Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Academy of Public Relations
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 07X298
778 Forest Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Amy Andino-Flohr

Dates of Review:
November 15, 2018 - November 16, 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

Academy of Public Relations serves students in grade 6 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</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>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>
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## 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>Area of Celebration</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>Additional Finding</td>
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<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>
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Area of Celebration

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations on instruction and professionalism through written structures such as the APR Weekly. Families are apprised of their child’s academic achievement through online portals such as PupilPath.

Impact

Mutual accountability for high expectations is achieved through teacher-directed intervisitations and teacher mentoring. School staff utilize effectively communicate high expectations to families in order to support student progress towards those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders delineate clear expectations on classroom instruction to staff through written communication such as the APR Weekly Bulletin. The bulletin outlines administrative responsibilities and key deadlines dates. In addition, a focus on the attributes of Highly Effective instruction in the area of student engagement and demonstrating content and pedagogy were elicited in the bulletin. Lastly, a focus on one of the school's instructional goals of including an anticipatory set in all lessons is articulated as well as a checklist to ensure coherence of instruction across all classrooms. Memos to staff outlined the expectations for preparing for quarterly conferences with administration to analyze student work, examine feedback to students and assess the impact of these practices. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process. Mutual accountability for these expectations occurs through teacher inclusion on the instructional cabinet.

- Mutual accountability for instruction and professionalism are articulated through teacher-initiated intervisitations. Teachers conduct intervisitations and provide feedback to one another on the classroom environment in the form of “glows” and “grows.” A review of teacher intervisitation notes showed teacher observations of best practices for implementing the anticipatory set into their lessons. Teachers provided feedback specifically to this practice and reflected on their next instructional steps. New teachers are paired with a mentor and coach to provide instructional support. A review of mentoring notes showed new teachers supported through models such as Elements of Effective Lessons and Post-Observation Co-Analysis assessments that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Administrators hold teachers accountable through the observation process.

- Staff members provide ongoing verbal and written communication to families via online progress reports through platforms such as PupilPath. Weekly parent engagement meetings with teachers apprise families of their child’s academic performance, in addition to progress reports distributed at the end of each marking period. Families receive automated phone calls and mailed packages mailed for upcoming schoolwide events. There are monthly brunch meetings with the principal to share with parents the culturally-relevant curricula adopted by the school, preparation strategies for State assessments, as well as the pathways to high school and college. Parents partner with the school by volunteering for fundraising events, high school fairs, accompanying classes on in-town and out-of-town trips to colleges. Moreover, during the parent meeting, parents discussed the collaboration with the school leader to incorporate instructional as well as social emotional supports for children with diverse learning capabilities, thus fostering a sense of family in the school community.
**Area of Focus**

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

Teachers use rubrics and assessment practices that consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

**Impact**

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students, 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 that apprise students of their next learning steps.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers are monitoring student progress during the lesson by employing formative assessment strategies such as questioning and student conferencing, which sometimes lead to in-the-moment adjustments to the lesson. In a seventh-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, the teacher checked for understanding by asking probing questions such as, “How do you know?” “What do you call that?” to support students as they solved a problem. During a turn-and-talk, the teacher listened in on the student conversations, worked with a specific group, and tracked the student responses using a tracker. Although data was collected in the moment, only the pacing of the lesson was adjusted. Similarly, in a sixth-grade ICT English Language Arts (ELA) class, the teacher checked for understanding and asked students to deconstruct words in the learning target. Although the teacher used a tracker, only the pacing of the lesson was adjusted, and the data captured in the moment was not used to adjust the lesson to meet the learning needs of all students.

- Students have some opportunities to peer- and self-assess their work against assessment criteria and monitor their own understanding; however, students were not always aware of their next learning steps. In an eighth-grade self-contained ELA class, the learning target required students to understand the criteria for a reading response by analyzing the differences between levels in the rubric. Students reviewed their grades from their reading response journals and the adjoining rubric, reflected on their work and devised a new plan to improve their work. This work will be included in the student’s portfolio where they track their progress towards goals. Similarly, in a sixth-grade self-contained ELA class, students implemented feedback and reflections on their reading response journals by using the rubric and re-writing their assessment. Students engaged with the reading response rubric, used a graphic organizer to support the organization of the paper and modified their work based on the rubric, thus knowing the success criteria and their next learning steps; however, this practice was not exercised in the vast majority of classrooms.

