Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Cornerstone Academy for Social Action
Elementary 11X189
3441 Steenwick Avenue
Bronx
NY 10475

Principal: James Bellon

Dates of Review:
November 28, 2018 - November 29, 2018

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

Cornerstone Academy for Social Action 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>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>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>Proficient</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
School leaders have a process to purposely evaluate and adjust the efficacy of respectful, ownership, collaborative, kind, and safe (ROCKS), professionalism, and feedback to teachers.

Impact
The process to evaluate and adjust the systems in place to analyze school culture, professionalism, and feedback to teachers has increased the coherence of policies and practices across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers as well as the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) team have played a role in the system to monitor the efficacy of school culture initiatives such as the PBIS matrix and incentive system alignment to ROCKS. Teachers were surveyed to provide input on the incentives that students are afforded for demonstrating ROCKS based on proving varied incentives for students. The survey revealed teachers’ input on additional incentive activities such as jewelry making, board games, and physical activities. Teachers provided input on transitioning students to the incentive period. Survey results showed positive responses from the staff for adjustments to PBIS incentives. As a result of the survey, additional incentives were added to the menu of activity choices, and there was a smoother transition to the activity period thus resulting in coherence in school culture related initiatives.

- School leaders and staff worked collaboratively on a process to ensure coherence in attaining high expectations for professionalism and school culture. Teachers meet regularly during common planning time where teachers can also reflect on community and culture building by planning events for students across discipline teams. A cluster team noticed that students of a specific class were having difficulty enacting ROCKS. The teachers strategized and devised a plan to include paraprofessionals as an additional layer of support to teachers and students to ensure that the expectations for ROCKS were articulated to students. As a result, teachers met as a team to review the role of paraprofessionals in the class, and professional development sessions for paraprofessionals were added to the professional learning calendar. This adjustment to the expectations has led to the coherence in professionalism and the school culture.

- School leaders worked with staff to improve the ways in which feedback is shared with teachers to effectuate change in their teaching practices. School leaders and staff engaged in research-based professional learning on the “Ways of Knowing” in order to learn how each staff member internalizes feedback. The staff was surveyed using the tool, “Leadership Interactions and Decision Making.” As a result of the staff feedback, school leaders have adjusted the ways in which feedback is provided to the staff for them to better internalize it to improve their craft, thus ensuring coherence in the ways feedback is provided to teachers.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
Teachers analyze Fountas & Pinnell beginning, middle, and end-of-year performance tasks to gauge student progress across grades and subject areas. Teachers use formative assessment practices to check for understanding and provide opportunities for students to self-assess.

Impact
Teachers use data to adjust curricula and instruction, provide opportunities for peer- and self-assessment, and collect in the moment data to monitor student progress towards assessment criteria; however, these practices do not always lead to effective adjustments, apprises students of their next learning steps, nor demonstrate increased mastery for English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet in teams to analyze assessment data such as the beginning, middle, and end-of-year performance tasks using the Analyzing Student Learning protocol schoolwide to analyze student work to adjust curricula and instruction. A 2017-18 first-grade middle-of-year writing performance task analysis showed students in need of support in the areas of punctuation, grammar, usage, and writing an informational report. Teachers used this data to group students who were far below, approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standards during instruction. Small-group instruction focused on drawings that matched the topic, adding labels, descriptive words, and phrases to pictures. As a result of these practices, the end-of-year assessments showed a twenty-five percent positive growth; however, this data does not show whether the sub-groups such as the English Language Learners and the Students with Disabilities demonstrated increased mastery in this content area.

- A 2017-18 math performance task for a second-grade class showed student growth by at least one level from the beginning to the end-of-year; Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) data for the same grade also showed students moving up by one or more reading levels. The teachers used the data to group students during small-group instruction; however, the data does not show whether the sub-groups such as the English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities demonstrated increased mastery in these areas.

- Teachers consistently check for understanding via questioning, conferring with students, or students utilizing hand signals. Students are provided some opportunities to peer-and self-assess. However, these practices do not always lead to in-the-moment adjustments to the lesson to meet the learning needs of all students, thus failing to ensure that students are aware of their next learning steps. In a third-grade 12:1 self-contained English Language Arts (ELA) class, students worked on identifying features of realistic fiction stories. The teacher checked for understanding by asking questions such as, “Who are our characters in this story?” Based on the students’ responses, the teacher conducted a mid-lesson interruption to explain the difference between first person and third person. In a third-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, the teacher checked for understanding by conferring with students one-on-one. The teacher asked the students to self-assess themselves using one to four fingers to show their level of comprehension of the math problem. The teacher conducted small-group instruction with the students who presented one finger and the other students worked in groups that displayed the same number. However, in a fourth-grade math class, the teacher conferred with students as a check for understanding but did not adjust the lesson in-the-moment based on data garnered from the student discussions. Similarly, in a first-grade math class, the teacher utilized the thumbs up or down strategy to check for understanding but did not integrate a mid-lesson adjustment to meet the needs of all students and apprise them of their next learning steps.
Findings
Curricular documents integrate the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shift of coherence and content standards such as supporting key details through textual evidence. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits.

