Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 083 Donald Hertz
K-8 11X083
950 Rhinelander Avenue
Bronx
NY 10462

Principal: Brandon Muccino

Dates of Review:
May 9, 2019 - May 10, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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. 083 Donald Hertz serves students in grade K 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>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>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 Culture

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

<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Celebration</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>
Findings

The vast majority of teachers engage in grade level and vertical teams using the looking at student work protocol. Distributed leadership practices are in place including such roles as dean and grade leaders.

Impact

The collaborative work of teacher teams has supported the school wide focus of vocabulary resulting in a focus on vocabulary in planning documents, thus fostering instructional coherence. Distributed leadership practices have resulted in the reduction of chronic absenteeism.

Supporting Evidence

- An eighth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) teacher team looked at student work using a looking at student work protocol to analyze student writing samples and devise next steps. The teachers analyzed the use of counterclaims in their argumentative essays on whether the United States was justified in the delivery of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. In addition, the focus of the meeting evaluated if students met the Common Core Learning Standard of writing arguments to support claims and reasons in addition to gathering information from multiple sources. Teachers reviewed two pieces of student work and provided their noticings such as: students wrote well organized essays, signaled the counterclaim in their writing, and developed a clear thesis statement. Next steps cited were: students needed support in analyzing the argument, building a resource bank of transitional words, and in strengthening the rebuttal. The next steps and implications for instruction included creating a checklist to improve student analysis of arguments, and the creation of a transitional word bank for students to have variety of these terms in their writing. Lastly, a protocol for peer review was also discussed. As result of this collaboration, teachers have improved in their instructional capacity by conducting teacher-led intervisitations to observe best practices, collaborative work on a claim and counter claim graphic organizer that is used across the grade, and the creation of rubrics such as the Chalk Talk rubric, thus fostering coherence.

- Teachers across the disciplines engage in six-week inquiry cycles that is in alignment with the school goal of vocabulary. A vertical teacher team engaged in inquiry work that centered on increasing and improving student vocabulary. Teachers administered a pre-assessment and devised a vocabulary strategy scaffold that is encapsulated in six steps in addition to figuring out unknown words. Teachers created a vocabulary resource list to reference additional vocabulary strategies, and adopted the picture dictionary graphic organizer. As a result of these inquiry cycles, teachers have infused research-based grade specific word lists, incorporated vocabulary words into the problem of the day for mathematics, focus words in science, and in all lesson plans across the grades there is a focus on academic vocabulary. After their inquiry cycle, students in grade six showed positive growth on their latest math assessment and students across the school showed positive growth on the spring administration of the ELA interim assessments.

- Distributed leadership practices are embedded so that teacher voice plays an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. The dean in collaboration with the attendance team supports the school with its attendance initiative to reduce chronic absenteeism by 10 percent. Phone calls, home visits, and attendance incentives were some of the strategies used to reduce the chronic absenteeism. As a result of the team’s efforts, chronic absenteeism has surpassed the school goal and has decreased by 11 percent. Grade leaders meet with their respective teacher teams and assist in facilitating teacher team meetings. During these meetings, a sixth-grade writing program was piloted where students utilize resources to assist in the pre-writing process.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

School leaders have an espoused belief that students learn best when there are student-centered discussions with an emphasis on academic vocabulary. Across classrooms, students engage in discussions.

Impact

Across classrooms teaching practices demonstrated the articulated beliefs of school leaders and students engaged in student-to-student discourse; however, student thinking and participation is beginning to demonstrate ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices consistently reflect and support the schoolwide beliefs that students learn best when there are student-to-student discussions, clear lesson objectives, and an emphasis on academic vocabulary. In an ELA class, the aim of the lesson stated, “What makes an effective leader?” Students were reading *Macbeth* and centered their discussions on the text. Students generated their own questions such as, “Do you think a good leader should be honest?” Students made comments such as “A dictatorship is not to get to people's needs and desires, it is about manipulation.” The activity facilitated student-to-student discourse to make student thinking visible. In another ELA class, an interdisciplinary lesson tasked students with using rich discussions to investigate Chinese produce and culture. In the station activity, students traveled to different tables to observe textures, scent, and masses of foods such as dragon fruit, kiwi, and edamame. At one station students collected the mass of the Bosc and Asian pear to discuss their differences. Extensions to the lesson were available for the early finishers; however, this practice was not evident across the vast majority of classes.

- Students engaged in student-to-student discourse that reflected high levels of thinking and participation while producing meaningful work products. In a science class, students identified the similarities and differences between molecules. In a modified station activity, students created concept maps of words such as atom, matter, model, molecule, mixture and substance. While doing so, students engaged in discussions making meaning of the vocabulary words based on prior knowledge. Students wrote that a mixture is a combination of chemicals. Afterwards, students read a passage and made inferences based on statements from the passage; however, in an eighth-grade science class, students were tasked with understanding the relationship between genetic variation and diversity in organisms. The lesson was teacher dominated, lecture heavy, and there were missed opportunities for students to engage in continuous discourse, thus impeding the ownership of student learning.

- In a seventh-grade math class, students sought to find the volume of a prism. Each student had a model of a prism on their desks as a visual representation. The teacher tasked the students with completing a problem as a quick check to gauge students’ comprehension of the volume of a prism. Students engaged in some discourse around the methodology for solving the assigned problem. Students were placed in color-coded groups based on their work. When queried, students articulated how to solve for the volume of a prism and students worked at different paces. In a sixth-grade math class, students were tasked with determining why finding the mean is helpful in a data set. Students completed the I notice and I wonder scaffold to make their thinking visible, but this practice was not observed across the vast majority of classrooms.
Findings
School leaders ensure that the curricula and academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shift of citing textual evidence and fluency with an emphasis on higher-order thinking skills.

Impact
The purposeful decision to integrate the instructional shifts and incorporate rigorous academic tasks is building coherence and promoting college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans and academic tasks integrate the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shift of citing textual evidence in ELA and fluency in mathematics. In an eighth-grade lesson plan, students in a fishbowl activity discerned the impact of power on leadership. Students cited evidence from the text *Macbeth* and drew inferences from the text to substantiate their claim. Similarly, in a fourth-grade ELA lesson plan students determined how descriptions of characters, events, and setting work together in a literary text. The lesson plan referenced the instructional shift of the use of details and examples in a literary text. Moreover, a seventh-grade math lesson plan required students to find the volume of a prism, then tasked students to complete a fluency exercise as a check for understanding for finding the volume of a prism.

- A fifth-grade math lesson required students to read and write whole numbers through the hundredth million. The lesson showed alignment to the Common Core Standard of numbers and operations in base ten. Students completed a place value chart to find the value of each digit which necessitated students to explain their reasoning. Students then responded to a prompt in their math journals to write in standard, expanded, and word form, five numbers that are at least eight digits long under standard form. In a third-grade math lesson, students determined the strategies to use to multiply with seven. Students learned to use the Commutative Property and the Distributive Property as approaches to solve word problems while explaining the rationale for strategy usage. The assigned problems were differentiated for struggling, on level and above level students through the use of manipulatives, higher-order thinking questions, and online enrichment platforms thus supporting the development of thinking and rigorous habits.

- A second-grade ELA task required the students to write a narrative retelling a scene, describing the characters, and the setting from the text, *Charlotte’s Web*. The students’ writing prompt required them to construct a writing piece that detailed a series of events in a time sequence. In a second-grade social studies task, students learned about the historical perspective of the changes that occurred over time with agriculture and gardening in New York City. Students learned about starting and maintaining a community garden which ultimately lead to the creation of the school’s community garden. These practices allowed students to apply higher-order skills across subjects and tasks. Math lesson plans showed groups tiered by their performance such as a reteach, enrichment, and independent groups. English Language Learners received visual vocabulary cards for support, and students with disabilities had access to kinesthetic learning stations so that all students accessed the assigned tasks.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teachers use assessments such as baseline and midline data to determine student progress. Teacher use New York State and performance task rubrics to assess student work.