- Students attested during the student meeting that the feedback they receive from their teachers is actionable and apprises them of their next learning steps; however, the feedback received is not always applicable to other subject areas, thus making the feedback less meaningful. Some students discussed feedback they received in ELA that was used in math. For example, a student shared that in ELA, the students need to substantiate their work with evidence. This feedback is used in math where the students justify their answers using evidence. Another student stated the that the feedback received in ELA is not always used in math. The student mentioned that in ELA, the work is substantiated with evidence; however, this is not the case in math, and evidence needs to be included. This sentiment was not echoed in the student group, thus signifying that the feedback is not always meaningful.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across content areas, curriculum maps, and lesson plans were aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the Next Generation Standards with integration of the instructional shifts such as the stairway of complexity and fluency. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using data to inform purposeful grouping of students.

Impact

Curricula and academic tasks are accessible to all learners and embed the Common Core and Next Generation Standards to ensure coherence and college and career readiness for all students, thus cognitively engaging students.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans across the content areas are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. In ELA, the shift of focus is the stairway of complexity. Additionally, curricular documents show a crosswalk between the Next Generation and Common Core Learning Standards domains and clusters. Lesson plans and curriculum maps across the content areas show the learning targets, essential questions, assessment evidence and differentiation for specific learning groups. The school has a focus on anticipatory sets and this element was included in all lesson plans across the content areas. In mathematics, the lesson and curriculum maps are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the mathematical and ELA instructional strategies such as: re-state, answer, cite evidence, explain evidence (RACE) and state the problem, observe, line up the problem, verify, and explain (SOLVE). The shift of focus is fluency and is integrated in all curricular documents thus exemplifying coherence and promoting college and career readiness.

- The school has implemented culturally-responsive curricula in ELA by incorporating a schoolwide text entitled *All American Boys*. The text explores issues such as police brutality in an urban setting. Another layer for the rationale for this text is to incorporate literacy skills known as literacy looping to increase the student engagement in reading texts of their interest individually, with a partner, in a group and lastly, individually. Curriculum maps and lesson plans across grades and for diverse learners cite this text. Tasks correlate to the text and characters through real-world events such as the racial profiling and police brutality with a focus of using evidence from the text to substantiate the themes. Students write their responses to the text through Reading Response Journals (RRJs) addressing prompts that require them to summarize their reading, identify a theme, and describe their reactions to the theme, thus building coherence and promoting college and career readiness.

- Teachers use student work and data to refine curricula. Purposeful grouping is delineated in lesson plans based on students Individual Educational Plan (IEP) data. Similarly, student group configurations are based on English Language Learner assessment data. Additional rationales cited in lesson plans mentioned student grouping based on forecasting students with potential misconceptions and students who are advanced. Classroom data based on student performance during independent practice is used to differentiate student groupings as well as student writing abilities, thus ensuring that all students are cognitively engaged in the learning tasks.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use scaffolds and strategies to foster student-to-student discourse.

Impact
Across classrooms, student discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation, thus resulting in students producing meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points so that all learners are engaged in challenging tasks and express their thinking. The learning target for a seventh-grade ICT math class stated, “I will be able to determine if two quantities are in proportional relationship.” Students engaged in a turn-and-talk and responded to the prompt, “What is the unit rate for us in the seventh-grade?” Student pairs stated “constant rate.” The teacher asked the follow-up question, “What else can we call it?” Students stated “proportionality constant.” Students resumed their group activity and employed student choice by solving three proportional tic-tac-toe problems. Students also used anchor charts in the room for support in problem-solving process. In a sixth-grade ICT ELA class, the learning target tasked students to understand the criteria for reading response by analyzing the different levels in the rubric. During the anticipatory set, the teacher tasked students to deconstruct the words in learning target and their reading response rubric in order to make meaning. Sentence starters were available for support; however, there were missed opportunities for student-to-student discourse as the dialogue was between the teacher and students.

- In a sixth-grade ICT math class, the learning target stated, “I can graph points with rational coordinates on a coordinate plane.” Students engaged in multiple turn-and-talks to discuss an alternative way to write numbers either in fractions or decimals and reflecting their line around an axis. Students reviewed a map of the areas surrounding the Washington Monument on a grid line and located the adjacent landmarks and their distances on the coordinate plane. Students explained their different strategies used to locate the attractions. Similarly, in a sixth-grade ICT bi-lingual math class, students reflected points with rational coordinates across both axes. Students demonstrated their thinking by showing their process for solving and justifying their work at the interactive whiteboard.

