Quality Review Report

2018-2019

J.H.S. 194 William Carr
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 25Q194
154-60 17 Avenue
Queens
NY 11357

Principal: Jennifer Miller

Dates of Review:
November 1, 2018 - November 2, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Daniel Kim
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


School Quality Ratings

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

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</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

All teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations through teacher teams, department teams and the inter-grade department Collaborative Action Research Project (CARP) team. Embedded distributed leadership structures that influence key school decisions are in place.

Impact

Teachers, through professional collaborations and shared leadership opportunities, play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school thus resulting in instructional coherence that positively impacts student achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher inquiry supports the school's instructional focus this year towards genuine and rigorous instruction that addresses the needs of every child-whole child-every day. The school's CARP team is geared toward improving pedagogy across grades and departments using a shared process. In the previous year, the CARP team focused on increasing the rigor of student work products as evidenced in student discussions, such as engaging in a “flash debate,” or using a Think, Question, Epiphany protocol for deeper class-wide conversations. As a result, teachers embraced a schoolwide understanding of instructional expectations around student discussions. In the vast majority of classes visited, students were engaged in peer-to-peer discussions in pairs, groups or whole class, questioning and clarifying, agreeing and disagreeing and making claims and counterclaims, thus pushing the thinking of their peers. Increased expectations for student discussions has resulted in a positive student performance trend in the school's internal growth reports from STAR Assessments and in the 2018 New York State English Language Arts (ELA) exam for all students, including 7 percent increase of students scoring level 3 and 4, and the schoolwide average proficiency from 3.1 to 3.21.

- Teachers shared that because of collaborations within their teacher teams, their instructional practices have strengthened. For example, a teacher noted differentiating her formative assessment such as the Quick Write/Problem Solving Tracker to hone in on specific areas for particular students, based on feedback from her teacher team. Another teacher described forming collaborations across content areas, such as social studies and ELA so that patterns and trends can be identified for specific students on similar skills. The teacher reported that within her teacher team, she noticed that her students were able to stay focused on content, but had difficulty in elaborations and using academic vocabulary. She worked with her ELA and social studies counterparts to share her noticing and help make connections for students by embedding these ideas in lesson plans, thus resulting in shared improvements across different departments and grades.

- Distributive leadership practices support teachers’ work to ensure curricular alignment and make key decisions on teaching practices. The grade six science teacher team, with the support and guidance of school administrators, reconstructed the curriculum to increase the rigor of student work products. Instead of assessing student mastery through an exam, the department team created a culminating project for the students to create a Rube Goldberg machine to demonstrate student mastery of simple machine energy transformations. Due to embedded leadership practices, teachers make key instructional decisions across grade and content teams, thus impacting student learning across the school.
Findings
Teachers create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers consistently use ongoing checks for understanding across classrooms and utilize student self- and peer-to-peer assessments.

Impact
There are missed opportunities from teachers to provide personalized and meaningful feedback for further student understanding. Although teachers make instructional adjustments through ongoing checks for understanding, students are not always aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular-aligned assessment practices and grading policies are used by teachers to provide actionable feedback across content areas. There are teacher-created assessments and rubrics by grade and across subject areas, and students are given glows and grows as part of their feedback. On a science bulletin board, student work is assessed using an Alternative Energy Sources rubric, which outlines expectations on content, writing mechanics, student use of sources and presentation. While most students are given actionable feedback, personalized and meaningful feedback is not evident across the vast majority of the classrooms. For example, on a student research project, the written teacher feedback on the student writing states: “+: your writing is organized. -: work on expanding your ideas using content-specific vocabulary.” On a grade-eight student work bulletin board, teacher feedback stated, “Glow – well-developed topic and varied evidence. However, grow – you need to manage your time better so that you can have an insightful conclusion.” For her grows, a grade-eight student stated that she needed to “add more insight” and that “her claim was not clear,” but the student was unable to articulate how to translate that feedback into her writing. Feedback is often given in a pre-populated template on which the relevant feedback is highlighted but is not personalized for the individual learner.

- Teachers use exit tickets, online in-class tools, questioning and conferencing to check student understanding and to inform student groups and activities. For example, in a grade-seven math class, the teacher used electronic data collectors to immediately assess student understanding of the do-now question for a quick review and whole-class discussion, as well as previous assessments to assign students to work in parallel instruction groups. In a grade-six social studies lesson, the teacher gathered conference notes in her electronic tablet and noted the quality of student discussions across groups. She gave immediate feedback that student discussions need to move beyond each student sharing their thoughts, and that students should build upon each other’s ideas and ask questions to further their own understanding. While evident in some classrooms, such feedback directing students towards next learning steps was not evident in the vast majority of classrooms.

- Students expressed that they frequently self-assess their work as well as give peer feedback. For example, a grade-seven student worked on developing the author’s craft by incorporating sensory images. On her self-reflection, she noted that she worked on developing “a sense of the scene through the actions of the characters.” Her peers wanted her to “give [a character] more dialogue to develop his [main] character.” While the student was able to articulate the feedback, the student was uncertain on how to concretely apply the peer feedback into her writing.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:**

| 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**

School leaders and faculty align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts into rigorous curricula and tasks.

**Impact**

Instructional plans are building coherence across content areas and promote college and career readiness by emphasizing higher-order skills. Academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits through student discussions across grades and content areas.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Purposeful lesson planning that incorporates the Common Core and instructional shifts build coherence across subject areas. Planned strategies evident across lesson plans include tiered-academic vocabulary, use of sources, argumentative writing, text-based student discussions, fluency and multi-step problem solving. A grade-six social studies lesson plan reflects a task where students are building an argument and gathering text evidence connect to their viewpoints through a student-led debate to decide on which argument is most important: the collecting, preserving or sharing of bone fossils of Lucy or other hominoid archaeological records. A grade-eight ELA lesson plan includes students synthesizing a parable between two texts, the *Lord of the Flies* and a secondary text from *NewsELA*, containing different Lexile levels to write short responses with compelling claims.

- Unit and lesson plans emphasize multiple designs of academic tasks with numerous higher-order skills. A grade-seven math lesson plan includes a task with students working with partners or independently to solve the relative position of student homes in relation to the school, given mixed numbers and positive or negative integers. Plans reflect preparation for students to use modeling, number lines, their mastery of fractions as well as their understanding of positive and negative integers to problem solve around a central question. In a grade-eight United States History lesson plan, planned activities include a student-led debate on who was responsible for the Triangle Waistcoat Factory fire, following an analysis of primary documents to examine worker conditions during the Industrialized Age.

- A grade-eight Algebra lesson plan included tasks to support students in classifying single-variable equations by analyzing their solutions. Plans included students debating within groups of four with each student analyzing two equations, sharing their findings and collectively emerging through inquiry, three types of equations. Plans included differentiated groupings and equations for students who had previously needed support in solving algebraic equations. The curricula reflect purposeful decisions made by school leaders and teachers to promote skills that prepare students for high school and beyond.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching strategies, through questioning, scaffolds and differentiated tasks, offer multiple entry points for students with opportunities to be engaged in genuine and rigorous discussions.

Impact

The consistent use of student-to-student discussions in classrooms resulted in students demonstrating higher order thinking in work products and in discussions reflecting high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher practices included utilizing student partnerships and groupings to support groups of students to gain more access to rigorous work. During an ELA lesson, students participated in rotations through workstations with text selections, photos, or pages from a graphic novel, Percy Jackson’s *The Lightning Thief* in order to access and analyze the materials at their own pace and in the manner best suited to their learning styles. Through multiple materials, students made connections across materials and developed their own theories on how the character becomes a hero. Using previous assessments, teachers in a grade-seven Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class utilized parallel teaching in small groups to explore the use of positive and negative integers in real-life applications such as temperature. Students were observed participating in group and partner discussions utilizing various protocols such as Thoughts, Questions and Epiphanies and were provided with scaffolds such as sentence starters and peer questions to keep them engaged in purposeful conversations.

- Teacher-provided scaffolds include graphic organizers, differentiated problems and tasks. Students in a grade-seven math class participated in Problem Solving Friday with the students working in partnerships or groups to solve a given math problem. Based on their conferencing, teachers offered various scaffolds, such as a number line, graphing paper or picture models to support students’ problem-solving strategies. Grade-eight students worked on the *Lord of the Flies* and a secondary text to build a combined parable message in short response, with some students utilizing a graphic organizer to arrange their thoughts. The use of scaffolds across classrooms supported multiple entry points into challenging tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

- Students produce high levels of work and discussion across content areas. In a grade-six science class, students were tasked to work independently or in pairs to design a Rube Goldberg machine as a means to demonstrate their understanding of energy transformations in simple and complex machines. In pairs or small groups during class, grade-seven students reviewed the “Tell-Tale Heart,” “Annabel Lee,” and “The Raven” to discuss Edgar Allan Poe’s use of repetition across multiple texts, with the students questioning the reliability of the narrator’s grasp on reality. Students in a grade-eight Regents Algebra class investigated and noticed the trends and patterns of the role of the variable in differentiated algebraic equations and discussed and articulated into three categories based on patterns that they noticed. Across classrooms, student work and discussions reflected high levels of participation and student thinking, thus producing meaningful work products.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction to the school staff and clearly outline high expectations for student achievement and college and career readiness to students and their families.

