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

Baychester Academy 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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>
</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>
<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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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders and staff ensure the alignment of the curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically embed annotation and citing textual evidence in the curricular documents for all content areas. Curricular materials emphasize rigor and higher-order skills for all students.

Impact
Strategic decisions result in curricula that ensure coherence across grades and subjects. All students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to curricula tasks promoting their college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers develop their own curricula aligned to the Common Core across grades and content areas. Collaborative curriculum planning sessions are used to develop curriculum maps, based on data from the 2018 English Language Arts (ELA) and math State assessments and student work products. Teachers strategically embed instructional shifts in lesson and unit plans, with emphasis on writing from different sources, providing text-based answers, applications of math concepts, and demonstrating deep math understanding. Across content areas, units require students to read and annotate nonfiction texts, make claims, and cite textual evidence to support their claims. In a fifth-grade social studies lesson plan on slavery, students will have access to five different articles to research slavery, from which they will prepare their written reports based on textual evidence. In a fourth-grade math lesson plan, students will be engaged in measuring angles in whole-number degrees using a protractor and creating and solving equations to find unknown angle measures. As a result of these curricular decisions, students take part in coherent curricula across grades that prepare them for the challenges of colleges and careers.

- Instructional planning documents revealed that school leaders and teachers across grades and subjects are incorporating learning targets, academic vocabulary, independent reading, writing, and problem solving, as well as group work activities. To support the learning process, teachers incorporated strategies such as RATT (restate the question, answer the question, text-based detail one, and text-based detail two). In math across grades teachers are using a POW (problem of the week). This is a five-day protocol where students engage each day in one of these activities: visualizing and exploring, teamwork, problem solved incorrectly, independent practice, and independent practice and assessments. In a third-grade end-of-the-unit extended response question, students used RATT strategies to complete their written tasks. Students shared that a POW has helped them to understand math concepts, skills, and strategies better.

- Lesson plans revealed a focus on rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills. For example, a general education second-grade social studies lesson plan for a unit plan on changing the world focuses on comparing and contrasting the most important points presented in two texts on the same topic. Students will read two different books, Seeds of Change and On Meadowview Street, and have a text-based discussion about how characters were similar and different, as well how they changed the land. Teachers differentiated the lesson to address the needs of the students by assigning students to strategic groupings, preparing differentiated questions, and using graphic organizers and sentence starters. In an English as a New Language (ENL) lesson plan on weather and natural disasters, ELLs will watch video clips of different types of natural disasters. They will then identify one natural disaster and design and build various structures that would save people and property from the natural disaster. Students will use manipulatives to accomplish this task. The teacher will reinforce academic vocabulary using language acquisition strategies. At the end of the lesson, each student will present their work and provide the class with a rationale for the selection.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

There is a short list of clear, focused school-level goals and action plans apparent in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and other planning documents. School leaders involve and communicate with the school community regarding school improvement plans.

Impact

Although school goals are tracked for progress, thoughtful adjustments have yet to leverage changes that explicitly link to accelerated student learning and social-emotional growth, particularly for ELLs and students with disabilities. The entire school community has yet to be effectively involved and support goals set by school leaders.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff have a collaborative process that focuses on the development of overarching goals to support student progress and positive social-emotional growth as well as the school’s instructional focus of engaging students in learning. The planning process for the CEP includes meetings of the school leadership team (SLT), instructional lead meetings, and grade-level sessions. At the end of the school year and during the summer, school leaders review student performance trends, including successes, and begin planning how to improve student learning in the following year. They then decide how these plans to increase student learning relate to program decisions for the next school year. At the beginning of the school year, the CEP goals and action plans are refined based on State assessment results, a school survey, Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data, and Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) data, as well as qualitative feedback received from the superintendent. While goals and action plans are tracked for progress and used to drive schoolwide initiatives, they have not yet explicitly resulted in accelerated student learning and social-emotional growth of specific sub-groups, such as ELLs and students with disabilities.

