Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 181 Brookfield
Elementary 29Q181
148-15 230 Street
Queens
NY 11413

Principal: Dina Wheeler

Dates of Review:
March 28, 2019 - March 29, 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. 181 Brookfield 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 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>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>
</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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</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>
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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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high professional and instructional expectations to the entire staff through structures such as the principal’s monthly newsletter. Staff and school leaders effectively and systematically communicate a unified set of high expectations and successfully partner with students and families.

Impact
Teachers are provided training that results in a culture of mutual accountability for all expectations. Students and families are supported and provided with clear, focused and effective feedback that supports a partnership with families and ensures that all students own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- A variety of ways are employed to support teachers in meeting schoolwide expectations. The school principal sends a monthly newsletter that reminds teachers of instructional and professional expectations. Professional development (PD) is offered to teachers that directly support the schools goals. For example, during the meeting with teachers several teachers shared how PD has helped them implement the schoolwide goals. Teachers explained that colleagues often conduct sessions and they always incorporate their learning into their classroom teaching practices. This includes PD addressing peer feedback and use of color-coding when providing feedback. Additionally, school leaders conduct frequent formal and informal observations and provide tailored feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders encourage intervisitation and peer coaching along with formal and informal conversations as a way of holding all staff members accountable.

- Regular communication between staff and parents keeps parents actively informed as to all happenings throughout the school. Teachers use online services such as Class Dojo to inform parents of progress in real time. Teachers send private messages, video clips, and updates on homework each week. Staff makes every effort to ensure that parents have every opportunity to engage in school events, even when they are unable to attend. Parent Teacher Association meetings (PTA) are now available online for all parents. The school offers parents a wide array of workshops to help support their children at home. For example, the school staff attends middle school showcases with families in addition to workshops to help families make an informed decision about middle schools choice. During the meeting all parents shared how positive and strong communication policy is that keeps them so well informed.

- Students are regularly exposed to the college and careers articulation process throughout the school year. This begins in Pre-K where there is a focus on helping students become independent learners. One such activity that supports this is their being able to select their own books and other materials individually. To prepare students for middle school, fourth and fifth-grade students follow a departmentalized schedule similar to middle school. During the meeting with students, they articulated all of the ways they are informed as to their progress throughout the school year. Several students explained they regularly log onto the schools online grading system in order to track their progress. In addition, all students explained how they can review their portfolios on any given day and speak to their teachers to ensure that they understand their progress.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding, most notably through conferencing with students and student self-assessment.

Impact

Many, but not all, teachers provide students with feedback that is actionable and make effective adjustments to meet the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of teacher lesson plans and conference notes indicate the ways that teachers check for understanding. Conferencing, exit slips, peer student checklists and task-specific rubrics are all employed. Students use self-assessment checklists every few weeks when they publish their writing pieces and also provide peer feedback to one another. During the meeting with students they explained how they self-assess their work often using a checklist or a rubric prior to handing in an assignment. They shared how self-assessing helps them review their work and avoid forgetting to add things like details or citing text-based evidence to their writing. However, students did share that opportunities to self-assess are not always provided across the vast majority of their classes.

- Across classrooms, teachers are providing students with feedback that identifies student strengths and offer clear actionable next steps. For example, feedback to a student’s math exemplar praised the student for “Modeling on a number line” and asked if they could “Figure out the relationship between 1/4 and 2/8” requiring the student to push their thinking. Feedback to a student’s writing prompt offered a glow that highlighted the student’s paragraph structure and organization and a grow that encouraged the student to elaborate on specific areas of his writing by providing additional facts that he may have learned while conducting his research. However, at times, feedback to students was not as detailed or actionable, simply stating “Excellent” or “Good job.”

- Throughout many, but not all, classrooms, teachers use ongoing checks for understanding. During a third-grade math lesson the teacher circulated the classroom and conferenced with students as they worked in groups. The teacher memorialized her findings by using a checklist. The teacher used that data to stop the lesson and address common concerns noted while she conferenced with students. During a fifth-grade social studies lesson, the teacher created groups at the start of the lesson based on a quick assessment that helped her ensure proper placement of students. In addition to conferencing with students, the teacher regularly took the pulse of the class by using other forms of checks for understanding, such as thumbs up/down. However, during a fourth-grade reading lesson, there were limited ongoing assessments, hindering effective adjustments and ensuring that students are aware of their next learning steps.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

All staff ensures that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and integrate key instructional shifts, such as a strong emphasis on academic vocabulary. Academic tasks consistently emphasize rigor and high-order skills for all students across grades and subject areas.

