Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. Q177
K-12 all grades 75Q177
56-37 188 Street
Queens
NY 11365

Principal: Kathleen Posa

Dates of Review:
February 28, 2019 - March 1, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Carlos Perez
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. Q177 serves students in grade K through grade 12. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>
## School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<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 growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Focus</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>
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<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>Well Developed</td>
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## Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

A variety of youth development and guidance structures, along with a theory of action which emphasizes student voice as an essential element of students' success as learners, drive the school's approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support for all learners.

### Impact

The school environment is safe and inclusive and meaningfully involves student voice in schoolwide decision making. All students are well known by almost every adult in the school and receive ongoing guidance and advisement supports that positively impact their academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- There is clear evidence of student voice that contributes to school improvement in several areas. For example, students were concerned about written feedback and how it did not remain private, once students' work products were displayed. They voiced their concerns and suggested that feedback be placed on the back of students' work to protect their privacy, and this practice is now in place throughout the school. Further, students decided that they wanted a "desk free" classroom so they conducted research, created a budget, and identified materials and resources needed to equip the room. As a result, the school now has one desk-free classroom and is looking into possibly implementing others. Students are also active participants in the school's culinary program and requested more input into the menu choices. Consequently, students do not only help prepare breakfast and lunch, but also decide what foods will be prepared.

- According to students, families, and staff, every student in the school is known by name, by most of the staff members. Several of the students shared how their teachers "care for them" and "always ask how they are doing." Families all shared how every adult in the school has a "positive rapport" with students. One family member stated that all students in the school are "everybody's children." The school has recently implemented a movement and mindfulness yoga program in the morning, to help students manage distress and to create a positive tone at the start of the school day. Teachers report seeing a positive change in students' attention span after their participation in morning yoga. Additionally, the school's dean is a former Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) teacher who works closely with staff and students and offers sensory strategies that teachers can use to support students. This work has led to a reduction in an already low suspension rate, going from a one percent suspension rate in the 2016-2017 school year to a zero percent suspension rate for the 2017-2018 school year.

- Throughout the school, there is a belief that all students’ learning styles must be celebrated and appreciated to foster inclusivity across all learners. Students believe that they should all feel included and never isolated. The older students in the school shared a concern about how any incoming, new students did not really know anyone in the school. As a result, they helped to implement a student buddy program that helps new students feel welcome in the school. In addition to the buddy program, members of the student council, in collaboration with their teacher mentors, created a handbook for new students. During the school visit, students shared that they care deeply for each other and how that helps to make them "excited about coming to school."
Findings

School leaders support the development of most teachers with frequent cycles of classroom observations. Feedback from classroom observations accurately captures teachers’ strengths and next steps and includes analysis of student work and data.

Impact

Feedback from school leaders to teachers elevates schoolwide instructional practices through direct references to resources and tools for strengthening instruction but does not consistently align with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers through the observation process is actionable, often includes resources and clear next steps, and is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Feedback to one teacher praised her for questioning and discussion techniques, as the teacher’s questions “promoted metacognition thinking,” which allowed students to predict and “actively enrich the discussion.” The school leader’s next steps for the teacher included incorporating a writing activity that would require students to critique the book they were reading. A second observation report praised a teacher for differentiating the musical instruments that students used in their performances. The teacher was also commended for allowing ample time for students to demonstrate their ability on each of the instruments. Next steps included instituting the use of student pairings to improve students’ social skills and lessen wait time for each student, during class activities. However, reviews of observation reports provided no indication of how feedback from observations was directly aligned to each teacher’s professional goals.

- The teacher observation schedule is designed to allow all teachers to be observed by all school leaders at least once during the school year. According to school leaders, the observation schedule is segmented into thirds, allowing them to collaboratively discuss findings of observations in relation to student work and data, and to visit the same teachers to assess progress across the observation cycles. According to school leaders, this “allows us to share feedback and look at trends in the feedback.” In addition, all first-year teachers are observed first by the school’s principal, for her to communicate expectations, concerns, and areas of focus for those teachers. During the meeting with teachers, they shared that observations are used to support teacher development by aligning feedback to areas in which school leaders feel a teacher needs additional support. One teacher noted that teachers look forward to their observations and make every effort to implement all suggestions provided in post-observation reports. Another teacher commented that teachers look forward to their post-observation conference and view it as “an important part of learning” and part of a “very supportive process.”