- During the mid-year review of progress, the school leader, the SLT, and the instructional team engaged in discussions and analysis of student achievement data and tracked schoolwide goals. Students’ progress was tracked through both formative and summative assessments, such as iReady assessments, NYS assessments, math quarterlies, ELA simulations, and weekly on-demand tasks in both math and ELA. Based on this data, students are grouped for targeted instruction. Weekly, students’ progress is assessed by completing the POW and weekly on-demand writing. Teachers track the progress of their students by inputting grades into an online file sharing platform. The school also has a system to capture students’ incidents, so school leaders can make targeted decisions to address and prevent disciplinary incidents. For example, in comparing the November 2018 with the January 2019 quarterly math assessments, the overall score reflects increases of 3.4 percent points, and the multiple-choice score reflects increases of 5.6 percentage points.

- School leaders make continuous efforts to communicate goals to and involve various stakeholders in the schoolwide planning process. This builds an inclusive culture around school improvement and decision-making. For example, parents who were part of the SLT reported that they were involved with the goal-setting process. Similarly, during the meeting with teachers, those on the SLT were able to explain and articulate their participation in the goal-setting process and to describe the school goals. Although the principal provided information about different events where goals were presented to stakeholders, some parents and teachers who did not participate in their design are not fully aware of the school goals. As a result, the efforts to effectively communicate and engage parents and teachers in school improvement plans and decision-making processes are not fully supported by the entire school community.
### Additional Finding

<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 strategies include real-world tasks and consistently provide entry points so that all students are appropriately challenged. Student discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

#### Impact

As a result of providing multiple entry points into the curriculum, all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, demonstrate higher-order thinking. The use of accountable talk and math talk protocols engages students in high-level classroom discussions.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently implement multiple entry points, including using graphic organizers, visuals, sentence frames, checklists, manipulatives, and the interactive features of whiteboards, so that academic tasks challenge all learners. To enhance the learning process for students with disabilities and ELLs, leveled and translated texts are employed. In a first-grade ICT class during a readers' workshop lesson, students were assigned to four different groups. During this lesson, teachers modeled reading a non-fiction book, stopping and jotting a newly learned fact. Then, students were assigned to find facts in their leveled books and were observed using scaffolded post-its with sentence starters. In addition, most students were referring to anchor charts about informational books or fiction versus non-fiction charts. As a result of these and other pedagogical practices, learners are given challenging activities that engage them in higher-order thinking.

- Across classrooms, there were opportunities to engage students further and push the level of rigor and critical thinking. In a third-grade lesson about China, students worked in groups where each group was assigned a different aspect about China. The purpose of the activity was to create a travel brochure highlighting areas such as geography, people and culture, natural resources, landmarks, and history. Students used laptops for their research, graphic organizers, picture books, and rubrics. A group of students were washing rice as part of learning the process of preparing traditional food in China. As students progressed with their task, they responded to the question, “How would you compare China to the United States?” In a third-grade science lesson on inherited traits, the teacher used a web-based science instructional platform to model how plants and animals have traits inherited from parents. Then, the teacher asked students to turn-and-talk, posing this question: “What traits do you think you got from your parents?” Students were observed discussing different characteristics from parents, such as hair and eyes. Then students were assigned to complete inherited and trait simulations using their iPads to access the web-based science instructional platform. Thus, students consistently engage in challenging tasks and demonstrate high levels of thinking.

