they can support their learners at home. Parents also shared powerful stories of partnerships via the Parent Teacher Organization, the school leadership team and a robust cadre of parent volunteers who support the learning at the school. As one parent shared, “My son was struggling in the beginning and the teachers ensured that I was kept in the loop about what needed to be done. They were very honest with me and made sure I understood that if we didn’t help support him, he won’t be successful. They helped us to get structures in place for him, along with supports designed to help him meet the expectations.” She further reported that there has been growth and improvement throughout the year.

- Students shared that articulation for the next levels begins when they enter the school, through the school’s focus on rigorous academics, as well as college and career readiness. Students shared that reading texts at their levels, and the small-group instruction they get from teachers allows them to own their learning and be prepared for the next level. Additionally, fifth-grade students receive support from guidance counselors in preparing for middle school, high school and beyond. This includes locating the best fit for each individual student, visiting schools and completing the applications. Students shared that they feel well-prepared for middle school, high school and beyond. A student shared, “Changing classes in fifth grade is helping me understand what middle school will be like. Another student added, “We are expected to be responsible and bring things with us for each class. This is what we will need to be able to do in middle school.”
Additional Finding

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

Findings
School leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from strategic use of frequent classroom observation cycles. Critical feedback emphasizes strengths as well as challenges and next steps in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact
As a result, support practices have a positive impact on teacher capacity and strengthen instruction across the school. Clear expectations support teacher growth and align with professional goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent cycles of classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item on observation reports includes specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom that supports the rating, as well as actionable next steps. For example, one observation report includes feedback to the teacher on having students revise their work using a different color so their revisions were clear. Another observation report detailed having the teacher post the overall unit goal and the summative task in the classroom and briefly address it at the beginning of the lesson so students are aware of their purpose. In addition, teachers also engage in intervisitations with peers. Teachers and teacher leaders shared that sometimes leadership will suggest that teachers visit a particular peer based upon observation findings, other times teachers request the intervisitations themselves.

- There are examples of observation reports that reinforce feedback offered in earlier observation reports. For example, one observation report includes feedback around ways to push students along the continuum of reading instruction. A subsequent report compliments the teacher for doing this. In another observation report, a teacher is advised to have students work as a whole group, in small groups, and in pairs during a lesson. In a later lesson, the teacher is complimented for implementing this strategy. One teacher reported that due to feedback offered by a school leader, she has begun incorporating guided modeling into her lessons more to show her students and not tell them. As a result, she has noted that students are able to go off on their own and implement the modeled strategy much more independently. Teachers shared that feedback is always linked to their professional goals and helps them make links to professional development and inquiry.

- Teachers and leaders shared that teachers meet with the leadership team at the beginning of the school year to create their goals for the year. They collectively review their Advance data from the previous year, their class data, school data, and schoolwide goals to help leaders plan for how to best support teacher practice and development. A teacher shared that his overall goal for the year was around asking higher-order questions and improving his questioning techniques. He further shared that feedback for this was addressed in every observation report, along with suggestions for articles, colleagues to visit and professional development to possibly attend. Teachers and leaders shared that the progress towards goals are revisited throughout the year with an eye on how leaders can continue to support teacher practice and development.