Impact
Integration of the instructional shifts builds coherence and promotes college and career readiness, thus accessible for a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders and teachers integrate content standards into the curricular documents in order to build coherence and promote college and career readiness. Unit plans across grades and subject areas show elements such as essential questions, teaching points, and resources. Instructional delivery methods such as small-group instruction, and differentiation of instruction based on student grouping and reading levels were delineated in the curricular documents. The building of coherence was evidenced through content standards such as finding the main idea and supporting details through textual evidence thus promoting college and career readiness.
- Lesson plans in ELA and math also show alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence and writing from sources. Math lesson plans show alignment to the shift of coherence by embedding the schoolwide practice of Math Talks across the lesson plans. Additionally, across the math lessons, elements such as formative assessments in the form of checklists and exit tickets were in evidence.
- Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and are accessible for a variety of learners. An interdisciplinary social studies and art task required students to create compasses and globes by looking at the world from the perspective of a geographer. Students created a writing piece that responded to the prompt, “How do geographers use tools such as a globe and compass rose to help them understand maps?” Modifications to the task included one-to-one assistance, word banks, and drawn lines to support writing. A social studies writing assignment tasked students to write an essay to answer the prompt, “I can explain a role that I have in my family and why it is important.” Modifications to the task included sentence starters. A math lesson plan cited a word problem for Math Talk that required students to convert from gallons to quarts. Differentiation for the problem mentioned working with a peer, working in small groups with students and the teacher for support on problem, or working in a re-teach group with explicit step-by-step instructions with visuals.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Across classrooms, multiple entry points to the curricula are exemplified through differentiated texts, questioning, and student groups that engage in student-to-student discourse.

**Impact**

Multiple entry points into the curricula allow diverse learners to have access to the curricula and provide students opportunities to demonstrate high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Students engaged in student-to-student discourse that reflected high levels of thinking and participation and worked on tasks differentiated by questioning. In a fifth-grade math class, the assigned word problem required students to solve a real-world problem through conversion of units. In addition to the problem, student groups had different focus questions such as, “How did you get your answer?” “How would your method work with other problems?” In pairs, students engaged in a school practice known as Math Talks and discussed their strategies for conversion. Students used academic vocabulary and had a partner check their work. A trio of students presented their work at the front of the class and the audience posed clarifying questions such as, “Why did you convert first?” “What did you multiply by…?” “I disagree, we did …” In a third-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, students worked on a word problem that required them to use the tape diagram to help solve a problem. The teacher modeled a portion of the word problem and asked students to engage in a turn-and-talk by responding to the prompt, “What took place?” “Is it twenty-one minus two or seven minus two?” A student in the group stated it was “seven minus two” and modeled his answer for his colleague. Student thinking was visible and there was an opportunity for all students to engage in differentiated questioning to support problem solving.

- In a fourth-grade reading class, students identified big ideas in a non-fiction passage and summarized key ideas in complete sentences. Students worked in pairs and read leveled books as well as completing differentiated reading response scaffolds to ascertain the big ideas in the text. Another small group was on the rug, and read aloud to one another. Students were also aware of their next learning steps when queried. Similarly, in a first-grade reading class, the teacher, while on the rug, modeled how to complete a personal narrative. Students returned to their desks and had a choice of selecting which paper layout best supported the writing of their narrative; hence, the differentiated work product provided students with access to the task that produced meaningful work products.

- Students engaged in meaningful discussions that reflected high levels of thinking and participation. In a second-grade reading class, students visualized and analyzed a character known as Lil Duck to help them become better readers. Students engaged in discussion around this character by noting traits such as, “I think Lil Duck is lonely,” and cited text to substantiate the answer. Students used accountable talk stems, “I agree with …he is friendly to the other duck.” In a fifth-grade English Language Arts class, students worked on using persuasive argument letters to effect change. Students in their groups conferred with one another about the issues within the school such as the bathroom environment and their plans to rectify the issue.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations on instruction and professionalism through written structures such as the CASA Family newsletter. Families are apprised of their child’s academic achievement through online portals such as Class Dojo and Remind.