- Across classrooms, activities reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. In most classes, students participated in turn and talks that expanded content information, such as in a first-grade writers workshop class, where students discussed with partners what details they would add to the essential part of the story. Students used accountable talk stems and made direct reference to the text. In a fourth-grade math class, students worked in groups engaged in discussions about different types of angles. They used manipulatives to create angles, identify angles within the room, and used their arms to create angles. Moreover, students discussed ideas using specific math talk protocols that were visible for each group. Some students were teaching each other, demonstrating high levels of participation and an in-depth understanding of the problem. They also made connections to college and careers, as students enhanced their discussions by saying engineers need to know well how to work with angles. This same high level of student participation was evident across observed classrooms.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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 grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. Entrance tickets and other forms of formative assessments consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Most students and teachers receive actionable feedback, based on rubric criteria, that informs the next steps regarding student achievement. Ongoing checks for understanding result in effective on-the-spot instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers shared that they develop student-friendly, Common Core-aligned rubrics across grades and subjects. A fourth-grade theme/message writing rubric guides students to focus, reason/support, organization, and conventions/mechanics/grammar. A fifth-grade math rubric includes problem-solving, reasoning, written response using math vocabulary, connections, and representation using drawings and labels. During the meeting with students, they articulated that they use rubrics to check the different elements they should take into consideration to complete their assignments. For example, one student stated that for his written assignment, he has to make sure to answer all parts of the question and make inferences from the text. Teachers and students also shared that the school has a standard-based four-point grading policy, which informs students about their levels of achievement on tasks.

- Student work products revealed that teachers consistently use glows and grows to provide actionable feedback to students across content areas. For one extended response assignment, the glow was, “You wrote an engaging introduction and used text evidence to support your answer,” and the grow, “You need to elaborate and explain your details.” In a math assignment, the glow was, “You did a great job solving the problem!” and the grow was, “Next time try to use more math vocabulary in your explanations.” During most classroom visits, teachers were observed providing verbal feedback to students during one-on-one conferences about their work, followed by written comments. As a result, most students are aware of their next steps to improve their work and have clarity about what areas they have to improve to meet their instructional goals.

- Across classrooms, teachers use several forms of checks for understanding, such as entrance tickets, thumbs up, “I can” statements, checklists, check-ins, conferencing, and exit tickets. In a fifth-grade social studies class focusing on slavery, students used a section on “quality details” from the informational writing rubric as a guide when collecting details for an essay. All observed teachers were using a clipboard or a tablet to gather data about students’ responses and progress on the assigned tasks. At the beginning of a fourth-grade math class, the teachers used an entrance ticket engaging students in problem-solving. Based on students’ responses, they were assigned to specific groups to work on differentiated tasks. In one third-grade science class, the teacher was conferring with students and recording students’ ability to identify the inheritance traits of a wolf. Based on these checks, the teacher adjusted the lesson to assist students in accomplishing their task, and, in two instances, asked them to work with partners.

- A review of students’ work products, meetings with school leaders, students, teachers, and observed classrooms revealed that students are consistently engaged in self-assessment practices. For example, at the end of many lessons, students have to complete an exit ticket to assess their work. One student wrote in her reflection sheet, “I can make my writing better and more interesting by putting feeling into my introduction because my introduction is boring.” As a result of ongoing assessment practices, students are aware of their instructional needs, ensuring that all students’ learning needs are met.
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate expectations for shared accountability aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching to the entire staff. School leaders and teachers use one-on-one sessions and the school website to effectively communicate high expectations to families connected to a path towards college and career readiness.

Impact

Effective systems to convey high expectations along with the supports to achieve them have led to a culture of mutual accountability for all staff. Ongoing support to families promotes meaningful partnerships contributing to student progress in meeting high expectations for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently articulate high expectations for all staff through a staff handbook, discussions at regular grade-level meetings, calendars, the weekly newsletter, emails, and individual and team conversations. School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a model for high expectations and meaningful feedback to teachers. Leaders hold teachers accountable based upon formal and informal observations, with both leaders and teachers designing a structured observation system with clear and consistent feedback. In addition, teachers take part in intervisitation, have access to model lessons conducted by model teachers, and keep an instructional focus on student engagement to promote higher academic achievement. Ongoing support for teachers in meeting expectations for instructional and professional practice is provided by school leaders, mentors, and consultants via one-on-one sessions and demonstration lessons. Teachers stated that having multiple approaches to receiving feedback and the weekly newsletter provide clear communication and promote accountability.

