Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Young Women's Leadership School, Queens
Secondary School 28Q896
150-91 87 Road
Queens
NY 11432

Principal: Mala Panday

Dates of Review:
October 16, 2018 - October 17, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Reiter
**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**

Young Women's Leadership School, Queens 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>1.1 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>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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
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<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from strategic cycles of observations. Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback to teachers from classroom observations elevates their instructional practices. Additionally, feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development through differentiated professional learning, and aligns with professional goals for teachers as well as the instructional focus of the school.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item is supported with specific, detailed evidence from the observed class to justify the rating. Included at the end of each report are strengths, quick wins, and next steps that are aligned with teacher goals and the instructional focus. For example, one observation includes feedback to “design a plan that will allow students a sufficient amount of time to summarize or reflect on what they have learned for each lesson. Create an exit ticket in Google classroom that will give live data.” Additionally, school leaders plan strategic cycles of observations that include all teachers receiving more than the minimum number. School leaders prioritize teacher need based on previous observations and teacher growth from Advance data from the previous year. Additionally, school leaders meet with each teacher three times a year to review progress in each domain and reflect on next steps. Thus, these practices elevate instruction and promote the professional growth of teachers.

- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers’ strengths and challenges and includes next steps so that teachers can improve their practice and impact on student success. Next steps are connected to the school's instructional focus and teachers' professional goals. For example, one observation report praised the teacher for planning and asking questions that sought to deepen student knowledge and suggested developing a system to collect whole-class assessment data. The report ended by stating that the teacher will receive support on implementing this system during the next two professional development sessions. Another report commended a teacher for creating an environment of high student accountability. Next steps included expanding the use of a participation tracker to include specific questions in the lesson. The report detailed possible questions to include and aligned to the teacher’s professional goal of utilizing the gradual release-of-responsibility model. Therefore, feedback provided to teachers is consistently aligned with professional goals and supports teacher development.

- Teacher peers, such as the peer-collaborative teacher, support the development of teachers through peer observation and intervisitation aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, the peer-collaborative teacher conducted several classroom visits of teachers throughout the school and noticed a trend of connecting the skill taught to real-world applications. Additionally, the peer-collaborative teacher worked with another teacher to develop a system of gradual release for classroom discussions, which aligns with the teacher’s goals and the school’s instructional focus. All teachers present agreed that they receive feedback that improves their practice from both school leaders and peers. Consequently, teacher peers join school leaders in implementing strategies that promote teachers’ professional growth.
Area of Focus

<table>
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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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when provided with student-centered learning opportunities. While teaching practices consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula, high-quality supports and extensions vary across classrooms.

Impact

All students are engaged in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best includes teachers using a workshop model approach, providing opportunities for students to collaborate, and leveraging positive teacher-student interactions to encourage students to engage in discussions and complete more complex tasks. This was evident across classrooms and led to meaningful student work products. For example, in an Advanced Placement (AP) United States History class, students engaged in a Socratic seminar using primary source documents to discuss Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The students facilitated the discussion, building on one another’s responses and challenging each other’s thinking when appropriate. One student said, “I immediately thought of a fascist government. In a society where people have one way of thinking, there is no diversity.” Another student then cited evidence from a text, stating that James Madison says it is the various thoughts in a republic that will make it strong. The teacher briefly interjected to ask students to clarify a phrase and then turned the discussion back over to the students. The class ended with students providing feedback to each other and writing their thesis statements for their upcoming essays.

- In a Geometry class, students completed a warm-up activity that was a review of the previous lesson. Students worked collaboratively to describe how far to rotate an image without using an angle of rotation. Several students shared their responses with the class before the teacher reviewed three key points to remember when completing transformations: the center of rotation, direction, and measure. During a grade-eight English Language Arts (ELA) class, after a mini-lesson on providing peer feedback, students critiqued each other’s writing and offered feedback using an online platform. Students also included a rationale for their comments. While teaching practices were aligned with the school’s articulated beliefs, in some classrooms there were missed opportunities to deepen students’ understanding through structured discussion protocols. For example, in a grade-six science classroom, students were instructed to write their answers from the previous lesson on chart paper. While students were released quickly to a group task, they were not provided with a discussion protocol or other structure that would have deepened their work.

