Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Hunters Point Community Middle School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 30Q291
1-50 51St Avenue
Queens
NY 11101

Principal: Sarah Goodman

Dates of Review:
March 6, 2019 - March 7, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jerry Brito
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

Hunters Point Community Middle School serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. 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>
<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</strong></td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 1.4 Positive Learning Environment
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a theory of action that focuses on the inclusion of all students into the school community. Professional development (PD), family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports are strategically aligned to the building of an inclusive school community.

Impact

Students benefit from a safe environment that is inclusive, respectful, and meaningfully involves their voice through venues such as the student council. The school involves student voice in decision-making processes so that the result is their adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is centered on the concept that all students are welcomed in the school community and is informed by a focus on the mastery standards used to guide academic and social-emotional learning. Hunters Point Community Middle School (HPCMS) is co-located with a District 75 (D75) school that services students with disabilities. Both schools have a partnership in which select students from the D75 school are incorporated into HPCMS’s general education classes. The D75 students are welcomed into the HPCMS community and expected to engage in the same curricula as their general education counterparts. In addition, school leadership, faculty and students are constantly engaged in discussions on how to make the school even more inclusive. Consequently, the school partners with Kaleidoscope of Friends, an organization that looks to incorporate traditionally marginalized student populations into traditional school settings. Through this partnership, the school engages in discussions with staff, students and parents on how to continue to build an inclusive community for students with physical and cognitive disabilities. For example, this partnership held a series of discussions with all members of the school community during Inclusive School’s Week on how to best welcome students with disabilities. During a student meeting, all agreed that the school is very inclusive, and all are welcome.

- The school’s emphasis on culture building is focused on issues of diversity within the school community. The school has a team dedicated to engaging the school community, including parents, on issues of building greater diversity. At a January meeting, team members discussed the results of a recent survey sent out to faculty and students to determine their needs about diversity and next steps. The team agreed on several actions to be conducted for the latter half of the school year, including the beginning a parent diversity panel and using a teacher inquiry cycle to determine how best to racially and ethnically diversify the staff. In addition, the school focuses on student mental health in their professional development work. In February, the school ran a series of teacher workshops focused on identifying students experiencing anxiety and identified strategies to address and alleviate it.

- The school’s student council contributes ideas that affect the operational and social-emotional structures that align to the school’s goal of building an inclusive school culture that honors positive behaviors. In a series of December meetings, the student council proposed changes to the school’s cell phone policy for the upcoming school year, including allowing students to use their cell phones as a privilege during their lunch period as a way to celebrate positive behaviors. Student voice is also evident in the creation of clubs that support students’ social and emotional growth. Students stated that they felt that the school community needed recognize and honor its Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) students. This year, with the advisement and support of school staff, students began a LGBTQ club that focuses on celebrating its members and educating the wider school community. Overall, students agreed, and evidence demonstrates, that students’ ideas are key to implementing initiatives that align to and promote the school’s vision of building an inclusive community where all are welcome and honored.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum

Rating: Well Developed

Findings

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate rigorous texts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

Curricular documents address coherence across grades and subject areas by promoting college and career readiness for all students. Though rigorous habits and higher-order skills are designed so all learners must demonstrate their thinking, differentiated work tasks for English Language Learners (ELLs), and students with disabilities are not yet clearly delineated in the curricular documents.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core and strategically integrate rigorous student texts. For instance, these texts form the foundation for academically challenging tasks that foster student discussion and engagement. In a unit plan focused on the United States (US) Constitution, students are tasked with studying primary documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, to analyze federalism, republicanism, and checks and balances. The plan also called for students to determine how these concepts in governance frame recent news events related to gun violence. Lesson plans are designed using these documents and culminate in research projects in which students identify and plan for a change in society they would like to see. In an eighth-grade English Language Arts, (ELA) unit plan, students are tasked with exploring their personal history through objective and subjective analysis and writing using the book *Farewell to Manzanar*. Using the text, students are identifying the differences between objective and subjective writing, the effect of multiple perspectives on identity, and have to explore their personal history. The plan also calls for the use of texts related to World War II to enhance student understanding of the unit's guiding questions.

- Academic tasks that are planned according to student needs embed higher-order skills so that a diversity of learners must demonstrate their thinking. In an eighth-grade science lesson plan, students are tasked with developing and presenting a research project with the premise of creating a three-part training manual based on reproduction, DNA, and inheritance. Students develop their projects in student groups, which are determined based on a previously conducted science assessment. Students engage in discussions and critique each other’s projects using a four-point presentation rubric. In a seventh-grade ELA lesson plan, the learning objective is that students can analyze their supporting character’s point-of-view by adding five different ideas to a chart. Students are grouped homogenously and are provided the appropriate scaffolds and supports such as checklists. However, these scaffolds only identified in some instances ELLs and students with disabilities, precluding them from having full access into the curriculum.