Impact

There is curricular coherence and access to the curricula for all learners promoting college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Unit plans across subject areas illustrate many different approaches to academic performance tasks with multiple scaffolds for all students. Teachers coach students in college and career readiness skills such as, note taking, use of accountable talk stems, group and partner discussion techniques and research skills. Curricula maps present evidence that the school develops rigorous and challenging tasks by adapting materials from Engage NY, the New York City Department of Education Common Core Library, and the New York City science and social studies scope and sequence. College and career skills such as, collaborative group learning, use of technology and subject specific tasks are in evidence throughout units and plans. For example, fourth grade students are exposed to a science unit entitled “Being a Scientist” which allows students to investigate the eight different types of scientists those students could aspire to be.

- All literacy and math units of study are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts. There is an infusion and focus on academic vocabulary across all grades and subject areas. Math lesson plans clearly indicate the vocabulary words associated with the lesson that students must actively use. Math vocabulary such as area and perimeter was a focus in one plan reviewed. A Kindergarten lesson focused on the weather, identified vocabulary words such as sinking and puffy that students would be using throughout the lesson. Additionally, a first-grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan identifies a list of vocabulary words that are connected to the text, to students personally, and to worldly current events. Many of the planned strategies addressed tiered-academic vocabulary, word walls, reading and math fluency, multiple methods of problem solving, text-based writing and writing to persuade.

- Lesson Plans across all subject areas emphasize essential questions requiring critical thinking. Many of the school’s students with disabilities have been mainstreamed into integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes as well as general education classes. As a result, teachers have ensured that academic tasks are rigorous, but add scaffolds that support students in producing high-level work. Higher-order thinking scaffolds and strategies for English Language Learners (ELLs), special education, and struggling students are built into the lessons. Flexible small groups, guided reading, sentence starters, task-specific graphic organizers, visual cues, discussion prompts and academic word walls are consistently embedded in lesson plans to ensure that all learners have access to the lesson.
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

Teaching practices are aligned to the school’s curricula and reflect the school’s belief that students learn best through questioning and discussion.

Impact

All students are producing meaningful student work products that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Throughout classrooms, students were given opportunities to engage in either partner or group discussions. For example, during a third-grade math lesson, students worked in groups in order to solve a mathematical equation. They could be overheard sharing how three multiplied by six means to “Take three and show it six times.” A second student was overheard telling her group, “Let’s show our work another way so that we are checking our results.” During a fifth-grade social studies lesson students worked in groups to obtain a better understanding of specific events that occurred in African American history. Students engaged in discussion with their group members and cited text-based evidence and used academic vocabulary to support their statement.

- Student work products evidenced high levels of rigor and student thinking. Fourth-grade students created a poster about fire safety that included a variety of ways that one can prevent fires. The poster contained headings and sub headings, as well as domain-specific vocabulary directly related to the task. In social studies students created a travel brochure for China. This task consisted of artwork, and areas that should be visited while visiting China. Fun and interesting facts such as, how the last Emperor of China became ruler when he was only three years old added to the high level of the work produced. In math students were required to explain their thought process as they solved math exemplar problems. Students articulated each step of the problem they solved, and the reasons as to why they selected a particular method for solving it. One student explained her process in answering a fraction problem by explaining that first she drew the four wholes and labeled them and then drew a rectangle in fifths and finally she counted all the fractions before finding the fraction greater than one whole.

- In speaking with students they explained that questioning and discussion is a “Very big” part of all their lessons. Students shared how speaking with their peers allows them to express their ideas and listen to their classmates. During classroom visits, students had opportunities to explain their thinking and support their thoughts with text-supported details. In math classes, students keep a detailed math journal where they analyze problems and clearly explain their thinking when solving the equations. During many lessons, teachers used a workshop model of teaching that began with a mini-lesson and teacher demonstration of the concept to be taught. Students then had ample opportunities to work with a partner or in groups to complete each required task.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of all teachers through the use of a strategically designed observation cycle and effective feedback that captures teacher strengths, and next steps. There is a transparent system for managing PD and making informed decisions about all staff members.

