Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S./I.S. 208
K-8 29Q208
74-30 Commonwealth Blvd
Queens
NY 11426

Principal: James Philemy

Dates of Review:
May 8, 2019 - May 9, 2019

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>
<td></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><strong>Area of Focus</strong></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><strong>Additional Finding</strong></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><strong>Additional Finding</strong></td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Findings

Grade and vertical teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work by using protocols to examine student work and subsequently make adjustments to instructional practice. Distributive leadership structures are embedded in the school through rotating grade leaders and the schoolwide Inquiry Team.

### Impact

Teacher inquiry results in shared instructional improvements and mastery of goals for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in key decisions for the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Through structured collaborations, teacher teams analyze student work towards improving their practice as it pertains to the schoolwide focus of examining math instruction across grades. For example, in the teacher team observation during this review, teachers from kindergarten to grade one met in cross-grade inquiry using the Gap Analysis Inquiry process to examine and gather noticings on results from a math assessment from grade one students with disabilities. As part of the presentation, the classroom teachers noted student behaviors during the task, such as student anxiety and challenges in focusing on the task at hand. Colleagues noted student successes in utilizing visual models in demonstrating their thinking, and then crafted instructional next steps based on their noticings. Next steps included previewing questions with the students beforehand, folding the paper to show one question at a time, utilizing a task checklist, reducing the number of words or using bullets for word problems. Teachers shared that there is a shared set of expectations of implementing suggested ideas for not only these particular students, but also with students across classes with similar patterns of performance.

- Artifacts from a grade four teacher team evidenced a student opinion writing task that included arguments whether or not a character was a hero based on a provided text. Using the Looking at Student Work protocol, teachers gathered wonderings such as whether or not students knew where to look to gather specific evidence for their opinions. Teachers then identified trends and patterns, noting that those who had been most successful were also effectively use a graphic organizer, citing details and using quotes in their writing, while those who struggled in the task also had challenges with the graphic organizer. Instructional next steps included modeling graphic organizer use, student partnership work to verbalize the process of using evidence for their arguments, and small group instructional teaching points for expanding student use of evidence. Such teacher inquiry, using student performance to identify student trends and patterns for instructional next steps, has positively impacted student academic achievement. In addition to all students making progress in their reading levels from the beginning of the year, internal assessment tracking shows evidence of 66 percent of students closing the achievement gap towards and beyond grade level standards.

- Distributive leadership structures are embedded within the school, with grade leaders rotated each marking period so that there is increased capacity to facilitate inquiry with colleagues. Teacher noticings from grade level and vertical grade meetings are brought to the schoolwide Inquiry Team, composed of representative teachers from across the grades and content areas. Artifacts from the Inquiry Team show evidence of making key instructional decisions, such as determining the schoolwide instructional focus on math instruction, fine tuning assessment analysis such as adding miscue analysis for student reading levels on the schoolwide data tracker to allow for more targeted instruction, and planning for the upcoming school year to implement Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Curricula consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills, such as researching and synthesis of primary documents to conduct a court trial of the Boston Massacre, across grades and subject areas. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using in-class student work, reading levels and benchmark assessment data.

Impact

While a diversity of learners, including students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged in their work, there are missed opportunities to plan for groups of students who are high achieving to elevate their cognitive engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- Planned tasks within lessons and unit plans consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking across grades and subjects. For example, plans for a grade seven social studies unit tasked students with analyzing and synthesizing multiple primary and secondary sources, including in-person testimonies and visual artifacts to conduct a court trial on the Boston Massacre. As the culminating project, students were to take on multiple roles, including prosecuting and/or defense attorneys, witnesses, reporters, and/or a member of the jury, with each needing to master not only the content but to be able to perform credibly their roles. This included as crafting opening arguments, responding to cross examinations in witness testimonies, and reporting the proceedings, within the overall task of deliberating on the fate of British soldiers. Planned supports for a variety of learners, including students with disabilities, included task focusers with scaffolds, tiered texts as well as vocabulary previews.

- Some plans included purposeful curricula extensions for students who were already performing at a high level. For example, lesson plans for a grade five math lesson on the subject of time required students to convert between units of time as part of solving elapsed time work problems. Groups of students, formed based on in-class assessments and exit tickets, were to utilize various strategies such as a number line or their understanding of fractions to break apart problems, as part of their solution approaches. Planned supports included using graphic organizers, analog clock manipulatives and computation charts. For students who had already demonstrated their mastery of time-unit conversions and elapsed time problems, plans include students themselves creating a fluency math game using index cards to represent multiple units of time so that other students performing at various levels could practice. Such planning for meaningful extensions of learning tasks was evident in some but not the vast majority of plans, thus potentially hampering some students developing further their higher-order thinking.