- School leaders convey high expectations to teachers through professional development (PD) aligned to elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, PD sessions were facilitated in November 2018 on an analysis of the following areas of the Danielson Framework for Teaching: demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy; designing coherent instruction; using questioning and discussion techniques; engaging students in learning; and using assessment in instruction. Teachers shared that these PD opportunities helped them unpack what they have learned and decide on actionable next steps that will impact their teaching practices. One teacher noted that school leaders collaboratively participate in the development of unit plans and model specific teaching strategies that highlight the overarching goals of each unit. Thus, there is a culture of mutual accountability, with teachers having a clear understanding of effective teaching practices and clear expectations of how to deliver instruction.

- School leaders and teachers send a monthly calendar/newsletter to make parents aware of the workshops, schoolwide activities, and opportunities to volunteer in the school. The workshops include topics such as the Common Core, math, ELA, science, literacy, tips for parents for maximizing homework and study time, and a roundtable addressing child behavior. Parents shared that during parent engagement time they have one-on-one conversations with teachers about their children’ progress. One parent shared that during her meeting with the teacher, she received a link to a website where math lessons were modeled. Another parent added that the school website is an excellent resource because the curriculum and lessons are posted there, so she felt equipped to monitor and support her children. Parents are kept informed about the middle school articulation process throughout the year, with middle school visits, fairs, and middle school presentations at the school. Moreover, the school conducts a college day and a dress for success day and invites guest speakers who share with students their experiences in their professional fields. As a result of these activities, parents are aware of the academic progress of their children as well as their paths for colleges and careers.


**Findings**

All teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional teams that have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of Common Core. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership.

**Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in the implementation of the Common Core, increasing schoolwide instructional coherence and student capacity. Professional collaborations and distributed leadership structures allow teachers to implement instructional initiatives that have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers and increased student achievement.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders ensure that all teachers engage in grade-level inquiry teams that meet regularly and purposefully plan and adjust curricula, analyze student assessment results, and formulate next instructional steps. Teams follow an inquiry protocol to look at student work. For example, the second-grade team used the results of *iReady* ELA assessments to identify the need for increased vocabulary building. This resulted in the display of content-based word walls in classrooms and the use of tier two words during shared reading to promote ways to determine their meanings. The grade leader team meets twice a month in a cross-grade session where teachers support colleagues in reviewing and analyzing data and planning units. After reviewing the 2018 State standardized assessment data, the team noticed a need to implement close reading strategies. Then, teachers in collaboration used the Common Core as a guide to ensure students cite strong and thorough textual evidence and think critically about a text, creating a consistent annotation system that would be implemented across all grades. In math, the team decided to implement the POW. As a result, the 2018 State ELA assessment shows 60 percent of students scoring at the proficient level or above, which is 14 percentage points higher than the city and 25 percentage points higher than the district.

- During a third-grade teacher team meeting, teachers reviewed student work to identify gaps in performance, focusing on short response questions. Teachers looked for student misconceptions to help them identify skills they needed to address these needs. Teachers discovered that students were adding instead of subtracting, several students showed difficulty borrowing, several students were not able to complete the two-step problem-solving, and only a few students used the strategy of the number line. Teachers then proposed to use more manipulatives and keyword charts as well as to reinforce the use of strategies taught in the unit. The outcomes of these meetings are shared schoolwide, so teachers in lower and upper grades are informed of the strategies used to address students' specific misconceptions. Teachers added that vertical conversations were happening during PD sessions and were supported during intervisitation. As a result of inquiry-based collaborations, teachers have increased their instructional capacity and identified new strategies to support student learning while promoting schoolwide coherence.

- School leaders promote distributed leadership practices through teacher team structures, mentors, model teachers, membership in the SLT, and grade leaders. During the meeting, teachers reported that they play a key role in curricular decision-making, lead initiatives for school environment improvement, participate in the hiring process, offer professional development, and engage in intervisitation. Teachers contribute to increasing student achievement by implementing new initiatives, such as a math talk poster, an annotation chart, a bookmark competition, and a robotics club. As a result, the 2018 School Survey shows that 92 percent of teachers say that they take responsibility for improving the school, which is higher than the citywide percentage.