Impact

Teachers analyze assessment data which results in small group instruction and re-teaching of content. Students receive actionable feedback on their work apprising them of their next steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher use beginning, middle, and end-of-year common assessments to track student progress and to inform adjustments to curricula and instruction. Teachers unpacked the seventh-grade fall 2018 and winter 2019 math baseline and midline assessments data and noticed a need to focus on academic vocabulary and solving constructive responses. Teachers adjusted instruction by including a problem of the week and month in the upper and lower grades respectively. As a result of this practice, students across the grades have shown increases in constructive responses in the ranges of 10 percent to 22 percent on the most recent Performance Series assessments. Teachers use platforms such as iReady to track student progress, looking specifically at author’s perspective. Teachers tracked a pre-test, a series of practice tests, and a post-test. Upon analysis of the series of tests over the course of the author’s perspective unit, teachers found that there was an increase in the number of students who met or approached the standard and a reduction in the number of students not meeting the standard. The monitoring of this data was used to adjust instruction and curriculum to support instruction in teaching author’s perspective.

- Math teachers convened to analyze the grade six students’ mid-year assessments looking at the standard that required students to compute quotients of fractions, and solve problems involving division of fraction by fractions. Prior to the assessment, 82 percent of the students had difficulties with this standard. Teachers adjusted their instruction by conducting small group instruction with an emphasis on the skills aligned to the standard, implemented student-created word problems, as well as a strategy called See, Think, Wonder in class activities for students to demonstrate their thinking. As a result of the instructional adjustments, there has been average growth of 24 percent. Similarly, grade eight teachers analyzed math assessment data that looked at three forms of quadratics. Teachers re-taught the graphing of a quadratic equation, focused on this standard for problem of the week, and re-assessed the students. This work resulted in 93 percent of the students meeting the goal of solving and graphing quadratic equations.

- Teachers use rubrics from ELA and math benchmark assessments to provide actionable feedback to students that apprises them of their next steps. In an eighth-grade writing task that was assessed with an eighth-grade four-point writing rubric, a student was tasked with writing a compare and contrast essay of two texts using the theme of survival. Although the student received the highest grade based on the rubric, the student was commended for including relevant evidence but needed to use sophisticated vocabulary in their writing. A mathematics performance task required students to determine the volume of three types of vases to hold fresh flowers. Students were tasked with deciding which vase should be purchased based on the dimensions and cost. The work was assessed using a four-point rubric. The student was lauded for the accuracy in their answers, showing their steps and labelling their work; however, an explanation as to why a specific vase was selected was missing. Students in the upper grades noted that test corrections are permissible for math tests. Students commented that the feedback they received from their peers has helped them improve on their work.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating: Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff through written media such as the Foundations of Good Mathematics Instruction and the Weekly Bulletin. Families are apprised of their child’s progress through varied platforms of communication.

#### Impact

Mutual accountability for expectations are attained via teacher facilitated professional development (PD) and intervisits. Families partner with the school via observing classes, volunteering at the school, and attending workshops to support learning in the home.

#### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders delineate high expectations on classroom instruction via the staff handbook. The handbook cited a document entitled, the Foundations for Good Mathematics Instruction. The document detailed assessment tools, the mathematical practices of the Common Core Learning Standards, raising teacher awareness around the Next Generation Learning Standards, instructional strategies such as math journaling, math discussions, suggestions for the classroom environment and expected student outcomes. Additionally, the required fluencies for each grade with alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards were provided. A similar document detailed instructional expectations for ELA, science and social studies. Expectations for instruction are articulated by written structures such as the Weekly Bulletin. Information about upcoming PD sessions, and schoolwide events are noted in the bulletin. Opening Day presentations enable the staff to reflect on the last school year via an analysis of New York State ELA and math testing data and Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) data. This information is used to set the expectations for goal setting, teaching, and learning. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the classroom observation process.