- Curricula and academic tasks are designed using student work and data in order to allow access for diverse learners. For example, plans for a grade four social studies lesson, as part of the schoolwide multicultural celebration, included students focusing on displaying their research results on their assigned country, Brazil. Groups of students, assembled homogenously based on reading levels, in-class performance and their interests, were to focus their inquiry on subtopics such as systems of government, culture and geographic features. Planned student supports included tiered texts, research materials, scaffolds and graphic organizers to reflect student needs based on student work and data. Specifically, students who had been performing at a high level were to focus their work on the Amazon Rainforest. However, such refinement of academic tasks based on student data for the highest achieving students was evident in only some of the planning documents reviewed.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies such as the use of differentiated tasks at learning centers, purposeful groupings, parallel and small group instruction consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

A variety of learners, including students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products, such as researching and synthesizing information for a presentations as part of the schoolwide multicultural day celebration.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade one English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, groups of students worked at six centers each with its own specific foci that were targeted to address the needs of the assigned student needs. These foci included sequencing of story events, opinion writing using writing prompts, spelling using high frequency words, and/or listening to grade-level stories on computers to support comprehension. One center included working with the teacher in a guided reading strategy lesson, utilizing pictures and visual cues to support comprehension. Students in a grade eight science class worked in heterogeneous pairs, formed based on their own self-assessments of mastery of the content material. Students worked to analyze and compare the eccentricity of planetary orbits by constructing, creating and calculating various ellipses. Simultaneously, teachers conducted small group conferences with various partnerships to assess student work, offer small group re-teachings of model construction, and provide visual, focal and content scaffolds to students with disabilities.

- Students in a grade five Integrated Co-Teaching, (ICT), math lesson worked in four different groups based on student in-class performance on exit tickets and math baseline assessments. Center plans included tasks that followed a protocol of Meet with the teacher, At your seat (independently), Technology, and/or Hands-on (MATH). Two teachers each met with two different groups around working on converting measurement units. Follow-up assignments were then given for students to complete at their seat. A technology group worked on online platforms to complete individualized math programs. Simultaneously, a group of students worked in the hands-on station with extension math games that reinforced the unit essential questions of comparing, contrasting and converting customary and metric units.

- Student work products across grades and subject areas reflect high levels of thinking and participation. For example, grade three students conducted an inquiry of Denmark, as part of the schoolwide social studies Multicultural Day. Student groupings, based on student in-class performance, reading levels and student interests, were assigned different topics such as food, interesting places, and mythology/lore that they would research. Each group of students then chose a focus, and decided how they would display their new-found knowledge. For example, the food topic group decided to focus on a famous restaurant in Copenhagen, created a restaurant sign, popular foods and menus to display. Students assigned to general information decided to aggregate their research, serve as Denmark tour guides and create a travel guide that consolidated their research. A group researching Danish folktales noted that in addition to Denmark, the nine other countries being studied as part of the Multicultural Day by different grades also had folktales about giants. They created a synthesis chart, called “forgotten giants” of folktales from ten different countries to be displayed throughout the building. Such student engagement, ownership and high levels of thinking in student work products was a building practice across classrooms visited during this review.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, educators use assessments such as running records, content-based general knowledge benchmark assessments, and task-based rubrics known as Expectations, that are aligned to the school curricula. Teachers use these common assessments to track progress, offer student support and adjust instructional tasks.

Impact
Students receive actionable and meaningful feedback regarding student achievement, and all students are demonstrating increased mastery in their reading performance as measured by their reading levels.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricula-aligned assessment practices of staff members and schoolwide grading policies provide actionable and meaningful feedback across content areas and the vast majority of classes. Teachers use running records, math and ELA general knowledge baseline assessments, as well as unit-aligned pre- and post-tests, on-demand weekly quizzes and performance assessments. In addition, students are given teacher and peer feedback through grade specific teacher-created assessments and rubrics that align with the units of study across all content areas. For example, for an argumentative writing task, teacher feedback included a student self-assessment checklist, as well as a task rubric with articulated expectations for argumentation, evidence, organization, language, conventions and document layout. Specific feedback stated, “[student], great organization, use of evidence to support your reasons; next time, we need to work on using different vocabulary.”

- Interviewed students stated receiving actionable and meaningful feedback to improve their work. Students unanimously described consistent assessment practices across grades and content areas and feedback received from peers and teachers relative to task rubrics, known across the school as Expectations. This included concrete ways to help them improve their work. Students from across the grades stated how they were able to apply their feedback in not only one course, but also to tasks across the other content areas. For example, a student described receiving feedback about how he could use dialogue in a political cartoon to inform his analysis. The student then used that thinking to deepen his arguments in oral and written presentations in his ELA class. Another student described receiving feedback about word choice, and how the student and teacher co-created a word bank that she has since utilized in social studies as part of her argumentative essay. Students also described how teachers follow up on previously given feedback and its impact on completing ensuing tasks.