- Curricular materials consistently embed rigorous habits that make the content accessible to all learners. In a sixth and seventh-grade self-contained lesson plan, students are expected to read age-appropriate books for the purpose of identifying the main character in the story. Students engage in discussions using hand signals to indicate when they would like to contribute. A graphic organizer is supplied to select students to help organize their thoughts. The plan includes a review of student’s individual reading goals to be used when conferring with the teacher. A review of curricular documents demonstrates a consistent focus on rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all learners, though specific identification of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities was not always evident.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the beliefs that students learn best when engaged in productive struggle and student-led discussions. Student discussions lead to meaningful work products.

Impact
Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, the belief that students learn best when engaged in productive struggle is evident in the form of rigorous tasks and student projects. In one eighth-grade Integrated Co-teaching, (ICT) classroom, students were in homogenous groups working on developing individual student projects centered on how a genetic counselor collects and uses data. In some groups, students presented their Power Point presentations to their peers, who provided feedback using a Genetic Counselor Presentation rubric aligned to the school’s mastery standards and the Common Core. In other groups, students were provided graphic organizers, along with individual support from paraprofessionals, to help in their developing an understanding of how scientists make predictions based on data collected. All group activities were focused on developing individual presentations. In a seventh-grade math class, students were tasked with determining whether a method for an outcome is fair by studying probability models. Students were working in groups and each group was provided with tasks commiserate with their proficiency levels. Student groups discussed the assigned tasks using manipulatives such as dice and spinners to determine probability. Overall, student tasks were rigorous, thus leading to productive struggle and meaningful work products requiring student ownership for their successful completion.

- Across a vast majority of classrooms, high levels of thinking and student-to-student discussions were evident. In a seventh-grade ELA classroom, students were working on analyzing a character’s point-of-view by using the book Forge by Laurie Halse Anderson. Students analyzed the last lines from a chapter in the book with a particular focus on a character’s point-of-view. Students then engaged in partner talk and discussed five different traits they noticed that constitutes that character’s point-of-view as the teacher memorialized student discussions. The results of the analysis of point-of-view would then inform students’ development of characters in their own narrative writing assignment. In a sixth-grade social studies class, students were learning the key factors to build a thriving civilization by developing a creation myth that explains a natural phenomenon. Students worked in groups and engaged in discussions using a table discussion protocol. From the discussions, student groups wrote down their myths on worksheets that varied according to a group’s instructional needs. A review of classroom practices reveals high levels of student discussions that demonstrate in-depth understanding and analysis of content.

- In all classrooms visited, work products were designed to be rigorous. In a sixth-grade self-contained special education ELA class, students were engaged in independent reading time during which they read a proficiency leveled-appropriate book. Students were comparing their reading proficiency to a four-point rubric that rated such areas as reading stamina and engagement. As they read, students are noting where they think they fall on the rubric. As the class read, the teacher conferred with select students to analyze their reading, take note of it, and provide support. In all classrooms visited, work products were designed to challenge all student thinking that allow them opportunities to reflect upon their own learning.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

Rubrics are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. The school uses common assessments such as Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals, track progress, adjust curricular and inform instructional decisions.

**Impact**

Actionable and meaningful feedback provides students and teachers with valuable information regarding student achievement. Results from common assessments demonstrate increased mastery for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and staff use content and task-aligned rubrics to provide students with clear, meaningful feedback for improvement. For an ELA extended writing assignment, students tackled the question of how authors create mood through word choice as evidenced in the books *All Summer in a Day, Mother and Daughter, and The White Umbrella*. Using a four-point extended response rubric embedded directly onto the essay, teachers added in color-coded comments on the side of the document corresponding to the area on the rubric to which they pertained. In one example, the teacher highlighted a scene described by the student and stated, “You need to bring this into the reader’s experience. Why would this make you feel gloomy?” This particular feedback was aligned to the specific sub-indicator on the rubric, thus justifying the student’s rating with clear and explicit feedback, including next steps.

- Feedback from both teachers and their peers includes one compliment (glow) and one next step (grow) aligned with a content-specific rubric. In one social studies lesson a student’s writing assignment included a glow that contained peer feedback which was used to add dialogue in her writing. As a next step, the teacher advised the student to add more details to a scene while also adding more power words, words being studied in class. The teacher stated that this will boost her rating on the rubric related to vocabulary. During one meeting, all students confirmed that they receive detailed and meaningful feedback in all their assignments. Overall, there is evidence in all classrooms of detailed feedback that is specifically aligned to content-specific rubrics.

