Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 166 Henry Gradstein
Elementary 30Q166
33-09 35 Avenue
Queens
NY 11106

Principal: Jessica Geller

Dates of Review:
March 6, 2019 - March 7, 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. 166 Henry Gradstein 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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
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</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 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

Teacher teams use inquiry to systematically analyze student and teacher work, embed distributed leadership, and improve student achievement and teacher practice, resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement.

### Impact

Structures are in place so that teacher teams facilitate authentic leadership roles, including supporting students’ social-emotional growth, engage in inquiry, and give teachers an integral voice in key decisions about how the school implements the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core), as they improve student achievement and teacher practice.

### Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers participate in inquiry-based, structured professional collaboration that explore problems of practice rooted in student data. The coherence across teams in their approach to inquiry, as well as their attention to school goals and student data when selecting a focus results in schoolwide instructional coherence across core content areas. Teachers regularly engage in three cycles of collaborative work, where teacher teams analyze assessment data, including, interim assessments, or teacher-created Common Core-aligned assessments that are tailored to specific areas of student need from analysis of student performance in the standards or attendance. School records from various teams across the school, housed in a school-wide online platform, demonstrate areas of focus such as writing mechanics in grade three, multi-step problem-solving in grade five, accountable talk in grade one, and conflict resolution in pre-kindergarten. Across the grades and subject areas, teacher teams use a common, data-based approach to inquiry, which creates schoolwide coherence, not just in their approach to inquiry, but also in the strategies and approaches teachers take in instruction, such as the CUBS strategy adopted by the grade four team, which prompts students to circle an author’s claim, underline evidence supporting the claim, box any unknown words and write comments in the margins as they problem-solve. Teachers shared data from the first inquiry cycle of the year in this area, and students showed improvement in problem-solving across the grade.

- In the cycle of inquiry observed during the review, a grade five teacher team analyzed data for a targeted group of students who were still struggling with providing explanations for solving problems. The team reviewed results of student performance on teacher created, targeted assessments that focused on word problems, shared reflections on instructional strategies being implemented across their grades and classrooms, with an eye toward mastery of goals for this targeted group of students. Teachers discussed next steps which included changing the order of the curricula, having students engage in more targeted partner work, continue implementing current strategies and administering another formative assessment to check progress. This work was typical of other teams that are consistently analyzing assessment data and student work for targeted groups of students with an eye toward mastery of goals.

- Teacher leadership is embedded through formal teacher leadership roles such as the school’s math coach, lead teachers, mentors, and model teachers for intervisitations. Teacher leaders support new and veteran teachers and play an integral role in the development of the school’s curricula, oversight of expectations within departments and hiring practices. Teachers decided, and facilitate, a daily, schoolwide midmorning brain break to support student’s social-emotional growth. Teacher facilitators also lead the inquiry meetings, as they set the agenda and facilitate the meetings.
Findings

School leaders and staff ensure that English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts and are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

The alignment of the ELA and math curricula beginning from Kindergarten builds coherence across the grades. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data, however evidence of planning for the cognitive engagement for all learners was not seen across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers create academic tasks that ensure all students can access the Common Core. Unit plans across the school illustrate vocabulary and key terms, skills, and strategies, essential understandings, content, activities, assessment and resources, such as the different manipulatives needed for specific lessons and units. Lesson plans and academic tasks include the integration of the instructional shifts across subject areas. Students in all levels of ELA are asked to write from sources, use academic vocabulary and read complex texts. Math unit plans evidence focus, coherence, fluency, and deep application of concepts.

- Curriculum support is provided at the beginning of each year when as a school, curricula alignment to the Common Core and the Next Generation standards is reviewed. Teachers’ review and adjust curriculum documents in peer review teams, department teams and interdisciplinary teams. Teams collaborate to revise curriculum and assessment based on an analysis of student work. Teachers submit revised curriculum documents for review. However, not all curricula documents, including unit plans and lesson plans, provided evidence that tasks were differentiated for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

- Teachers plan and refine lessons and tasks based on assessments of student work, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and teacher observation data. Some, but not all teachers adjust lessons to provide scaffolds and supports for all students. An ELA unit plan included a vocabulary activity that was updated to have students utilize the Frayer Model, which differentiates vocabulary for students, while an ELA lesson plan indicated new vocabulary taught whole class and not differentiated. A writing lesson for an Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class indicated that students would move into student groups based on a quick assessment at the beginning of the lesson. This lesson included notes on individual scaffolds and supports for students. However, a math lesson broke students up into groups based on their table assignments and not based upon student needs. Some, but not all reading unit plans have all students reading differentiated, leveled texts, while a second-grade unit plan has all students reading the same text with the same support activities provided.
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 reflecting an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when they are active and have voice and choice in their learning. Teaching strategies including small group work, provide multiple entry points for most learners.

Impact

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Students engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional priorities for all classes include a focus on small groups, differentiated instruction and tasks, and student-to-student conversations. These adopted priorities reflect the school’s articulated beliefs and was evident throughout classes and provide students with opportunities to produce meaningful work products. In a grade-four English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students engaged in a think-pair-share activity to locate text-based evidence to complete a compare and contrast activity about two main characters in a text. Each pair then shared with other pairs at the table and the table was asked to share out their findings. In a grade-two science lesson, students worked in pairs and small groups to complete observations on properties of four dry ingredients to try to discover that a mixture might have different properties than its ingredients. Each group had different ingredients, a different amount of ingredients and a different page to complete. A small group of students was called up to share their findings with the rest of the class.

- Across classrooms, students were arranged in pairs, triads or small groups to promote discussion and critical thinking and support the needs of individual learners. In a grade-four math lesson on adding and subtracting fractions and mixed numbers, the teacher provided a brief mini-lesson where she modeled and then had students jot down answers on a small whiteboard for a quick check for understanding. Students were divided into six groups to complete a problem on a chart where they showed their work using the CUBES strategy. Students then took a gallery walk to see how each group solved the problem. In a grade-five social studies lesson, students worked in groups to gather text-based evidence information about French colonies. All students were provided with differentiated texts and resources to complete an opinion poster that was to include text, diagrams, and images.

- Multiple entry points enabled learners’ access to the materials across classrooms visited. During a math lesson, differentiated supports such as individual whiteboards, markers, manipulatives, and a chart, were made available to all students. Students were then sent to work at stations that included assorted partner activities. During an ELA lesson, students were asked to self-select differentiated graphic organizers to complete a close reading activity.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

There is a schoolwide emphasis on the analysis of student work, as well as both teachers and students using rubrics aligned to the school’s curricula to offer a clear portrait of student mastery. A Varied use of ongoing checks for understanding are reflected in the use of rubrics and questioning.

Impact

Students and teachers receive actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement. When needed, teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers consistently analyze student work to inform pedagogical next steps. A grade analysis/planning sheet for math showed that while some students were strong at one step problems, multistep problems were an area where students needed support. Teachers then adjusted curricula to include more multistep problems and strategies for solving them. A planning/analysis sheet for information writing showed students needed more support in organization, elaboration and spelling and punctuation, but were successful with leads and endings. Teachers then created and implemented a scaffolded chart and checklist for students to use during writing activities. Such analysis is done across grades and content areas and shows a means by which teachers receive meaningful feedback regarding student achievement.

- Without looking at rubrics or samples of their work, students articulated teacher feedback and referenced rubric content that together they claimed informed their readiness for the state assessments. A student stated that he learned to use more than one model to check his math work. Another said that he needs to remember to use a lot of evidence to support his claims. A third student noted that she has gotten better at using more details to support her inferences but needed to use a broader range of vocabulary. Regarding their work, although there were a few instances where students were not able to explain parts of rubrics in their own words, all were able to use the rubric to articulate their next learning steps by pointing to areas of improvement in specific assignments such as the need to use correct spelling, provide more evidence from specific sources, and include details from text to support an explanation.

- Questioning was consistently used in a math lesson to assess student understanding of the topic and move students toward achieving the learning objective of adding mixed fractions using a strategy. Students were asked to draw from their prior knowledge from past lessons as well as the work done during the lesson to address questions such as, “How can you solve this question another way? How can you use models to help you solve this problem?” Similarly, a teacher in a social studies lesson pushed students to justify their thinking about information gathered from non-fiction sources by asking questions like, “Were there negative results of the French colonization on the Western Hemisphere? Where is in the text shows you that?” During an ELA lesson teachers asked students to evaluate each other’s responses to student-created visual presentations on character traits during a gallery walk. Students evaluated each presentation using a checklist. In other classrooms, teachers used things like exit slips, small whiteboards, and thumbs up/thumbs down to check for understanding throughout lessons.
Findings

School leaders, including 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 effectively and 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 so that students are supported, own their learning and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Clear expectations are regularly communicated to the staff. Early in the year, the staff collaboratively explore the staff handbook, which communicates expectations such as a focus on student engagement, having students work in groups, bulletin board displays and aligning writing to content areas. These expectations are regularly reviewed at faculty meetings, and via a weekly newsletter and emails. 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 stated that “school leaders and teachers regularly partner with them in supporting student progress” Teachers provide daily online and in-person communication via a student agenda, Class Dojo and Tuesday open hours. Pre-assessments always come home with a checklist of what was done well and what needs work to ensure parents always know what is expected. Parents also shared powerful stories of partnerships that support the learning at the school. As one parent shared, “My son was struggling in the beginning and they were very honest with me. If he doesn’t do this, he won’t be successful. It helped us to get structures in place to meet the rigor and the expectations with teachers.”

- Parents shared that articulation for the next levels begins when students enter the school, through the school’s focus on rigorous academics. Students shared that reading texts at their levels, and the feedback they get from teachers allows them to own their learning and be prepared for the next level. Additionally, in 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, “my teacher expects us to be a lot more independent in the classroom. We are expected to manage our time to complete assignments on time. This is what we will need to be able to do in middle school.”
### Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision

#### Rating: Well Developed

### Findings

School leaders and model teachers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with strategic cycles of observations and opportunities for peer intervisitations. Feedback from leaders and peers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps aligned to identified domains within the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

### Impact

Clear expectations and articulated next steps for improvements in teacher practice supports professional development and aligns with individual and schoolwide professional development goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent observations of instruction and provide teachers with effective feedback and next steps in writing and during follow-up face-to-face conferences if needed. Student work and data is reviewed by school leaders before and after the observations. Feedback on student work is also reviewed to ensure it’s actionable, meaningful and aligned to the task and lesson being taught. Feedback is given on the teaching strategies that were evident in the lesson as well as on a specific domain of focus that ties into their goals. Written reports reviewed evidence meaningful and actionable feedback to teachers. For example, a teacher was given feedback on providing a variety of appropriately challenging resources that are differentiated for students in the class. The teacher was given specific strategies to try such as having different points of view, or the same article annotated to support reading levels. Additional resources were provided as well. Teachers stated that the feedback they receive is always time bound, contains suggestions and includes actionable next steps designed to drive their practice forward.

- Teachers provide support to each other through regular opportunities for peer intervisitations. Through intervisitations teachers provide their peers with feedback and have the opportunity to observe new and best practices implemented throughout the community. Additionally, there are also informal intervisitations that are tied to mentoring and coaching of individual teachers based specific need. Teachers receive instructional support and feedback from coaches, leadership and consultants that highlight their strengths, areas for improvement and next steps. Teachers shared that intervisitations and rounds help them to get feedback from teachers who have a depth of experience and knowledge across grades and content areas. They stated that this feedback helps to deepen practice and ensure everyone has a common understanding of what is expected in the classrooms.

- Teachers and leaders shared that they meet together at the beginning of the school year to review professional goals from the preceding year and create new goals for the current year. A review of Advance data and informal observation feedback revealed that leaders consistently link feedback to individual and schoolwide professional goals. Effective feedback includes the identification of teacher strengths and challenges as they link to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and specifically address teacher progress as it relates to schoolwide expectations for the use of data-driven small group work and student engagement. For example, in a February report, the school leader refers to the level of engagement seen during a lesson and provides next steps. In a November report, the school leader gives feedback on the way students are grouped for a lesson, with next steps on how to group some learners so they are challenged with high-quality supports and extensions. A review of Advance data evidences teacher growth in Danielson Domain 3c, Engaging Students in Learning.