**Impact**

Mutual accountability for high expectations is achieved through common planning time for teachers. School staff utilize online platforms to effectively communicate high expectations to families to support student progress towards those expectations.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders create an elevated level of clear expectations for all staff that is evidenced through written structures such as the staff handbook and the CASA Family newsletter. The staff handbook delineates the expectations for instruction in ELA by outlining the flow of the day for each grade. Expectations for math instruction articulate the problem-solving approach with specific guidance on instructional strategies and steps for initiating and engaging the schoolwide practice of Math Talks. Additionally, expectations for school culture are mentioned with guidance around the Book of the Month character education practices and the positive reward system for the school’s PBIS known as ROCKS. The weekly CASA Family newsletter delineates the expectations for PBIS, commends the work of teachers, and informs the school community of upcoming events. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process. Mutual accountability for school culture expectations occurs through the PBIS team.

- Expectations for professionalism are exemplified through structures such as common planning time. Teacher work collaboratively on lesson planning and memorialize their meetings on a common planning time conference record. Teachers chronicle their meetings on curriculum planning, data review, or lesson plan review. Teachers hold themselves mutually accountable for these meetings through preparedness and structured lessons. Administrators hold teachers accountable via feedback to teachers and the observation process. In addition, teachers facilitate professional learning sessions, and serve as mentors for new teachers, thus holding themselves mutually accountable for expectations on professionalism.

- The school orchestrates events such as weekly parent engagement meetings that provide parents an opportunity to meet with the child’s teacher to discuss his or her academic progress. Online platforms such as Dojo and Remind allow parents to keep abreast with their child’s performance academically and socially. The school hosts workshops for parents on strategies for State exam preparation, online enrichment programs, and the school’s curriculum. The school collaborates with families through fundraising, arts and crafts activities, volunteering, and hosting specialty breakfasts for parents, thus fostering a partnership with families.
Findings

Teachers on grade teams engage in structured professional collaborations that analyze student work using the Analyzing Student Learning protocol. Distributed leadership practices such as the Wallace Fellow, Teacher Leader, Model Teacher, and Peer Collaborative Teacher (PCT) are in place.

Impact

Consistent collegial collaborations with teachers have resulted in sharing resources and best practices among teachers. Distributed leadership practices have resulted in improved student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A second-grade teacher team engaged in inquiry work to analyze an end-of-module math test from EngageNY. The teachers used the Analyzing Student Learning with a focus on math standards operations and algebraic thinking as well as numbers and operations in base ten. Based on the assessment data, teachers placed their students in groups such as far below, approaching, meeting and exceeding the standards. Teachers agreed that the format of the text needed revision in order to be more kid-friendly. Additional implications for instruction cited by the teachers for each of the groups of students included: more one-to-one conferencing, emphasis on basic math facts, using multiple strategies beside base ten, having students design their own word problems, infusing resources from Go Math! into the curricula. As a result of these weekly professional collaborations, teachers shared resources such as checklists with one another, and adjusted lessons based on colleague feedback.

- A review of teacher team notes revealed additional work from the second-grade team that presented an ELA resource entitled, “Words My Way” during literacy instruction. Teachers noted that students were not reading independently, thus leading to difficulty in decoding, reading and engaging in grade-level texts. The team incorporated stations that used “Words My Way” and “Benchmark Online Phonics.” Similarly, a fifth-grade teacher team engaged in teacher teamwork centered on curriculum planning that informed analysis student math work. The team analyzed how students utilized the tape diagram strategy to determine the fraction of a number. The expected outcome will be that students will comprehend the concept of the denominator, divisor, and numerator of the multiplier. As a result of the evaluation of student work, a lesson plan was created and entitled “Writing the fraction of a number using the tape diagram strategy.” As a result of these collaborations, there was a twenty-five percent proficiency in math based on the 2017-18 State math assessments.

- Distributed leadership practices are in place at the school and are exemplified through structures such as a Wallace Fellow, Teacher Leader, Model Teacher, and Peer Collaborative Teacher (PCT). The Wallace Fellow, in conjunction with the administration, has revised the Academic Intervention System (AIS) by allotting time built into the schedule for teachers to support students with targeted instruction through programs such as Fundations. Provisions for coaching and resources are provided to teachers. In addition, the PCT chairs the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) to provide intervention plans for students with teacher support. The Teacher Leader has supported teachers through the schoolwide practice of Math Talks. Lastly, the Model Teacher provides social studies curriculum support with the classroom serving as a lab site for modeling social studies instruction for teachers. As a result of these practices, forty-four percent of the teachers were Highly Effective and forty-eight percent Effective based on the 2017-18 Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP).