Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 054 Charles W. Leng
Elementary 31R054
1060 Willowbrook Road
Staten Island
NY 10314

Principal: Karen Catanzaro Larosa

Dates of Review:
October 17, 2018 - October 18, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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. 054 Charles W. Leng serves students in grade PK through grade 5. 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
**Rating:** Proficient

### Findings

School leaders support the development of all teachers with effective feedback from frequent observation cycles that focus on providing strengths, recommendations, and next steps in formative assessment and questioning skills, based on student work and data.

### Impact

The quality of feedback emphasizes practices aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, which are leading to the elevation in the quality of teaching and learning and promote professional growth and reflection.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders utilize both informal and formal observations to support teachers and increase their instructional capacity using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. During cycle one, school leaders observed to ensure teachers were using intentional learning objectives that were aligned to the standards and reflected activities in support of those objectives. Currently, in cycle two, the school leaders’ foci have changed, where they are observing for effective formative assessment practices, including the use of success criteria and self-assessment. Teachers reported that debriefs occur within a specific timeframe, which allows them time to reflect on their lesson and utilize the feedback provided. One teacher stated that during her debrief, the school leader spent time reflecting on student work to develop actionable goals for her, which included an intervisitation to view questioning and discussion in another classroom. Other teachers provided similar responses about their feedback, which taken together, reflect how ongoing observation and feedback practices in the school aid in the increased reflection process for teachers.

- A review of feedback reflects how school leaders provide feedback in the form of strengths and recommendations with next steps that entail either additional strategies or tools teachers can use to increase their capacity based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* components. In the questioning and discussion component, suggestions to have students talk to their peers in math during a number talk were recommended using a turn and talk structure to help them make decisions as to which addition or subtraction strategy to use. In another observation report, the school leader suggested that the teacher reflect on his planned questions using the Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* tool to determine whether the level of the prompts enables students to engage in higher-order thinking. In another report, sample questions were provided to increase the rigor of the teacher’s prompts during a lesson. Overall, suggestions to improve the quality of teaching across classrooms are increasing the quality of questioning in teachers’ practices across the school.

- As part of the school’s instructional focus, observation report feedback reflects an emphasis on assessment. In one report, the feedback suggested that the teacher check for understanding prior to sending students off for independent practice using a thumbs up/down method. Another report recommended that the teacher use an exit ticket at the end of the lesson to determine whether students understood the lesson and indicated that the information could be useful in planning small group instruction for the next day. Similar feedback using formative assessment practices was common on several reports, thus reinforcing the school’s expectations on teaching and learning.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings

All teachers use or create rubrics and other assessments, including common assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, that are aligned to the schoolwide curricula and are utilized to assess student progress, but loosely aligned in other subject areas.

Impact

Although curricula-aligned ELA and math assessments are used, common assessments in other subject areas are inconsistently developed or analyzed for making instructional adjustments. Assessment-based feedback is limited in providing clarity for students towards next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders reported that the tell something you like about a person’s piece of work, ask a clarifying question, and give a suggestion for improvement (TAG) protocol is implemented in the school as a structure for students to provide feedback to each other. In one kindergarten Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) writing class, teachers engaged students in a lesson on how to use TAG with their peers. During a student meeting, most of the students were familiar with the TAG protocol and connected its use in math when engaged with problem solving with their peers. However, according to the students, the TAG feedback protocol was only used in math and not in other subject areas. In addition, students shared that their teachers tend to provide feedback in the area of math and some students were able to connect that feedback with the next steps in their teachers’ comments. However, in ELA, the use of a rubric as a means to provide clear next steps demonstrated confusion for some students and feedback was not provided in this area or other content areas as reflected in student work folders. Thus, the limited understanding of how to use rubrics and feedback in understanding their next steps hinders students’ abilities to improve their achievement across subject areas.

- A review of bulletin boards and work folders mostly reflects feedback in the area of math. Some of the feedback addresses specific skills from a problem-solving rubric, which is attached to most of the student work. One feedback comment included next steps, indicating that the student should further label their work and try an additional problem-solving solution, supporting the student’s next steps in obtaining a higher grade. However, this level of feedback with next steps was not as common across other folders and in all subject areas. In science, one student received a next step in the form of a question that did not provide guidance on how to improve the experiment, thus reflecting a limitation in the level of feedback provided across the school.

- In ELA, common assessments used to determine student reading levels are administered four times a year and monthly pre- and post-unit tasks are analyzed to determine how students are progressing in meeting grade-level benchmark standards. After their analysis, grade-three teachers determined that students were in need of more work in predicting and determining the rationale for their conclusion. The data has been used to revisit these concepts through focused read-alouds and small group instruction to emphasize the need to reread and understand why the reader is making a prediction. However, adjustments such as these are primarily made in ELA and math. The use of common assessments across grades and subject areas is not fully implemented to measure student progress over time, limiting adjustments in curricula and instruction to ELA and math only.
Findings

The schoolwide curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, and integrate and emphasize rigorous instructional shifts, including real-world problem solving and text-based answers, for a variety of learners.

Impact

Purposeful decisions and the use of instructional shifts to reinforce rigorous habits and critical-thinking skills promote coherence and college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, the curricula reflect alignment to instructional shifts, such as formulating claims with supporting details for literacy, and use of models and real-world applications in math and science. In science, teachers incorporate the use of new science standards where activities reflect the construction of explanations after applying scientific ideas through experiments. One fourth-grade science task includes a learning intention, or objective, which asks students to design and build a simple electrical system using classroom devices, synthesize their new learning to formulate claims, and explain how these systems can have light, motion, or sound energy as a form of output. Using these new learnings, other tasks reflect how students will be using this knowledge to further explain and resolve problems in scenarios where light is a factor.

- Other curricula reflect a common trend of tasks that align with text-based answers, and ELA instructional shifts. In a second-grade curriculum map, one task requires students to explain how New York City has changed over time using evidence from multiple primary and secondary sources including maps, photographs, newspapers, and historical documents. Similarly, a fifth-grade ELA task entails an activity where students analyze the theme across a series of books to develop debatable topics and determine text-based details to support their rationale. In math, tasks include activities for students to develop their fluency through number talks and understand and use multiple models to represent how they solve real-world word problems. Therefore, the curricula align to the instructional shifts and ensure that tasks are tied to the grade-level core skills within the standards across grades.

- In a fifth-grade ELA curriculum map, one task requires students to conduct a debate using differing viewpoints based on their reflections from a text and support their side with evidence to persuade others. Another ELA task requires students to consider how characters are complex and whether their actions cause conflict and tie to the theme of a book and the author’s point of view, which asks students to use a variety of rigorous skills including synthesis and interpretation. Other planning documents reflect how kindergarten students in an ICT class would use protocols to engage in self-reflection with a checklist, then editing and providing their peers with feedback, emphasizing metacognition in the younger grades. The schoolwide math curricula contain problem-solving tasks where students use communication and multiple modes of representation to solve and explain their word problems. A third-grade math task includes an activity where students use multiple models and other strategies to determine the standard form of a set of given numbers from a word problem and are to use math language to explain their action plan and the results of their work. Similarly, other grade-level math tasks entail these common protocols for real-world problem solving to assist students in developing a deeper understanding and application of high-level math skills.
Findings
Across classrooms, teacher practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the school’s articulated beliefs on how students learn best through engagement in the instructional shifts, group discussion, and the production of student work products.

Impact
Consistent instructional practices based on the school community’s focus on student engagement lead to high-levels of participation and student thinking, and meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers’ instructional foci emphasize making connections to the real world and having students engage in activities that enable them to demonstrate higher-ordering thinking and discussion and enhance student thinking. In a third-grade science class, students worked together in groups to connect circuits and associate what they learned to a case study of a town that experiences frequent blackouts. As students engaged in connecting their devices, several student questions and discussions surfaced from their noticings about why the connected devices were unable to function together. A review of student work products indicated that students were able to understand that when the devices lacked energy or needed more, they would not be fully functional, especially when comparing various power sources. Overall, the opportunity for students to engage in real-world, complex problem-solving leads to meaningful, high-quality work products that reflect the ELA and math instructional shifts.

- In a fifth-grade ELA class, students worked in groups and with partners to develop claims, a rationale, and text-based evidence to support their response in a literary debate, which enabled them to deepen their understanding of themes and characters in a text and connected to the instructional shifts. Students developed their own questions and then developed their thinking and evidence to debate either contrasting position in groups. One group shared that they felt their main character, Olivia from Main Street, changed the most over the character’s in the book as “she goes through life changes with her dad and the fact that she moved to a new town with her family.” The students provided a rationale for why those reasons resulted in their choice of character and the development of their claim. Across the class, most student groups were able to share clear rationales and text evidence in support of their claim through conversations, thus supporting student engagement as part of the school’s instructional focus.