- High expectations are articulated to the staff through PD. The PD sessions are aligned to the school’s focus on student engagement via reading routines and writing. PD sessions offered included, Educating Powerful Writers to support the seventh-grade scope and sequence as well as a session entitled, Routines to Develop Mathematical Reasoning. This work has led to the creation the Exemplary ELA Writing Summary for Grades K-8 document that delineated the elements required for student writing across the grades. Teachers facilitate PD such as a series of math sessions that articulate content for Algebra, strategies such as using number talks, the use of manipulatives, generating higher-order thinking questions during instruction, and strategies for working with students with a speech impediment. Teachers hold themselves accountable for these expectations via intervisits and sharing best practices with their colleagues. Teachers new to the profession stated that intervisits have improved their practice via the observing of best practices and supports for ratings found in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- School leaders and teachers communicate high expectations to families to apprise them of their child’s academic performance while encouraging partnership with the school. Parents attested that there is ongoing communication using several online platforms, progress reports for each marking period, the school website and the school’s app. Parents meet with teachers weekly during parent engagement meetings to discuss their child’s academic progress. Workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards, specifically math strategies to engage their child are offered to support learning in the home. Parents are invited to workshops on healthy cooking, tax preparation, as well as the pathway to high school admission. Parents are invited to the child’s classroom to observe instruction and volunteer for the school.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Feedback to teachers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps toward improving teaching practice. School leaders use data to inform PD and succession plans.

**Impact**

Teacher feedback has resulted in teacher professional growth as per the MOTP. Teacher evaluation data is used to plan PD on rigor and inform succession plans for leadership opportunities.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers receive feedback that delineates their strengths, challenges and next steps toward improving their practice. The feedback is aligned to the school's instructional focus of strong reading routines and rich discussion practices to support student writing. This is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, specifically, the student engagement component as well as questioning and discussion techniques. A review of observation reports revealed a teacher was commended for fostering student choice in activities and for the structure of their collaborative groups making it conducive for student ownership of the task. The next steps cited the need for adding a short text piece related to the lesson in order to increase rigor. A subsequent report referenced previous feedback, a checklist to share with colleagues, and incorporating technology in the lesson so that students can complete their writing task on a laptop. On another observation report a teacher was lauded for the incorporation of vocabulary into the lesson; however, students were still unclear of the objectives for the written assignment and plans for formative assessment were not apparent. A subsequent observation cited the teacher's incorporation of the feedback and provided opportunities for students to engage in peer feedback. The teacher made vast improvement in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component of using assessment in instruction. As of the latest MOTP, teachers were 98 percent effective.

- The administrators analyzed teacher observation data and noticed that teachers showed challenges in the questioning, discussion, and student engagement components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. This data was used to inform PD sessions such as selecting rich and engaging math tasks, research-based close reading strategies, and pre- and during-reading strategies for students with varying needs. In addition, there was a whole school PD on questioning, discussion and infusing rigor into instruction using the rigor and relevance rubric. Teachers mentioned that the information learned in PD is implemented in their lessons.

- P.S. 83 has a partnership with local colleges to serve as a pipeline for teachers to attain their administrative license. The trajectory for leadership entails serving as a classroom teacher and adopting roles such as the English as a New Language coordinator and the students with disabilities liaison, testing coordinator, and dean. Currently, an assistant principal has served in the roles of a students with disabilities teacher, and Individualized Educational Program point person. The physical education teacher currently leads PD for the school district as a result of the school's wellness program. Teacher data was used to plan PD such as questioning, discussion and rigor as a result of teacher observation data.