Impact

School leaders hold teachers accountable for meeting high levels of professional expectations through ongoing professional development, and families understand their children's progress towards college and career readiness through online platforms, school events, and meetings with staff.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations for professionalism and teaching are set through the opening-day folder, which include the results of the school’s collaborative effort to define what rigor is and looks like in the classroom. The school's professional learning committee holds ongoing meetings with school staff to further hone and develop a consistent understanding of rigor. School leaders also communicate professional expectations by establishing a consistent schoolwide grading policy, instructional agendas and elements for lesson planning. School leaders conduct formal and informal observations to hold teachers accountable to these expectations and use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to provide meaningful feedback to teachers in multiple cycles of observation.

- School leaders and faculty use Pupilpath and email for continuous communication with parents. Consistent content updates from teachers support parents' understanding of what is being taught and their children's growth in meeting benchmarks. Staff, as well as students, track progress to know when requirements have been met. Parents are registered to use this program to find out about homework assignments, check attendance, and see how their children are doing on coursework. Parents spoke of how their children are often the first to point to updates to the online platform as soon as the students meet families after school, and together talk about what is happening in the class and in school. Student performance information on the online platform is used for advisement, particularly for those who are struggling and create a joint student-family-school plan for success with additional support so that students can be on track towards moving on to next grade and high school.

- School staff consistently communicate high expectations towards students’ pathways towards high school, and college and career readiness throughout the school year. The guidance counselor meets with all grade-eight families to discuss individual high school selections, in conjunction with the high school application information night for families. School faculty is planning a High School Day for all grade-seven and eight students, with plans for inviting former students in various high schools to speak to current students. School leaders communicate expectations towards college and career readiness through college campus visits for all students; the grade seven advisory, in partnership with New York Edge and College Access for All, uses a ten-week curriculum to explore student interests and discuss college options. Parents stated that they appreciated the weekly event updates from the guidance counselor and attending parent workshops on the high school process, even though they had older children who had already gone through the process. Parents of grade-six students appreciated being able to gather general information and attend high school fairs earlier to know what is coming.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating: Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders support teacher development through observations with areas of focus, areas of celebration, effective feedback and clear next steps connected to Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher growth is supported in collaborative cycles of feedback from multiple administrators and articulate clear expectations for teacher practice.

Impact

School leaders have created teacher performance evaluation structures that yield effective feedback and identify next steps which are supporting the development of teachers and improving pedagogy across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with effective feedback and next steps from four ongoing cycles of observation, with the first two from one school leader, a third and fourth from a second school leader to offer different perspectives on practice. For example, one report focused on Using Assessment in Instruction, using specified practices outlined within the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*: “Questions and assessments were regularly used to diagnose evidence of learning by individual students.” This was followed by directions to improve teacher practice: “Continue to look at ways that you are utilizing formative assessment to differentiate instruction and/or support/enrich individual student learning.” Application of this feedback to this teacher was evident during a classroom visit, with the teacher providing four levels of differentiated student work based on previous formative assessments.

- Feedback to teachers accurately captures observed instructional practice, with each observation report including strengths as articulated as an area of celebration, challenges as articulated around the schoolwide area of focus, and next steps, all using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. For example, one report articulated an area of celebration on questioning: “During the lesson, the teacher stopped at various points to have students reflect on specific questions [on the Pearl Harbor attack]. Why do you think the Japanese designed the attacks in different waves? What do you imagine the response is going to be?” The feedback to the teacher stated, “Moving forward, consider different ways to capture more from student discussions. One suggestion is to make notes as students are talking to their smaller groups… to bring back important points to the whole group discussion.” Observation records and feedback reflect a focus on the school’s assessment practices thus articulating schoolwide expectations and supporting teacher development.

- Teachers shared that they appreciate the feedback from administration, stating that their feedback is specific, applicable and develops their practice. A teacher used an example of feedback, received from a school leader through an observation that suggested augmenting the thumbs-up/side/down minilesson check for understanding with others, so that the teacher can specifically address student misunderstandings. The teacher shared that upon reflection on the feedback, he realized that his prior practice gave him an incomplete picture of student understanding. He stated that he changed his practice the following day towards shortened exit tickets to assess mastery, which helped him formulate a small student group to target specific needed skills.