- Teachers utilize student performance and progress noted in work products and assessments, such as running records, to make adjustments to instruction. Plans and observed practices that utilized student data to formulate differentiated tasks and supports was consistent in reviewed instructional planning documents and in classroom visits across grades and content areas. For example, plans for a grade eight social studies lesson utilized student reading levels, in-class performance and unit pre-assessments to provide tiered texts and differentiated questions as students explored the role of yellow journalism during the Spanish American War. Similarly, in a grade six ELA class, students were observed working in groups based on his/her performance on a literacy analysis assessment, to analyze narrators’ point of view of different fiction and non-fiction texts of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake. Such adjustments to instruction based on assessment practices has resulted in all students including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, (ELLs), making progress to grade level standards or beyond from the start of the year to the date of review, as measured by student reading levels.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders and teachers consistently communicate high instructional expectations to the entire staff through the staff handbook, and individual, grade and faculty meetings. School staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates high expectations to all students.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for staff expectations, and students receive effective feedback and guidance so that students own their educational experience for their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate high expectations for all staff through discussions at schoolwide professional development (PD) days, the teacher handbook, faculty conferences, as well as individual and grade/department conferences. Through these structures, school leaders detail expectations related to academic instruction, social-emotional learning experiences for students and school operations. Additionally, school leaders meet regularly with individual teachers to engage in reviews of professional growth, expectations for high quality teaching and learning and follow-up to implementation of skills and strategies gained from external and internal professional development. To expand capacity in delivering effective instruction, all teachers receive feedback on their performance in relation to best practices highlighted by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Instructional high expectations are further reinforced by a public Commitment Ceremony, where teachers, in front of all students and families, take a pledge to adhere to educational principles of the school.

- School leaders further reinforce high expectations for instruction by providing all teachers with PD support in skill building to improve their proficiency in areas such as designing coherent instruction, with a focus on creating schoolwide coherence on math instruction. Through individual and team discussions at grade, department, and common planning meetings, staff members receive professional development support aligned to their needs and interests. Furthermore, teacher teams collaborate to develop and share curriculum maps, create and analyze lesson plans, and hone strategies for small group instruction to support student access to content material. Structures, such as an online repository for teacher resources across grades and content areas, parent newsletters, curricula maps, teacher team minutes, action plans and student achievement data further reinforce shared and mutual accountability among teachers and staff.

- Staff members communicate expectations and feedback via a myriad of ways that prepare students for the next level. These include the schoolwide grading policy, student pledge, review of project and assignment rubrics before and after units of study through one-on-one conferences with students, and advisement for middle school and high school. Students receive ongoing and detailed feedback from teachers and peers, which is reviewed at conferences with their teachers where they articulate goals and next steps. Interviewed students described feedback they have received such as making better word choices and using academic vocabulary rather than slang, thus supporting their academic goals, such as getting onto the honor roll, or making better personal choices to ensure that they can go to the high school of their choice. Students shared how such feedback and guidance assists in achieving their goals, improving their work, getting a better grade, and impacting their academic next steps.
Findings

School leaders and faculty support the development of all teachers through strategic cycles of observations relative to problems of practice as identified through instructional rounds, and through colleague intervisitations. Teachers receive feedback, which accurately captures their strengths and challenges and outlines next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Feedback that articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, aligns with professional goals, supports teacher development and elevates instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders plan cycles of observations for all teachers around a specific problem of practice, such as assessment or discussion and questioning techniques, identified by informal instructional rounds with supervisory responsibilities for observations strategically aligned to the instructional and content expertise of assistant principals. In addition, these strategic and frequent cycles of observations and support, serve as the basis for organizing peer intervisitations to further enhance teachers ability to develop instructional practices relative to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* domains. Analysis of student work products is included in individual observation debriefs, and is deepened by both one-on-one and teacher team meetings to identify patterns and trends for individuals and groups of students on benchmark assessments, and specific instructional moves for those groups of students, including ELLs and students with disabilities. This analysis is captured in each teacher’s action plan and updated following each benchmark assessment.

- Effective feedback has resulted in positive teacher development and teacher practice. A teacher observation report articulated a strength around asking deeper questions for assessment and elevating student thinking, thus incorporating previous observation feedback to focus on questioning and discussion. Next steps included various suggestions to foster greater student independence, such as using a checklist/expectation guide that is specific to the task so that feedback to groups of students during conferences would not be repetitive and allow for students to monitor their own behavior while working in groups. A subsequent observation report, with improved ratings in engaging students in learning and managing behavior, noted student roles such as table-captains and question masters supported students monitoring their own behavior and learning. During this review, students in this same class were observed working individually in centers, supported by self-managing scaffolds such as focusers, task charts, and extension choice activities to foster greater student independence.

- School leaders utilize individual conferences with teachers to create professional goals and support plans. Interviewed teachers unanimously stated that their observation feedback is concrete and actionable, support their professional goals and improves their practice, which was evident by the review of teacher observation reports. One observation report noted growth in practice where students knew and followed the expectations for independence within math-center rotations, which was aligned with the teacher’s goal of more student independence. Next steps, referring to the schoolwide instructional focus of more coherent math instruction, included utilizing more academic vocabulary in math instruction, and reinforcing content specific vocabulary through math word walls for students to access. During this review, the teacher was observed conducting a small group instruction, reinforcing math content vocabulary as the students converted various units of time, while independent groups worked on math games or with online tools reviewing math concepts or solving elapsed-time word problems.