Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Pathways College Preparatory School: A College Board School

Secondary School 29Q259

109-89 204 Street
Queens
NY 11412

Principal: Fia Davis

Dates of Review:
March 14, 2019 - March 15, 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

Pathways College Preparatory School: A College Board School serves students in grade 6 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>
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<tr>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

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

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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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| Area of Celebration | Well Developed |

1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Systems for Improvement

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

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| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

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

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

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

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

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

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |

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

| Additional Finding | Well Developed |
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**

The school implements practices based on a theory of action and believe strongly in student voice exhibited in structures such as town halls, which informs the approach to culture building, discipline and social-emotional support. There are clear structures in place that support this belief.

**Impact**

The school is a safe and inclusive environment that supports progress towards school goals. Students are well known by all staff that supports students’ academic and personal behaviors.

**Supporting Evidence**

- There are several structures that support the social-emotional well-being of all students. The school uses Restorative Justice practices and as such has implemented restorative circles as one of the primary tools that allows for students to express and identify themselves. They enjoy the benefits of a fulltime restorative justice coordinator that spends a great deal of time working with students. Restorative sessions are scheduled each week and are utilized when there is some form of student crisis. In addition, the school has implemented weekly town hall meetings where students are celebrated for academics, attendance and other social and emotional areas. During the town hall students perform student created songs, dances, or poetry allowing for active and meaningful student participation in school life. In addition, school staff speaks to students about the school's core values, which address respect, responsibility and resilience. Work such as this has resulted in a 55 percent drop in principal and superintendent suspensions in 2018.

- Student voice is evident and accepted throughout the school. Surveys to students identified areas that were of concern. Students shared how they were considering moving to another school because of the uniform policy. As a result, students and school leaders worked together and developed a new line of school clothing called “Pathways Gear.” This includes a wide variety of fashionable uniform options that were enthusiastically agreed upon by both students and staff. Students voiced their interest in being able to leave campus during their lunch periods. As a result, eleventh and twelfth grade students can now leave campus if they are appropriately dressed and have their student identification. It was through active student participation that students are now able to invite friends from other schools to school parties. As a result, the school implemented a policy that requires any outside student to present valid current student identification from their school in order to be allowed into a school function.

- There is a wellness team in the school that includes a guidance counselor and two social workers. These staff members work at the school's fulltime wellness center. One social worker is dedicated to working with students, while the other social worker attends to families on a regular basis in order to provide an entire family with mental health support. The wellness team visits all English Language Arts (ELA) classes and presents workshops to students related to wellness, the structure of the wellness center and their availability to all students at any time. During the meeting with students, several students indicated that the center is a place where they “Love to hang out.” They explained they feel secure and know there is always someone they can talk to in the school. Parents also expressed how “Wonderful” it is to have a wellness center available to them if ever it is needed.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating:          | Proficient |

Findings

Across many, but not as yet the vast majority of classes, teaching practices are aligned to the school’s belief that students learn best through opportunities to engage in high levels of rigorous student discussion.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Rigorous discussions that evidenced high levels of thinking were in evidence across classrooms. During an Advance Placement (AP) Language and Composition class, students worked in groups that included roles such as a facilitator, timekeeper and spokesperson. Students were overheard evaluating how the author utilized rhetorical devices in service of a particular purpose. Students actively supported their findings with evidence from the text. During a seventh-grade math lesson, student groups presented math problems to their classmates. As one student wrote the problem on the board, another member of the group explained the process by which the group completed the problem. All students fully participated and engaged in rigorous discussion for each group. However, during other classes visited, opportunities for students to engage in this type of challenging and rigorous discussion were not as evident.

- Student work products demonstrated high levels of thinking. For example, a science laboratory assignment had students examine diffusion through a membrane and engaged students in creating a cell membrane using dialysis tubing. Students then predicted what would happen to the substances inside and outside of the cell. In an AP Government class students’ writing assignment asked the question “Does the Youth Vote Matter.” The students were to examine the impact that young voters have on elections. Claims were to be supported by data from the 2016 election and included in the writing. During a self-contained math lesson each student constructed and presented a scale-model of the Louvre Museum. In addition to constructing their model, students researched and presented claims and findings using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details they discovered during their research.