- While all students had access to various supports such as wall charts, notes, and teacher support, strategic supports and extensions are not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms. For example, in a grade-nine English class, targeted students received an additional graphic organizer to help organize their thoughts. In a U.S. History class, students were given one of three tasks that were differentiated based on student ability. Each group was also provided with extension questions. However, such strategic supports and extensions were not used in most classrooms, as all students were given the same charts and notes to use for additional support.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teacher teams work together ensuring curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrating the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

Integration of the instructional shifts such as writing from sources and applying and understanding math standards, along with the identification of a progression of skills supporting AP courses, has resulted in coherence across grades and content areas. The school’s emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills requires that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of unit and lesson plans reveals there is alignment with the Common Core and New York State content-area standards. Additionally, there is evidence of the integration of the instructional shifts, with an emphasis on writing from sources. For example, the requirement that students support arguments with text-based evidence as well as an emphasis on literacy experiences is addressed across grades and content areas. Thus, a grade-seven science unit plan details how students will write a memoir as a rock going through the rock cycle. A grade-eight ELA lesson plan includes a task in which students write a letter from the point of view of the author of *Inside Out and Back Again*, using details from the text as they describe the author’s escape from Vietnam. Therefore, there is evidence of coherence across grades and content areas that promotes college and career readiness for all students.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, there is evidence of the mathematical instructional shifts dual intensity and real-world application. A grade nine Geometry lesson plan details how students will practice transformations and then engage in a self-assessment to demonstrate understanding of the standards taught. Students will complete problems that are labeled as approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standard. Students will then discuss areas of strength and improvement and identify peers who can support them in developing their skills. A grade six lesson plan included real-world examples in which students must utilize the order of operations. Additionally, students must identify errors in a solution to a math problem and provide the correct answer, thus demonstrating the shift of dual intensity.

- Lesson plans include activities requiring students to demonstrate their thinking through discussion or writing. A Global History lesson plan for an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class indicates that students will analyze images of Napoleon from which they will infer how he was perceived over time. Students will then engage in a discussion in which they defend their opinions of which image best captures Napoleon’s true nature. Included in the lesson plan is a final task for students to write a Regents-exam based essay. A grade-six ICT math lesson plan indicates students will work in pairs to solve multi-step problems in which they use the distributive property to create equivalent expressions. Additionally, students will explain how finding the area of a rectangle is related to the distributive property. A grade-ten English lesson plan includes a task that requires students to analyze a poem and complete an on-demand writing task based on the themes, subjects, and events found in the piece, as well as the literary devices the poet uses. Thus, all students demonstrate their thinking throughout all grades and content areas.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices, such as conferencing, exit slips, and whole-group questioning, consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback that includes next steps. Additionally, teachers make effective adjustments to ensure all students’ needs are being met.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics to assess student work and provide actionable, written feedback to students on tasks such as essays, math performance assessments, or other culminating tasks. Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. Feedback to students on math tasks guides students through questioning and targeted next steps. For example, one student received warm feedback that the equation used made sense. The cool feedback and next step were, “If the x-value is height and the y-value is the arm span, what is the relationship between them? Use variables for your equation.” Other examples of written feedback to students include, “Try to end your story in a way that signifies the end of the work,” “Write a short description in each theme,” and “Change your sentence structure.” Additionally, evidence of the use of rubrics by teachers and students across grades was apparent on hallway bulletin boards, on classroom displays, and in student work portfolios.

- One student reports and all others present agreed that feedback given by their teachers has a direct impact on their work. A grade 10 student shared that the rubric and teacher feedback helped her improve from the first essay to the second essay. She said, “My analysis was not strong on the first essay. I used feedback to try a different strategy called, ‘say, does, because’ and I improved.” A grade 12 student shared that she received feedback to be more specific and provide examples in her college essay. Therefore, students receive actionable feedback across grades and content areas that positively impact student performance.

- Teachers continually check for understanding through reviewing exit tickets and past assignments, conferencing with students, and using whole-group questioning and making adjustments based on these assessments. For example, in a grade-nine Geometry class, the teacher asked what the word measure meant in the context of transformations. Additionally, students engaged in a self-assessment task in this class to determine their progress toward meeting the standards. In an AP U.S. History class, the teacher paused the student discussion to ask what the word minority represented in 1789. Students then continued the discussion using examples that represented minority of thought, which linked back to the teacher’s previous question. In both classrooms, teachers were clarifying misconceptions students had based on their previous work and responses. Teachers also conferenced with students and made adjustments for individual or small groups of students. For example, in a grade-10 U.S. History class, students worked in small groups and the teacher provided each group with targeted questions and support. One group was given support regarding how the population census can impact voting outcomes while another group received clarification on a vocabulary term. Additionally, students used self- and peer-assessment tools across classrooms to support their learning needs.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<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 expectations and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students, such as all students are college-bound.

