Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. Q993
K-12 all grades 75Q993
85-15 258 Street
Queens
NY 11001

Principal: Jacqueline Zaretsky

Dates of Review:
May 30, 2019 - May 31, 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

P.S. Q993 serves students in grade K 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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
<td></td>
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<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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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 classrooms, teachers create assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the curricula. The school uses common assessments that create a clear picture of student progress towards goals, and monitor student understanding through teachers’ and paraprofessionals’ active and frequent checks for understanding.

Impact

Students are provided with actionable and meaningful feedback that allows all learners to demonstrate increased mastery. Teachers make effective adjustments that meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are provided with feedback that is meaningful and actionable capturing student strengths and offering clear next steps. All students were able to speak to the feedback they receive. One student stated, “The teachers always tell us what we did well and what needs to be fixed.” Other statements by students included how they know what they need to do in order to get a perfect score on any test or homework assignment. Additionally, students explained how helpful and effective the use of rubrics is when they are doing a task. Rubrics are used in all their classes and they know that using them has helped them improve their work by making them aware of what they need to include and what needs to be addressed before completing the assignment.

- School leaders believe that analyzing assessment data is an effective approach to help drive instruction, create IEP goals, and monitor student learning. For example, specially designed instruction (SDI) checks are done at the end of every lesson using an SDI checklist that helps teachers plan lessons for the following day. After each unit of study assessments are administered to capture student progress for targeted skills and is noted in students’ portfolios. Teachers use assessment-tracking sheets that provide students’ baseline scores in all areas and are updated at the midyear meetings and again at the end of the school year. Teachers use daily data sheets that are aligned directly to each student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). A review of teacher team meeting agendas revealed that teachers review assessment results weekly. This work has helped students increase their mastery level on a variety of assessments. Data from the 2018 state English Language Arts (ELA) exam indicates that 92 percent of students achieved proficiency.

- Ongoing checks for understanding include pre-planned questions for paraprofessionals to use during small group instruction as evident in teacher lesson plans and observed in the vast majority of classroom visits. During the meeting with students, students stated, “If they need help with their work, they can ask any of the teachers in the classroom.” During classroom visits, teachers and paraprofessionals conferred with students and often created small groups for the students who struggled with a skill, or they stopped the lesson to address students’ misconceptions identified during conferences. Teachers often asked students if they needed help and assigned peers whenever possible to help them, encouraging peer feedback. Students use assessment rings that they place on their desks that allow their teachers to gauge their learning throughout the lesson, which has increased performance on their in-class work.
Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of all teachers with effective feedback through the use of a strategic system of frequent classroom observations. Across many, but not the vast majority of classes, feedback to teachers accurately captures the events of the lesson, highlights teacher’s strengths and offers clear actionable next steps for improvement.

Impact

Schoolwide instructional practices have been elevated which has promoted professional growth and reflection. Feedback articulates clear expectations that align with teachers’ professional goals including those developed during Initial Planning Conferences (IPCs) and monitored during the school year.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher goals are developed and discussed during the IPCs at the start of each school year. Teachers fill out goal sheets and student data, teacher observation reports, student portfolios, and teacher’s observation binders are utilized to help develop each teacher’s goal. Throughout the year, teachers and school leaders ensure that the professional development (PD) sessions teachers attend are directly aligned to their goals. A review of a “Collaborative Conversations” worksheet for one teacher directly relates to her goal for increasing student opportunities to engage in discourse and improve students’ expressive language skills. This was also evidenced in observation reports, listed on a Teacher Improvement Plan (TIP), and aligned to the PD this teacher attended. The ongoing connection of support aligned to teacher goals was evident for the majority of teachers positively impacting their practice.

- School leaders have a strategic teacher observation system. Having nine different sites requires precision and attention to detail to ensure it is effective. At the start of and throughout the school year, the principal and the site coordinator or assistant principal visit classrooms together to norm each other and ensure that all instructional expectations are being realized. The principal is responsible for all teachers at the main site and those teachers who are to be given tenure. There is an observation binder for every teacher at each school site which tracks progress, memorializes pre and post observation conferences, and maintains a clear picture of progress for all teachers. Student data that is used to develop feedback is placed in each teacher’s portfolio and used to judge the impact of the teacher’s performance on student learning. During the teacher meeting all teachers shared that the observation process in their school is “Truly supportive.” According to teachers, not only do they get observed by a school leader, but by a teacher mentor and provided the same “High-quality feedback.”

- Most teachers are offered detailed feedback that gives a clear path to teacher improvement and offers resources and other tools to incorporate in their lessons. Feedback to one teacher praised her for establishing a positive classroom environment that welcomes student choice and exploration. Next steps included ways to deepen access for specific students and how to accurately collect data during a lesson to create lessons that are specific to students’ cognitive levels. Resources such as websites are consistently provided to teachers. Suggestions for visiting peers are often included. For example, feedback to one teacher expressed concern regarding the lack of questioning and discussion. As a means of support the teacher was directed to visit a colleague who is known to be strong in this area. However, as yet not all observation reports accurately captured detailed teacher strengths or offered clear next steps.
Findings

School leaders ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and integrate instructional shifts with a focus on questioning and discussion. Rigor and higher order thinking skills for all students is embedded in the curricula with refinement of academic tasks using student work and data.

Impact

There is curricular coherence across planning documents that promotes next level readiness for all students. All students have access to curricula that is cognitively engaging and requires that they demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have spent 32 percent of the school’s budget in order to ensure that curricula is aligned to the Common Core and to build coherency as students move from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. Questioning and discussion, differentiated tasks, and student grouping are emphasized in all planning documents. For example, a 12:1:1 self-contained lesson plan clearly outlined the grouping strategies to be used and the reasons behind those groupings including a reference to the student’s IEP, prior exit ticket responses and student choice. A Science Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) plan outlined the various Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questions and the Universal Designed for Learning (UDL) components that the lesson would encompass. Components such as these were evident across the vast majority of planning documents.

- Curriculum is task-based, allows opportunities for student choice, and provides built-in accommodations for all learners. The curricula focus is on the individual elements of a lesson, while incorporating the learning styles of all students, their learning modalities, interests, and skills. It ensures contributing and participatory roles for all learners. For example, in a self-contained 12:1:1 high school class, rigorous questions such as “How can we connect our realistic fiction writing piece to transition?” are included. In an alternate-assessment social studies lesson plan students are expected to discuss and answer questions related to ideas such as how and if culture influences a community. Rigor and the demand for higher order thinking was evident in all planning documents reviewed.

- Teacher teams create and design academic tasks through an analysis of student data and work products. Teacher teams differentiate learning opportunities to meet the needs of all students as evidenced in their unit plans, lesson plans and student culminating activities on bulletin board displays and student portfolios. Student work samples outline the rigor of the tasks, and the level of questioning based on DOK levels. Teachers’ lesson plans are specific as to how student groups will be created based on individual student learning levels and the level of the DOK they will be expected to answer. Specially designed instruction using leveled texts, along with student choice, enable all students including ELLs and higher achieving students to be cognitively engaged.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the belief that students learn best when they are provided multiple scaffolds and have opportunities to engage in meaningful, real life discussions. Teaching strategies for all students include the use of strategically provided entry points, high quality supports.

Impact
All learners engage in challenging tasks where students must demonstrate higher-order thinking and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school community believes students learn best by engaging in purposeful lessons that directly relate to students’ lives and include embedded opportunities to engage in productive conversations with peers and adults. During a science lab lesson, students engaged in conversations about what they know and what they want to learn regarding plants. Students discussed how some plants could reproduce from taking cuttings from another plant. During a high school science lesson students engaged in conversations regarding an animal’s use of sight to learn about its environment. Students could be overheard sharing their thoughts regarding an animal’s use of sight to find food and gauge distance. Across the vast majority of classes students engaged in active discourse where they shared their thoughts and responded to their peers.

- In the vast majority of classrooms students engaged in differentiated activities and provided multiple entry points through leveled texts, graphic organizers, manipulatives, visual aids, and assistive technology. For example, during a K-2 12:1:1 self-contained science lesson, all students used iPods in order to identify the key elements of a story, which discussed the importance of trees. During a 12:1:1 literacy class, students were provided with sentence starters, pictures, and the use of technology to help them use information gained from the illustrations and words in a text to demonstrate the understanding of characters, setting, and plot. During a 12:1:1 English as a New Language (ENL) class, several students used auditory and speech devices to communicate with classmates and their teachers ensuring their active engagement in the learning.

- Throughout the school there was evidence that students used high levels of thinking in order to complete their work products. During a music class, students played the piano keyboard and read music, and one student played an entire piano selection by Johannes Brahms. Elementary school students created a detailed lunar landing out of Lego pieces and offered a full explanation of the event. Student-created posters illustrating why students with disabilities are just like all other students were part of hallway displays. Students compared those students with disabilities to those that don’t have a disability and explained how they are “both human, have feelings that can easily be hurt, like to hang out with friends and want to go to college.” One student ended his poster by stating, “Therefore, disabled students are like everyone else and they should be treated equally.”
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 instructional and professional expectations through the use of the staff, parent and student handbooks as well the school's website. Staff engages in a successful partnership with families that establishes a culture for learning and sets high expectations for all students.