- School leadership and teachers review common assessment data to form a clear picture of student progress towards academic goals and to determine student groupings and needed scaffolds. As a result, the school is identifying students of varying proficiency levels and providing appropriate academic supports to reach or exceed mastery. For example, a review of data from a recently administered DRP assessment demonstrated an average four percent growth in reading proficiency when compared to the baseline given at the beginning of the school year. This data informed adjustments in classroom groupings and text supports across grade and content areas. It also impacted adjustments to both scaffolds and teaching strategies in the school’s Cerebral Diversity classes, designed to provide enrichment or extra support depending on student needs. In addition, students track their own progress using the DRP scores, revising their academic goals, and reflect on their own next steps in order to achieve their goals. A review of student data binders and schoolwide data tracking systems reveal that results from assessments are consistently used to track student progress, make adjustments to instructional strategies, and inform individually developed student academic goals.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through communication tools such as the staff handbook. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
The school culture results in mutual accountability for high expectations. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families to support their children’s progress toward high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff handbook outlines the academic, operational, and social-emotional framework used to inform the school’s operations. A key feature of the handbook is an in-depth explanation of the academic expectations and grading policy, which is based on the mastery standards focused on scholarship, creativity, and community. This mastery grading policy, based on a four-point rubric, refers to when students have mastered a skill so they use it independently and consistently. The staff handbook also outlines the use of *JumpRope*, the school’s online gradebook that staff, students and parents can access. The staff is given a detailed primer on how to use the program, including how to identify honor roll students and to assign homework. The mastery standards and grading policy are evident schoolwide in all classrooms and hallways, and their use are evident in teacher planning and student work products. The result is a culture where high expectations are valued, clear, and apparent throughout the school community.

- School leaders and staff partner with families to effectively communicate expectations to prepare their children for college and career. The school invites parents on learning walks so they get to see the academic work taking place in classrooms and help them develop a deeper understanding of how they can help their children at home. In a parent meeting, one parent indicated that she recently went on a learning walk focused on looking for evidence of the use of the claim, evidence, and reasoning (CER) protocol, used to help students make claims and provide supporting evidence in their work. In addition, parents are provided opportunities to learn about the high school admissions process. Seventh-grade parents attended a workshop on the high school admission process, which explained the requirements for screened and specialized high schools. There was also a clear connection made between academic performance and getting into a desired high school. In all, there is clear evidence that the school partners with families to establish and maintain high academic standards.

- School leaders and staff have systems of communication in place to inform families about their children’s academic performance. The school distributes a student and family handbook that outlines curricula, academic expectations and opportunities for them to provide extra academic support to their children. In addition, the school sends DRP reading assessment letters to families three times a year that details their child’s current reading proficiency rate, the growth in comparison to previous DRP assessments, and a predicted ELA State test score. A review of communications to families reveals that they gain an in-depth understanding of the tools needed to support their children’s academic progress.
Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations that promote the school’s focus on providing rigorous work assignments accessible to all students. Distributed leadership structures are embedded within the school community.

Impact

Collaborations within professional teams have strengthened teacher instructional capacity schoolwide while data reveals increases in student achievement. Teachers build leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions, such as in developing professional development sessions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that promote the adoption and implementation of best instructional practices schoolwide. In a sixth-grade teacher team meeting, the focus was to analyze data from the mock State ELA and math tests. Using a data analysis protocol, teachers first looked at the data, jotting down their findings. Next, individual findings were shared with team members as a recorder memorialized them in an online document form. With respect to ELA, it was determined that sixth-grade students were struggling with inferential thinking. In math, the data indicated that students were not citing evidence properly in word problems to be able to achieve the correct answer. Next, team members broke up into their department teams to determine how best to approach the identified areas of focus within their content specialty. The result was a greater focus on using the C.E.R. method in ELA and social studies. In science and math, the decision was made to focus on introducing text and word problems that mirrored the state exams. Teachers also determined that there needs to be push to incorporate essay-writing assignments into the school’s Saturday intervention program.

- Teacher teams engage in cycles of learning informed by formative student performance data. In one seventh-grade ELA inquiry team meeting, teachers, after analyzing student writing data, looked at how best to get students in their short and extended responses to give sound reasoning aligned with text evidence. Team members agreed to extend the amount of time students have to discuss their work so that students can analyze in-depth the connection between reasoning and evidence. They identified six students in each class who will be the focus of an inquiry cycle, which pre-assessment and post-assessments to use, and the scaffolds to be implemented. Post-assessment data indicated that tracked students used the ideas from other students along with their own to enhance the connection between reasoning and evidence. As a next step, it was determined that the grade should eliminate the free-writing portion of student work and focus more on the discussion protocol used during the inquiry cycle. A review of teacher team minutes schoolwide reveals that teachers use the inquiry process to regularly revise their planning, resulting in increased student progress and mastery.

- Each teacher team is has two staff members who lead the inquiry work driving instructional changes schoolwide. In addition, teachers plan and lead professional development sessions such as the best way to incorporate math into the other content areas. During a teacher meeting, teachers agreed that they play a key role in the school’s decision-making process, especially regarding curriculum development. One teacher stated that teachers lead the work centered on developing best practices that helps inform adjustments to the school’s curriculum.