Impact
Communication around high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability. Students, including high-need subgroups, develop ownership over post-high school next steps through a college-bound initiative.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through a faculty handbook and principal newsletters that contain information connected to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Sections of the handbook clearly state schoolwide expectations regarding pedagogical practices such as using the workshop model, conducting intervisitations, and receiving feedback. Moreover, newsletters and other communication make clear the schoolwide goals. For example, teachers are expected to choose a professional goal that is aligned to either a system of innovation or a system of release in the classroom. Teachers collaboratively discuss their choices of a professional goal with school leaders during one-on-one meetings. A review of the school’s professional development plan revealed that there are three cycles of learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The first cycle focuses on planning and preparation. All teachers present at the teacher meeting agreed that they received professional development supporting schoolwide expectations, as well as individual goals. Additionally, high expectations are established and reinforced through faculty meetings, emails, and team meetings.

- Evidence of a culture of mutual accountability exists between school leaders and staff. At the teacher meeting, teachers came to a quick consensus that they hold school leaders accountable. For instance, teachers shared that they desired more peer feedback, in addition to feedback from school leaders, to meet their professional goals. In response to this, the peer-collaborative teacher developed an intervisitation schedule and protocol that was implemented. Another teacher shared that she frequently invites school leaders into her classroom for an informal observation, and they always either accommodate her or schedule a different time to visit. All present at the teachers’ meeting agreed that was a common practice. One teacher shared, “This is a very collaborative school. We all support each other and have high expectations for each other.”

- Teams and staff establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations. All students present at the student meeting agreed that teachers, counselors, and school leaders provide them with feedback and support to ensure they are prepared for college. Additionally, school leaders and guidance counselors meet weekly for strategic data check-ins to identify students in need of additional support and to develop action plans. Students and parents meet with the College-Bound counselor beginning in junior year. During this initial meeting, student transcripts, along with various test scores, are reviewed, and possible college opportunities are discussed. Students have one-on-one meetings with the College-Bound counselor as they complete their college essays and applications. One student shared that she received support on writing her college essay and was now working on her supplemental materials. The impact of these supports is a 100 percent college acceptance rate, including acceptance to five Ivy League schools.
## Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that conduct action research and analyze student work. A distributed leadership structure empowers teachers to positively affect student learning through assuming various leadership roles and through using an open-door policy to share with leaders ideas for initiatives and professional development.

### Impact

Collaborations within vertical and grade-based teams strengthen teachers’ instructional capacities, which has led to schoolwide coherence and increased student achievement. Teachers’ voices are integral to decisions around course offerings and expectations that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams and vertical content teams examine student work to identify trends, curricular modifications, and supports needed to increase student performance. For example, the grade-eight team reviewed students' quick-writes from ELA and noticed that students needed more support in identifying and analyzing relevant evidence. It was determined that students would benefit from being shown an exemplar and using sentence starters. As a result of this, all students demonstrated improvement in both identifying and analyzing relevant evidence. Additionally, the social studies teacher also incorporated those strategies into her class and saw an improvement in student writing. The English team determined that across grades and classes, students were struggling to grasp the language of the aim of the lesson required of them. The team decided to write the verbs in the aim in bold or capital letters to highlight what students needed to complete. The team also included short mini-lessons on such language to build students’ academic vocabulary and understanding. This strategy was evident across all classrooms, thus demonstrating schoolwide coherence, which teachers stated has increased student performance.

- The Advanced Placement Team, comprised of all AP teachers, met to share their analysis of the baseline assessments from their respective courses. Teachers shared noticings from students in the first and fourth quartile. After each teacher shared, they discussed trends across the different courses and developed an action plan. The team determined that across all courses, students struggled to retain essential information taught in previous grades or courses. Teachers then brainstormed ideas that they could implement in classrooms that might promote students’ retention of information and skills. Possible solutions included having students write a six-word sentence at the end of each class explaining what they learned and using the restate, rephrase, reword, and record (4R) protocol. The team also discussed presenting their recommendations at the next professional development to have these strategies implemented across the school.

- Teachers play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school. The Laying the Foundation team, which is comprised of teachers across grades and content areas, facilitates weekly professional development sessions aligned to the needs of teachers. Additionally, teachers turnkey their professional learning during weekly whole-staff professional development sessions. Teachers have a voice in course offerings. For example, an AP Seminar class on women and fairy tales was proposed and designed by a teacher. Additionally, teachers create and plan different academic celebrations that highlight student learning. For instance, a math teacher developed a middle school math portfolio event that includes student reflection and parent participation.