- School leaders explained how the statement “He who does the talking, does the learning” sums up how important discussion and rigor is to all lessons. During a tenth-grade ELA lesson, through group discussions students investigated the lesson’s essential question of “How does literature reflect life?” Throughout the lesson, students could be overheard sharing responses such as “I disagree, people with power have a lot of eyes and media on them” and “People with a lot of money are able to buy and pay for whatever they want.” During a sixth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) ELA lesson, students engaged in conversations where they cited text-based evidence and used accountable talk stems as a scaffold to help them engage in-group discourse. However, during an AP US History lesson there were fewer opportunities for students to engage in rigorous discussions.
Additional Finding

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

All staff ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and integrate instructional shifts, most notably literacy across the curriculum. Rigor and higher order skills are consistently emphasized and embedded across grades and subject areas.

Impact

There is coherency across all planning documents that promotes college and career readiness skills and is accessible for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- In order to build curricular coherence across all grades and subjects areas, skills are identified and aligned to college and career readiness. This includes the acronym R.A.C.E. (reword, answer, cite and explain) that was found in all literacy-based lessons which supports student understanding and when answering a constructed response essay question. Teachers ensure that these skills are found in all documents so that all students are introduced to this skill in the middle school and continuously use and master the skill in high school. Additionally, there is clear coherence in lesson planning using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning strategies. For example, an AP Language and Composition lesson plan includes questioning strategies in order to guide instruction, differentiation between groups, and challenge students by incorporating higher-level DOK enrichment questions in the lesson plan. Directives such as “Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument” were evidence in plans reviewed.

- Lesson plans include detailed sections outlining the modifications and scaffolds to be used for all learners. For example, a public speaking plan has a built-in section entitled “What are the ways in which I account for the varied learning needs of my Gen Ed/students with disabilities/English Language Learners (ELL) students?” Listed in this section are content, process, product and misconceptions that will support each student throughout the lesson. A sixth/seventh-grade math lesson includes the identical planning along with detailed information for student grouping which may include a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. In addition, math-planning documents include the various manipulatives, such as counters, picture support, and calculators that will support students to engage in high-level mathematical equations while not reducing the rigor of the content.

- Science curricular documents evidence coherence in planning as they include the phenomena to be investigated, student predictions, observations and explanations in addition to a writing section focusing on the claim of the experiment studied. Math lesson plans include direct, real-world connections and applications as well as ways that students will make their thinking visible. For example, a sixth-grade lesson plan includes questions that ask students how the activity personally connects to them. A second grade math plan engages students in constructing a scale model of a museum and gives students’ choice in how to demonstrate what they will learn.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classes, teachers use or design specific rubrics and common assessments providing weekly updates as to the results, offering a clear portrait of student mastery. Throughout the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use a variety of assessment practices to regularly check of understanding.

Impact

Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students that allow all students to demonstrate increased mastery. Instructional adjustments are made that effectively meet the needs of all leaners and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are provided with feedback that identifies an area of strength indicated as a glow and an actionable next step designated as a grow. Feedback to a student's math problem included praising the student for his addressing the errors by constructing and showing the correct solution and providing next steps that reminded the student in the future to explain why multiplication was the appropriate strategy to use for this problem. On a student's writing piece the glow praises the student for their "Eloquent writing style that showcases your skill in explaining." The teacher provided next steps that advised student to be sure and spend equal amounts of development on certain characters and the “valuable discussion” that takes place between those characters. During the meeting with students, all of them were able to express the impact that feedback has on their performance. One student explained that in Spanish class, feedback enables her to remember to address mistakes in spelling. While another student explained how he emailed a presentation that he created with his teacher because “values his feedback.”

- The school uses a variety of assessments and tools to monitor and track student progress towards goals. Most notably there is a list of students (by student identification numbers) in every class that are updated weekly. Staff is able to track students’ progress through the weekly updates and adjust instruction as needed. All students and staff spoke regularly about “The Wall” and how anytime they want to see their progress they simply go to “The Wall.” Grade teams regularly review interim assessment data and isolate key skills that indicate the need for additional instruction and adjust lessons accordingly. Additionally, teachers’ regularly monitor and track student progress through student IEP meetings. Students, parents and teachers regularly review and update student IEP’s to ensure that all students’ learning needs are being met and they are progressing towards their goals.

- Teachers use a variety of ways to check for understanding. Throughout all the classrooms visited, teachers conferenced with students and tracked conferences by using a checklist, anecdotal notes or an electronic assessment tracker. Additionally, teachers utilize thumbs up/down and Popsicle sticks to select random students in order to gauge student comprehension throughout the lesson. During several lessons, teachers made adjustments to lessons based on conference data that resulted in individual instruction, or the creation of differentiated learning groups. During the meeting with students, every student shared work examples and was able to clearly explain what they could have done differently, or needed to do in order to receive the best possible score on their assignment. They explained that feedback and the specific direction their teachers give them, they have a “clear understanding” of what they need to do to get a better grade the next time.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high professional and instructional expectations to the entire staff often using slogans to convey goals. School leaders and staff consistently communicate and partner with families and students informing them of a unified set of learning behaviors and outcomes.

