Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 155
Elementary 27Q155
130-02 115 Avenue
Queens
NY 11420

Principal: Gregory Jacobs

Dates of Review:
May 29, 2019 - May 30, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Sonja Webber-Bey
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. 155 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Area</strong></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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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>
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**Additional Finding** Proficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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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**Additional Finding** Proficient

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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 of Celebration</td>
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**Area of Celebration** Well Developed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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 of Focus</td>
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</table>

**Area of Focus** Proficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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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</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Finding** Well Developed

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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>
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</table>

**Additional Finding** Well Developed

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<tr>
<td>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>

**Additional Finding** Well Developed
Quality Indicator: 1.3 Leveraging Resources

Rating: Well Developed

Findings
The allocation of funds, space, technology, and contracted personnel are well aligned to the school's mission, instructional goals, and long-range action plans. There is a conscious effort to ensure teachers have substantial and regularly scheduled meetings and team-oriented learning opportunities.

Impact
The effective use of staff time and resources results in the improvement of instruction so that all students are engaged in challenging academic tasks, thus producing meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Funding through a grant enables the purchase of new technology, as well as the support of a City of New York (CUNY) intern that visits the school part time to monitor and supply equipment. All classes have laptop carts to provide all students with technology support in the classroom. In grades three through five, Google Classroom is used to support students with their writing, and offer opportunities for students to receive online written feedback provided by their teachers. Additionally, the school is using their technology to teach 21st Century Learning Skills, by providing computer classes, which teach basic coding, thus, supporting college and career readiness. In a third-grade class, students were observed using a coding program to create animated story lines based on a narrative they created in their class. Additionally, in a first-grade class, a group of students were observed using the new technology to support them in structuring their writing about the police and community, which is thoughtfully aligned to the school's instructional goals for improving language and literacy.

- To ensure continued support of the school's long-term English Language Arts (ELA) and math programs, additional budget allocations fund the ongoing purchases to maintain their fidelity and implementation. As an additional support this year, a Universal Literacy coach was placed to support the lower-grade classes in developing and further enhancing the ELA program by integrating higher-order thinking questions and tasks, and student-friendly rubrics. This work is evident across the lower grades in a review of documents that reveals student tasks designed to engage students in higher-ordering thinking thus, cultivating the promotion of college and career readiness. Furthermore, two F-status teachers, former teachers at the school, were hired to mentor and coach new teachers this year on best practices in using the ELA and math programs. Additionally, adaptive equipment was purchased for students receiving special education services to build their academic and personal behaviors, including stamina and self-regulation. In one class, a student had a stand-up desk, which enabled him to fulfill all the requirements of the challenging task, which he is assigned. In another room, kick bands and wobble seats were obtained and are used to build reading and performance stamina. Overall, the schoolwide allocation use is thoughtfully prioritized to enhance the school's progress towards meeting their goals.

- School leaders departmentalize instruction in third, fourth and fifth grades and schedule a double period once per week in which teachers meet in vertical teams by subject. Grade teams meet to discuss what will be needed to align their work with the school's instructional goals. This focus is deliberately structured across teams, so that consciously teachers' attention to professional responsibilities culminate in a shared plan. As an example, following a schoolwide focus, teacher teams reviewed their units from the GO Math! program and conducted an item analysis of its assessment questions. Now, when they give students feedback they identify the exact question and the content topic. Based on the feedback, students use the “I can” statements to chunk goals in math.
Findings

School-level goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) are tracked for progress and adjustments are made in planning documents, such as additional strategies for vocabulary acquisition. Parent leaders are involved in school improvement planning and the decision-making process.

Impact

School leaders drive efforts to accelerate student learning; however, opportunities to explicitly link achievement to students’ social-emotional growth are not yet evident. There is involvement of some families in the development of school improvement plans and the decision-making process.