- In a fifth-grade ICT class, student groups used computer programs to develop questions and determine the themes in their book club discussions in order to prepare for a debate. In one group, when discussing the theme of the story, one student shared, “You can’t rely on just one theme in a book like this. I feel the heart of the story isn’t just about being brave, but about always remembering to do the right thing.” Another student agreed and added on to the idea by supporting their thinking with evidence from the story. Similarly, in a third-grade ICT math class, students worked collaboratively in groups to solve problems, where group members all played a key role in being involved and engaged with the word problem. Overall, across classes, students work in partnerships and groups that provide them with opportunities to engage at high levels.
Additiona Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate and reinforce their expectations and instructional focus on assessment to the entire staff. School staff communicates high expectations to students through ongoing schoolwide and classroom structures and protocols.

**Impact**

The provision of professional training and ongoing communication by school leaders supports a system of accountability of teachers for the schoolwide expectations. Schoolwide classroom and youth development structures provide support to prepare students for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders communicate expectations for meeting State level standards and the use of success criteria used for self-reflection and lesson planning through professional learning, faculty meetings, and daily emails called *What's Up*. These structures remind staff members of the schoolwide instructional expectations towards meeting student learning needs through differentiation, small group instruction, and engagement of students to become more reflective of their abilities. Additionally, professional development is geared towards ensuring teacher teams utilize structured protocols for reflection, which is reinforced via a vertical instructional team. Thus, school-wide structures ensure teachers are cognizant of expectations to ensure that all students are supported in meeting the standards as part of the school’s instructional focus on standards-based instruction.

- School leaders use multiple structures to ensure that teachers and other staff members are able to implement and are held accountable for the school-wide instructional expectations on improving student engagement. A review of post-observation reports illustrated how school leaders share their instructional expectations based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and provide resources such as articles and websites to support their teachers’ understanding of them.

- Students articulated that there are a variety of ways that teachers and other staff members share academic expectations. The students reported that their teachers use models to help them understand what upper grade-level work looks like. Other structures, including middle school meetings and college and career awareness day, help them understand what is needed to pursue pathways to post-elementary school readiness. Students shared that, as a result of these experiences, they felt more prepared for their current grade expectations and others shared that these experiences help to build an awareness of what they need to do to prepare for middle school. Two students shared that they wanted to pursue careers in the medical profession and knew they needed to excel in science and writing to ensure they get into the right schools to help them meet their academic goals, thus leading to students demonstrating a sense of being prepared as a result of the consistent communication of the school-wide expectations.
**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based impact teams across the school. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Teacher teams promote the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards, build leadership capacity, strengthen the instructional capacity of teachers, and facilitate teacher input on student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Grade-level teams meet weekly to discuss student work using an Evidence, Analysis, Action (EAA) protocol to determine proficiency areas, gauge where gaps in understanding occur, and share next steps to improve instruction. A review of several teams’ notes reflected that this is a common protocol used across the school that helps teachers share ways to improve their instruction, including the use of new scaffolds or strategies. A first-grade team’s notes entailed the analysis of a conversation, which showed that when producing informational writing, students demonstrated difficulty in using transition words and different, relevant details across pages. The notes reflected that the teachers would reinforce and reteach these skills through mini anchor charts, mentor writing, and through the use of shared writing techniques.

- During a fourth-grade team meeting, teachers reviewed groups of graded student writing to determine what areas students were demonstrating difficulty with and what instructional next steps should be implemented. After reviewing students who scored a level three, teachers determined that these students were able to demonstrate understanding of main idea and the use of supporting details yet needed more support with their introductions. In order to support these students, teachers determined that they would conduct small group instruction in this area to help students improve their responses to literature. In review of students who did not achieve a level three, teachers determined that small group instruction was needed in other areas such as how to use annotation to help students understand the task and to use color coding to decipher main ideas, supporting details, and other details that are considered unimportant to help them remove extraneous information from their writing. Overall, teachers work collaboratively to share strategies that build their instructional capacity to meet the school’s student achievement goals.

- Teacher teams, including the vertical team, share their input towards improving instruction and ensure students’ needs are at the forefront of their input. To improve student engagement, the vertical team supported school leaders in planning professional learning on technology in order for students to utilize twenty-first century skills in their ELA and math responses. Across the school, other grade-level team input led to changes in how mini-lessons were implemented to ensure students were able to understand taught concepts more clearly by slightly increasing instructional time, allowing for more modeling and guided practice time. Collectively, teacher team input focuses on improving student learning experiences.