Impact

Staff holds themselves mutually accountable and is offered training and support in order to reach all schoolwide expectations. Due to the strong support, effective feedback and guidance practices students own their educational experience and are ready for their next level.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are communicated at the start of every school year. This year the slogan is “This is the year” referencing how the school is in year three of their cycle of change. School leaders and faculty have developed a list of school-wide goals for school improvement that are clearly communicated. This is done through pre and post feedback conversations with teachers where the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric is always visible on the large screen in the principal’s office and referenced throughout the session. Teachers hold themselves accountable for meeting all schoolwide instructional expectations by designing and volunteering for intervisitation instructional rounds. During these sessions, groups of teachers visit colleagues and offer feedback after each visit along with suggestions regarding practices that will result in having greater impact on student learning. In addition, school leaders and teachers worked together to help and improve teacher attendance for groups of teachers. Data indicates that those teachers who were in need of improving their attendance have significantly decreased their absences thus improving consistency in instruction for their students.

- Since the school is an early college access school, families are well prepared for the college application and selection process. Students begin taking Regents exams in the eighth grade and each year students in the ninth to eleventh grade take the Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSATs). Families are offered a large number of workshops that include; college financial aid night, college application night, as well as trips to college campuses. During the meeting with parents all expressed that they have a partnership with the school. One parent stated, “Communication here is really top-notch.” Parent explained that regardless of whether they have an appointment or not, they are always accommodated and seen by someone. Everyone agreed that if you come in unannounced and want to speak to someone staff make it happen.”

- All students know how they are performing in all of their classes. Students regularly monitor their grades on the school’s web-based platform. All students are registered and actively use the program. Students shared how this program is “So important” to tracking their progress. One student said, “Anytime we want to know how we are going, we just go and log on.” In addition, students explained that there are scheduled “Data days” when they are given time to review their portfolios, assessments and work products and conference with their teachers to check for progress. Students know how they are doing in their classes through their IEP meetings. One student explained that after his IEP meeting he knows if he met his goal or has to adjust his goal.” In addition, all students once again shared how they can simply go to “The Wall” and see their scores and track their progress.
Findings
The vast majority of teachers are engaged in professional inquiry-based collaborations and engage in leadership programs, such as corrective action lessons that are embedded throughout the school schedule.

Impact
There is strengthened teacher instructional capacity, schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement, most notably on state exams. Teacher voice plays a key role in decisions made that impact the entire school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in grade and subject specific teams engaging in inquiry to identify strategies to support groups of students. Teacher teams are participating in corrective action lessons where they discuss a lesson during team meetings, teach it, revise it and then reteach the lesson based on data and feedback collected from peers. Teachers give each other feedback with a focus on improving instruction. Teachers believe that team meetings allow for stronger collaboration, which strengthens their instructional capacity and their ability to support students with the “Best instruction possible.” As a result, increases in student achievement at the state level are in evidence. A review of the data for 2018 indicates a 14 percent increase in the school's middle grades New York state math scores.

- According to school leaders, teacher leadership is always charged with delivering best practices and support to their peers. Teachers have been identified as Model Teachers and are receiving targeted professional development that they turnkey to members of their departments. Teachers stated that they have input in their professional learning as well and provide support to each other. Teacher leaders took charge of the testing team and ensure that scheduling and all regulations are followed during testing sessions. Additionally, teachers are part of the principal's extended cabinet and actively share input as far as curricular and pedagogical decisions. Teachers played an active role in implementing instructional rounds. Furthermore, when the Quality Review dates were announced, teachers initiated the development of teams to self-evaluate the school to prepare and identify gaps prior to the review.

- One particular effect of the work of teacher teams is found in the area of teacher accountability. Through consistent analysis and review of assessments teachers assume increased accountability for student progress and specifically what supports they can offer students. Teacher teams focus on summative assessments and consistently collaborate to identify Common Core aligned standards. Teachers are quick to share that it is “wonderful” to learn from their colleagues. A newly assigned first year teacher said that he looks to his peers for best practices and innovative ways that he can employ to support his students. Teachers believe that the impact of their improved teacher practice has been a large factor in the 14 percent increase in the number of students achieving proficiency on the 2017-2018 New York State ELA exam.