Impact

School-wide instructional practices are elevated through effective feedback to teachers that articulates clear expectations and aligns to teacher goals which leads to improved quality of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders begin the school year by visiting classrooms as a team in order to norm and ensure they center on the school’s instructional focus. School leaders design the observation schedule so that every school leader observes every teacher at least once. During leadership meetings, school leaders review and discuss observation reports and create a plan of action for any teacher needing additional support. During pre and post observation conferences student progress and other relevant data is reviewed to ensure the rigor of student work products. Through this strategic cycle of classroom observations, school leaders provide teachers with effective feedback that according to teachers supports them, and provides them with a great deal of useful feedback.

- Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, offers actionable next steps, includes resources and is directly connected to teacher goals. For example, feedback to one teacher commended her for her use of parallel teaching and use of small purposeful student groupings. The next steps included ways to improve questioning strategies so students learn to ask good questions. Feedback to a teacher’s reading lesson highlighted the use of literature circles with next steps that indicated the need for more clarity and alignment with respect to the teaching point and the execution of the lesson. The school leader provided an attachment for the teacher to read which provided information related to supporting student readers. Feedback is aligned with teacher goals. During the meeting several teachers shared that during pre and post observation conferences their goals are discussed. They must always explain how they will be incorporating any part of their goals into the lesson.

- School leaders have a transparent and strategic process for managing and implementing PD. School leaders meet regularly with the PD team to present trends and patterns that they are noticing during their observational rounds. The PD team discusses how they can address the trends and issues and work with school leaders to design and implement a series of PD sessions directly connected to those concerns. Recently teachers provided the PD team with data from teachers and school leaders that showed concerns with reading levels for students in kindergarten through first-grade. The team and school leaders decided that students should be grouped by their reading levels and not their grade levels. Recent data indicates this change positively impacted student reading performance.
**Additional Finding**

**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development  
**Rating:** Well Developed

**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional inquiry-based collaborations. Teachers are provided opportunities to take part in distributive leadership practices most notably, as teacher leads.

**Impact**

Teachers’ instructional capacity is strengthened which has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teacher voice plays an integral role in all decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams regularly review the results of benchmark and other assessments in order to make informed instructional decisions on adjustments to teaching practices. During the teacher team meeting, the school's math team used the Collaborative Team Inquiry protocol to analyze student work products. The problem of practice they discussed addressed student understanding of how to perform repeated addition of unit fractions. Teachers reviewed student work products and asked clarifying questions, shared the noticing form, the work analysis, and offered critical feedback related to student performance. The team identified modifications that should be implemented to support students and the theory of action for all next steps developed. Work such as this has positively impacted state math scores. There has been a six percent increase in math student proficiency over last year as a result of the effective changes in teaching practice.

- Distributed leadership structures are embedded throughout the school. Teacher leaders are part of the school's instructional cabinet and act as a conduit between teachers and administration. Additionally, those teacher leaders who represent each grade meet weekly with the administrative cabinet to discuss possible professional development and teacher-led initiatives. In addition, teachers from the professional development team make decisions about professional learning offerings at the school. During the meeting with teachers, they explained they have input on decisions affecting the selection and refinement of curricula resources, the placement and grouping of students and the selection of new teachers. In addition, one teacher identified a reading program she thought would work well with struggling readers, she presented it to the PD team and it was implemented for these students with positive results.

- Teacher teams meet informally three to five times a week on their common prep and lunch periods. Both teachers and school leaders shared that the team meeting schedule can be adjusted in the event that teachers need to meet in addition to their scheduled time. In one instance the principal explained that there needed to be an increase in explicit teaching addressing writing that informs the reader. Teachers met beyond the regularly scheduled times to address the need. As a result of their work recent classroom observations demonstrate an increase in explicit instruction in the area of informational writing. Teachers now include anchor text with examples of high quality writing along with the infusion of explicit academic vocabulary throughout their planning. The implementation of these strategic teaching practices has had a positive impact on student performance with a 27 percent increase in students achieving proficiency in ELA from 2017 to 2018.