Impact
Teachers are provided with training that has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability towards expectations. Students and families are supported towards all academic expectations through effective and clear feedback so that all learners own their educational experience.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers shared that high expectations are consistently communicated to staff verbally and in writing. The staff, student and parent handbooks, emails, instructional memos, post-observations, faculty meetings, and collaborative team meetings ensure that expectations are made clear to the school community. Teachers have a variety of ways by which they hold themselves accountable. Teachers submit feedback from workshops attended to inform future PD activities and turnkey their learning from PD to their peers. During the teacher meetings they explained that there is an expectation to “Provide turnkey trainings to ensure a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement for both students and staff.” School survey results for 2018 revealed that 94 percent of teachers agreed that the school leadership makes expectations for meeting instructional goals clear to all staff.

- There is a strong belief that a partnership with parents is essential to the school’s success. Every parent that was spoken to during the parent meeting expressed how there is consistent outreach and communication throughout the school year. One parent shared that the information provided by this school is the “Best I have ever experienced.” There is an open-door policy that allows parents’ access to all staff members all the time, which fosters a partnership and a culture of mutual accountability. Parents receive communication through the online grading platform, which allows them to see their child’s progress and any missing assignments. Many teachers also use Class Dojo that provides updates in real time and includes videos and photographs of their children’s progress. To support ENL students and families, the school provides Saturday workshops focusing on speaking and listening skills for all members of the school community.

- Students are supported and offered guidance and feedback on a regular basis, including the college and post high school articulation process. Tours of local colleges are arranged for students and their families. Students are directly linked with the office of disabilities in the college that they will be attending to offer support and a smooth transition. All parents and students meet many times with the school’s parent coordinator and transition coordinator to ensure the greatest post-secondary outcomes for students and families. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves when they have a question about their academic progress. Students explained that they frequently visit the online grading platform to see their progress and conference with their teachers to get feedback on how they did on an assignment or how they are performing in a course. One student stated, “I know how I am doing all of the time, and if I don’t know something I ask.”
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
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<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Teachers engage in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that focus on curriculum development, student work, and instructional practices. Teachers take part in the embedded leadership structures found throughout the school including subject specific collaborative teams.

Impact

Teacher collaborations have resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all students. Teachers have voice in key decisions positively impacting student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- During the school visit, the school's STEM collaborative team met and used the student work protocol in order to examine student work recently presented at the Queens Hall of Science Lego Moon Mission fair. Teachers from each school spoke about and presented student projects such as the one a student created of an entire moon station that included different rooms. Teachers separated into collaborative groups and further discussed student work products using a collaborative inquiry form to track teacher responses. All teachers utilized tools such as a DOK wheel and an inquiry checklist. Several teachers shared examples of increased levels in student thinking skills. One student started the year answering DOK level 1 questions and as of the date of the event, were answering and constructing DOK level three questions. Additionally, teachers explained the positive impact of the STEM projects referring to students' increased presentation skills and improved speaking ability as a result of explaining their project to an audience.

- In addition to grade and subject teacher teams within each school there are thirteen grade and subject specific instructional collaborative teams that meet across all nine school sites every two weeks. Additionally, there are a multitude of teams where teachers take on leadership roles. The Positive Behavioral Intervention Services (PBIS) team, along with data and curriculum teams are directly involved in making decisions that impact students' learning and behavior. Teachers were instrumental in the implementation of the PBIS program as they realized the need for a strong social and emotional program for the students. The PBIS team embedded components of PBIS across all curricular planning documents across all grades and subject areas. The most recent data reveals a significant drop in student behavior incidents year to date.

- According to both teachers and school leaders, teacher teamwork has positively impacted teacher’s instructional capacity in a variety of ways. The principal shared that during her entire 46-year career she has never “Seen the caliber of teaching that they have now,” and strongly believes that it is a direct result of teachers working together. Teachers believe that their instructional capacity is strengthened because of the amount of collaboration that takes place not only between teachers, but with the paraprofessionals as well. Teachers hold themselves accountable and engage in intervisitations on a consistent basis to strengthen their craft. The opportunity to learn from one another and implement tools and techniques accelerates the improvement of their practice. One teacher stated that the increase in student-to-student discourse in her lessons was learned through observing her peers. She shared that she recently implemented the use of DOK questions and students' critically thinking is on the rise.