Supporting Evidence

- The School Leadership Team meeting agendas verify a focus on this year’s CEP goals, attention to historical data, and interim plans for reaching towards current targets. One third-grade teacher commented about teachers’ increased focus on vocabulary enhancements this year; a correlation to one of the CEP goals that describes scholars in grades three, four and five, to show an increase of five percent from last year’s scores on the Language/Vocabulary Domain, which is to be measured using ReadyGen performance-based assessments. Planning documents identify vocabulary embedded in program texts and contain a specific instructional plan. Additionally, the teachers have outlined a shared approach to utilizing classroom smartboards for word knowledge growth, and generating vocabulary anchor charts.

- School leaders generate school goals through discussion and planning that involves the teaching staff. Goal benchmarks are set which are directly linked to the CEP goals. Teachers interviewed agreed that school leaders calculate the number of individual students that need to move their achievement higher towards determined goals. Action plans that support deeper understanding of grade-appropriate, student-appropriate concepts are created. School leaders analyze data in a digital drive that allows them to ascertain progress across the building; however, there is no theory of action articulated across the school community that ensures they work collectively together to thoughtfully adjust and ensure all goals have been met with fidelity.

- Based on parent and student interviews, a focus on one CEP goal on implementing student-led conferences in third, fourth and fifth grade was supported in several classes, but not all. The school has a guidance counselor but no strategic programming, attentive scrutinizing or other supports for students’ academic and personal behaviors. While academic learning is valued for its essential growth, students’ social-emotional growth has yet to reach ample understanding by the school community as likewise respected.

- Another CEP goal intends to increase the number of parents participating in school functions. The principal spoke about the school’s difficulty in getting parents to meetings and workshops. Parent Association (PA) agendas are generic and sign-in sheets were not presented; however, the principal spoke favorably about the PA’s support of the school this year. Those parents who attend and hear about the school goals will tell other parents, as the attendance is low. Thus far, families are not yet effectively involved in the development of school improvement plans and the decision-making process.
**Additional Finding**

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

School leaders and faculty use curricula such as ReadyGen and GO Math! that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and integrate the instructional shifts. Planning documents are refined using student work and data.

**Impact**

Purposeful decisions build curricular coherence across grades and content areas that promotes college and career readiness for all students. Accessibility of curricula and tasks for a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, ensures that students are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has adapted ReadyGen and GO Math! as their core curricula. Pacing calendars and the prototype for delivery of lesson components contain timelines. The literacy unit plans reviewed follow this design and clearly include the components of curricula as detailed in the teacher guides which are aligning instruction across grades. Furthermore, purposeful decisions are made to plan and utilize units of study in social studies that follow the New York City Department of Education (DOE) scope and sequence, and highlight strategies for integrating academic vocabulary. These curricula are building coherence towards attaining enduring understandings and key skills and promoting success in college and career.

- Lesson objectives have adapted a student-friendly format of “I can” statements. Science and social studies teachers have also adapted this student-friendly approach to focus students on lesson skills and strategies. In a teacher meeting, the teachers agreed that having taught the core programs for a number of years, teachers knew what to do, and now students are being held more accountable for their learning. Documents show a consistent focus on higher-order thinking (HOT) questions and on vocabulary with close reading in literacy; however, no maps in math or science were presented. Kindergarten through fifth-grade maps provided for social studies and computer science cluster assignments indicate topics and generic learning objectives for each grade. Although there is evidence of coherence across grades within some content areas, evidence of a strategic alignment of instructional shifts across grades and subject areas with a correlation to the Common Core Learning Standards is not transparent throughout curricular documents.

- The core curriculum teacher guides contain general guidance for instruction of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Teachers use these prescribed lessons when ELLs and/or students with disabilities struggle academically. The school’s English as a New Language teacher follows a pull-out schedule, aligning lessons to a pre-readiness review of ReadyGen lessons that students will encounter in their classrooms. The faculty affiliates with other resources, such as EngageNY elements and Exemplar math components, to align with prescribed units and make connections as students advance through the grades, and to build coherence. A Productive Struggle prototype has been introduced in the fifth-grade math classes for high-achieving students to engage lessons partially independent of the teacher, with peer support. Some academic tasks plan for groups of students to participate in stations, based on previous student work and data, however, pre-planning for differentiation for lowest and highest students across grades or subject areas and the refinement of curricula to meet the needs of individual ELLs and students with disabilities, is not yet evident in curricular documents.
Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices reflect the coherent set of beliefs that students learn best when engaged in small-group discussions and teachers use most recent data to drive instruction. Teachers strategically use scaffolds, questioning, and other practices to provide multiple entry points and extensions into the content and tasks.