- Along with clear expectations that are articulated in observation reports, feedback to teachers includes references to specific resources that the teacher can use in the future. For example, one observation report informed the teacher that he needed to incorporate four ways to differentiate instruction during the lesson, such as by using scaffolded worksheets. In a second observation report, the school leader urged the teacher to challenge students with higher-level questioning strategies and then offered the teacher some sample questions. The school leaders also shared their expectation for all teachers to always include key academic vocabulary in lessons and provided the rationale behind that schoolwide expectation.
### Additional Finding

#### Quality Indicator:

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<tr>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate instructional shifts, including writing across the curriculum. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

#### Impact

The design of curricula and tasks promotes coherence across grades and subjects, fostering college and career readiness for all students and allowing all students to access the school’s curricula and be cognitively engaged.

#### Supporting Evidence

- All planning documents reviewed clearly showed how lessons would cognitively engage all students. All lesson plans listed students in the class, along with their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and scaffolds to be used for each student. Teachers used data from checklists and other assessment methods to plan for daily activities. For example, a science lesson plan for an 8:1:1 class not only listed individual tasks for students by level, but also listed each student, the IEP goal, small group activity, and independent activity that the student would be engaged in. A math lesson plan for a 12:1:1 class listed the Common Core standard for the lesson as well as the whole group and small group learning activities. The lesson plan also detailed the specific, differentiated tasks for each group, as well as the independent learning activity for each of the students in the class. This level of planning that incorporated entry points for all learners to have access to the curricula and tasks, was a common feature across all planning documents seen.

- Strategic integration of the instructional shifts was seen consistently in curriculum documents throughout the school. This was most notable with writing tasks. For example, an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan for students in a 6:1:1 class detailed how the students would answer questions verbally and in writing and complete a worksheet after listening to a story. A second lesson plan for students in a 12:1:1 class centered on future living options and aimed to ensure that the students would understand and be able to manage personal decisions, in order to balance work, family, and life. Several tasks required students to complete worksheets (with the help of a paraprofessional) and construct five sentences about where they would like to live in the future and why. Writing tasks embedded in curricula connected to real-world situations were seen in almost all planning documents reviewed.

- Interviews of staff confirmed that the staff makes purposeful choices about curricula, based on daily student performance and data from periodic assessments, including Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI). Staff members reported that SANDI scores are checked before every student’s IEP meeting, which is usually four to six times per year. Additionally, planning and refining activities were evident in the revised curricula maps organized by grade bands, academic content area, and social skills development. A revised map showed adjustments that were made to the rigor of questions asked of students, based on their ability levels. In many lesson plans, teachers explicitly stated any adjustments made and shared data that backed up any revisions. For example, a math lesson plan showed how the teacher created small groups based on scores on the previous day’s assessment.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school's belief about how students learn best, such as via real-world connections and small group instruction. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teaching practices linked to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and Common Core instructional shifts, engage all students in challenging tasks, which result in work products that illustrate students’ higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers demonstrated a variety of instructional tools that offered students entry points into lessons. During a lesson for students in a self-contained (12:1:4) class, the students were offered pictures and dolls as supports to help them identify differences between a boy and a girl. Additionally, non-verbal students used an auditory speech device as a support in answering questions. Further, during a self-contained math class, students used fake currency, laminated number sheets, counters, and display boards, as manipulatives in a lesson that centered on exploring food items at different sections of the supermarket. Students were required to select two different items and determine the sum.

- Specific elements of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, including grouping students by their cognitive and behavioral levels, were noted as examples of how students are grouped by need, reflecting elements of the school's beliefs about how students learn best. During a math lesson for students in a self-contained class, the students worked in small groups and had opportunities to read a math story, determine the problem that needed to be solved, and complete a bar graph to answer the question. The students used data and responses from the question, “What is your favorite fast food place? Papa John, Taco Bell, Mc D’s, Wendy’s?” During the group discussions, students could be overheard stating what their favorite place was and why, and compiling data and creating bar graphs, respectively. Similarly, during a science lesson for students in a self-contained class, the students presented their Biomes projects and took turns asking and answering “Wh” questions. When asked to describe what a tundra was, one student stated, “It is very cold with long winters, has polar bears and wolves, and no trees.”

- During lessons across classrooms visited, there were several scaffolds that provided students with multiple entry points into lessons. There was also a strong connection to real-world activities. For example, during a music lesson the teacher offered students drumsticks to help them maintain a consistent and accurate tempo. A teacher of a science lesson pertaining to weather and weather patterns, gave students pictures and sample weather forecasts, while students engaged in an ELA lesson were allowed to cut and paste pictures which they used as manipulatives to help identify the beginning, middle, and ending of a story. The students were highly engaged in these challenging activities and demonstrated higher-order thinking skills as they worked to complete the tasks.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers use and create rubrics, grading policies, and assessments that are aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment, most notably through conferencing with students.

Impact
Teachers make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all students and provide all students and other teachers with actionable feedback on student performance.

Supporting Evidence

- During classroom visits, teachers could be seen checking for understanding consistently, via conferencing with groups and individual students and often using a checklist to memorialize data from students’ responses. During a science lesson for students in a self-contained class, the teacher conferenced with individual students, using a checklist to record their responses to questions such as, “Tell me why you think that” and “Can you explain a little more what you mean?” In addition, students used a checklist to self-assess their work. Paraprofessionals also helped with data collection during instruction in some classes visited. This data, along with data from student self-assessment activities, informed adjustments to instructional practices at times during lessons and helped to determine student groupings for future lessons.

- Teachers provide students with feedback in a variety of ways. During the meeting with students, one student stated, “My teacher talks to us all the time and tells me what I did good and what I did bad.” A second student explained how the teacher gives them feedback on a post-it note or on the back of their assignments. A review of teacher feedback on samples of student work, across grades and subjects, details how differentiated and specific feedback is, depending on the student’s comprehension level. There were smiley faces for lower-level students and glows and grows for higher-level students.

- One of the ways that teachers check for understanding is by having students tell their partners what they learned and then asking the students to share what their partners stated. During some lessons, students could be overheard stating, “First I did this” and “Then I did this,” to either the teachers as they conferenced with them, or to a peer during partner discussions. During a science lesson, the teacher asked the students several times to, “Raise your hand if you agree,” and then asked follow-up questions, to have the students explain why they did or didn’t agree with something. In addition, at times, teachers made real-time adjustments to lessons, such as creating an additional small group or using a paraprofessional to further support specific students, based on learning needs detected in the data gathered during the lesson.
### Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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#### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that are focused on improving staff and student learning. There are distributed leadership structures and roles throughout the school, with some teachers serving as “Unit Coordinators.”

#### Impact

Professional collaborations by teachers strengthen their instructional capacity and promote the achievement of school goals. Distributed leadership structures result in teachers having a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are active members of collaborative teams and meet at least twice per week, both within subject areas and through classroom ratios (6:1:1, 8:1:1, 12:1:1). Teachers are grouped according to student populations and students’ ages. Teacher teams examine lessons with a focus on the rigor of the task, the level of questioning, and the various levels of differentiation, to help students improve their performance on tasks. During the school visit, the ELA team met to review outcomes of a lesson and determine how to assist students in achieving the instructional goals. The meeting included a facilitator, a note taker, and a data analyst. The presenting teacher shared three pieces of student writing with the team and allowed time for the entire team to review each piece of evidence to assess each student’s strengths and learning needs. After determining the students’ levels of achievement on the task, the team decided that next steps for the students would include scaffolds like a personal word wall and a nightly journal. The team agreed to adjust future lessons and meet again in the coming week, to further discuss students’ performance.

- There are several ways in which distributed leadership is evident across the school’s many sites. There are currently over 200 paraprofessionals and they are held in the same regard and very often given opportunities to attend the same professional development events as teachers. In addition, many of the paraprofessionals have transitioned to becoming teachers in the school. There are also teachers who are part of the school’s instructional cabinet and have regular meetings and interactions with school leaders to support curriculum and instruction across the sites. Since this school has multiple sites, there are teachers who act as unit coordinators and support the principal when she is not on site. Further, there are many teachers in the school who attend professional development (PD) events regularly throughout the year and turnkey the information which they acquire to other staff. Teachers shared that their voice as teachers and teacher leaders is appreciated and allows them to “take ownership of the school.”

- Teachers and school leaders feel that teacher-team activities have increased teachers’ proficiency in creating effective lesson plans, particularly in relation to the teaching of writing, resulting in effective writing strategies that are embedded in all planning documents seen. Teachers have co-designed lesson plans which incorporate different strategies for use with student journal writing. School leaders believe that there is much more collaboration among teachers, with teachers sharing ideas and discussing their practices much more often than in the past. School leaders credit teacher teamwork for the improvement seen in the areas of questioning and discussion, as evidenced by a comparison of Advance teacher observation data for the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year, to date.