Impact

All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across most classrooms, students engage in thoughtful discussions (partner and small group), and, at times, students verbally respond to others after they have presented information. For instance, in a fifth-grade math class, students named their response as an echo, an elaboration, or explanation of a peer’s remark. Additionally, in a third-grade computer science coding class, students exchanged ideas as they changed the coloration of characters, added on layered movement, or wrote in additional dialogue as an extension to the basic animation assignment. Across classrooms, all learners were given opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking tied to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the school’s belief that small-group discussions produce meaningful work products.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, vocabulary word walls and anchor charts displayed supplemental support to the students in content areas. For example, in a fourth-grade class, the math word wall had both English and Spanish words to facilitate swift access of ELLs to academic vocabulary. An anchor chart in one fifth-grade classroom organized vocabulary words with listings of category, definition, and sample sentences. Another fifth-grade teacher pulled ELLs into a small group, engaging them in a word-work mini-lesson about interjections. Kindergarten students, in an ELA class, read a text about a police station, wrote sentences giving their opinion why police stations are important, and some students through extensions completed a graphic organizer comparing their own personal community to the community in the text. Such high-quality supports and extensions furthered students’ engagement in challenging tasks.

- Teacher team and school-level discussions reflect a coherent set of beliefs about the value of daily assessment and the use of data to drive instruction. Each teacher visited gathered and used data from the mini lesson to determine where to group students in different station levels. For example, in a first-grade ELA class, after sharing the reading of a poem and looking for text evidence about character feelings and placing sticky notes to show the evidence of what they were thinking, three groups worked on a graphic organizer to enter responses, while others worked with primary paper to write responses in sentences. All students in the classroom were able to express their inferences based on the poem. Furthermore, during a fifth-grade math lesson, students were grouped based on data the teacher had gathered through higher-order thinking (HOT) questioning in a quick check. Groups varied with extension activities assigned, which consisted of different two-dimensional shapes, least to more complex. HOT questions were prevalent throughout classes, allowing all learners to demonstrate higher-order thinking.
Findings

Faculty articulates assessment choices, which deliver a range of data, some daily such as quick checks, and some monthly as performance-based assessments. Teachers consistently analyze student learning outcomes, and take the pulse of student understanding through various classroom assessment practices.

Impact

Teacher assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement. Effective adjustments to meet student learning needs enable students to articulate their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), performance-based assessments from EngageNY, and all other data is uploaded to Google Drive. For example, one third-grade teacher creates planning charts of small reading groups, identifying the Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) common reading level of certain students, then confers with them, giving feedback about their next steps towards skill mastery. Using analyzed information, teachers, in the vast majority of classrooms, identify low-achieving students as “Spotlight Scholars” and high-achieving students as “Highlight Scholars”, supporting students’ understanding of their academic portrait, which includes rubric indicators and glows and grows regarding achievement. Spotlight Scholars are aware they must attend afterschool classes for test-prep buttressing. Highlight Scholars get feedback and are invited to Saturday Academy, where students are supported to further achieve higher levels. Ongoing assessment data continues the cycle of instructional feedback to students and teachers.

- In fourth and fifth grade, teachers provide feedback in Google Drive for students to use for finished products; written comments are glows and grows about specific indicators in the supplied rubric. In the small-group meeting, students shared that teacher comments in Google Drive helped improve their outcome on their final written pieces. Lower-grade teachers developed and now use feedback emojis or icons to help their students know and apply their next steps. For example, one first-grade student wrote about how police stations are important. The teacher drew a face with a straight-line mouth on his paper, which indicated on the anchor chart a reason needed to be added to the writing. Following this meaningful feedback, the student wrote another sentence, indicating police handcuff the bad guys, thus raising his level of achievement on the assignment.

- All teachers prepare activity folders called “If/Then”. Once quick checks are completed, small-group assignments are determined. In addition, practices such as thumbs up/down, snapping for agreement and teacher mid-lesson conferring gives teachers consistent reflection of student perception and understanding. In a fifth-grade class, the teacher waited for a short while for additional students to show a thumbs-up, after stating, “Thumbs up for when I can move on”. Before moving on, she entered names into her If/Then small-group planning page.

- After students write a draft, then a peer assesses the work, generating a glow and grow for their classmate. Students were able to verbalize this in class and in the student meeting. For instance, two fifth-grade students, while creating pamphlets on Mexico, shared that they exchanged them and peers suggested additional details that could improve their work. One third-grade student acknowledged that she always needs to check her capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Recently, on her final essay about how government works, she had a written glow from the teacher acknowledging her improvement with capitalization and punctuation.
Findings

The vast majority of teachers collaborate in structured, professional teams in which they develop and implement schoolwide instructional practices, such as lesson studies and data analysis. Teacher teams systematically analyze student work and teacher practice for students they share.

Impact

Through the work of professional collaborations, teacher instructional capacity is adjusted and strengthened resulting in schoolwide coherence, increased student achievement, and mastery towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams in kindergarten, first and second grade meet daily during a common prep, and vertical teams in ELA and math in grades three, four and five meet for double periods once per week. Teams have monthly data talks in which data is reviewed, analyzed, and next steps are developed on what instructional strategies can build their capacity in the classrooms. This process informs planning, organized by differentiated needs, and is supported by curricular resources as well as supplementary resources, which promote the implementation of the Common Core. For example, third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade math teachers decided to have student work guided by the Exemplar Math standards-based rubric, wherein levels are measured by novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert categories. Teachers collaborated on how to build students’ understanding that movement across the rubric signifies increased student achievement. These rubrics were visible throughout their classrooms.

- For example, third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade math teachers decided to have student work guided by the Exemplar Math standards-based rubric, wherein levels are measured by novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert categories. Teachers collaborated on how to build students’ understanding that movement across the rubric signifies increased student achievement. These rubrics were visible throughout their classrooms.

- At team meetings, teachers also discuss the quick-check data gathered daily in the classrooms. Determinations are made about which students are on track and which students are not on track to make progress in certain skills presented for the current units. Teachers discuss students they share and how to support the Spotlight Scholars, the students who are not performing at grade level. Teachers then use the paced curricular resources to support the reteach lessons, which are displayed in “If/Then” folders, after identifying particular materials that correlate lesson-by-lesson with the curricular programs. A quick-check data recording sheet from a first-grade teacher shows 23 of the 25 students exhibiting evidence of several skills’ usage as the unit develops such as: asks and answers questions from texts; uses acquired words from text; connects ideas; connects events; identifies a central message. This data is linked with similar data from other first-grade teachers and used for shared improvements of instructional practices, focused on efforts to improve student learning.

- Having conducted an analysis of State ELA and math test questions, teachers are starting to add more HOT questions, discerned to be more complex, to supplement ReadyGen and GO Math!, using EngageNY and Exemplar Math materials for students they share. Teacher practice across the building now has teachers presenting at least two higher-order questions daily to students that have been agreed upon in team meetings. Mastery of goals for groups of students is increasing. For example, each ELA unit data tracking for third grade shows improved student learning from end-of-unit one to end-of-unit two, with a grade-performance average for three classes rising. One class average increased by 21.9 percentage points, from 50.1 percent to 72.0 percent. A second-class average increased by 7.6 percentage points, from 74.4 percent to 82.0 percent, and a third-class average increased by 15.5 percentage points, from 48.5 percent to 64.0 percent. This example of improved learning is one outcome of the shared improvements of teacher practice in the building.