- In an art class, students interpreted protest art by the late Keith Haring. Students used differentiated scaffolds such as graphic organizers in the students’ native language of Spanish. Students used the scaffolds to interpret the artwork and based their conversations around the scaffolds and the teacher prompts. In a mixed-grade Word Generation class, students were tasked to answer the essential question, “Who is responsible for childhood obesity?” The teacher’s line of questioning focused on academic vocabulary as well as citing evidence from an article entitled, “Who is responsible for childhood obesity?” as well as previously-covered material. The students engaged in student-to-student discourse that required them to cite evidence to answer a question such as, “Why are we learning about childhood obesity?” Students cited the need to prevent heart disease.
Findings
Feedback to teachers captures strengths and next steps that are aligned to the school’s instructional focus of formative assessment infused into instruction. School leaders use observation data to plan professional development.

Impact
Expectations for instruction are articulated to teachers via feedback on observations and informal walk-throughs to implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Observation notes provide teachers with feedback on the strengths, challenges and next steps to improve in their instructional practices. Observation reports detailing the feedback in the form of “glows” and “grows” were aligned to the school’s instructional foci of formative assessment, student-to-student discourse, and inclusion of anticipatory sets in lessons. An observation report commended the teacher for including a check for understanding by looking at student work and making an adjustment in the moment of the lesson. In addition, the teacher employed a turn-and-talk in the lesson. The next step for the teacher imparted a strategy to utilize for late-arriving students in order to not disturb the flow of the lesson. In another observation report, the recommendations cited the use of formative assessment to occur throughout the lesson with examples to implement. Trends in the observation report feedback included the inclusion of the anticipatory set, formative assessment strategies, and infusing more student-to-student discourse. As a result of the feedback, the 2017-2018 Measures of Teacher Practice showed one hundred percent of the teachers were Effective.

- Teachers receive feedback from coaches and mentors to provide them with instructional support in order to promote professional growth and reflection. The Elements of Instruction is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provides teachers with reflections of how they provide feedback to students using the eight components of Danielson. Teacher feedback itemized components of Danielson vacillates between Effective and Developing for all components of Danielson. Follow-up notes with next steps for teachers delineated content-specific strategies to use in the classroom such as a “Sum It Up” protocol that supports students recounting a story in their own words. Teachers were also given strategies to show what effective and meaningful work looks like for their students, so that students can emulate these practices.

- Advance data is used to plan professional development and provide teachers with support for professional growth. School leaders noticed a trend that showed teachers in need of support in the area of the Domain three of Danielson. As a result of their data analyses, professional development sessions on the understanding and purpose of formative assessment and increasing academic discourse and student assessment were incorporated. Additional observation data analyses showed a need for teacher support in area of infusing rigor in instruction to support assessment. As a result of this noticing, a schoolwide focus on rigor was incorporated that defined rigor for the school community as well as strategies to import rigor into instruction.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Teachers on vertical teams engage in structured professional collaborations that analyze student work using the student work analysis protocol. Distributed leadership practices such as teacher leaders are in place.

**Impact**

Consistent collegial collaborations with teachers have resulted in closing the achievement gap for students with disabilities in math and ELA. Distributed leadership practices have affecting student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A special education teacher team engaged in inquiry work using a student work analysis protocol to evaluate two pieces of student work. The focus for the meeting was, “What gains did we see students make after RACE was implemented?” Teachers analyzed an end-of-unit ELA assessment and noticed that both students restated the question and cited evidence in their responses, but inconsistently. The students demonstrated difficulty with connecting the ideas in their essay and connecting the evidence to the overarching essay question. Teachers identified classroom implications such as the need to concentrate on the citing of sources and explanation. In addition, teachers decided to create a RACE checklist for students to use while writing essays, and a teacher introduced a new strategy called, “Evidence or Not.” As a result of these professional collaborations, teachers have shared best practices and normed their practices across the classrooms.

- A math team engaged in inquiry work commenced with an icebreaker entitled, “Which does not belong?” Four clocks were displayed showing different times. The purpose of the icebreaker was to enable teachers to engage in discussions around their noticings. This was introduced as an activity to implement with their students. Next, teachers worked individually on a problem set that introduced the concept of proportional relationships. Teachers engaged in a turn-and-talk to discuss and justify their answers. The teachers presented an overview of class data and proceeded to analyze four pieces of student work that aligned to problems on the State exam that presented a challenge for students. Teachers chronicled their noticings such as the students use of the RACE strategy, an attempt to label their work, and the lack of proof of a proportional relationship. Teachers identified next steps such as a focus on small group instruction for fluency and proportionality and incorporating video tutorials. A review of math team notes revealed a draft of a five-phase Math Improvement Plan (MIP) based on six years of math assessment data. Currently, teachers are in the fourth phase entitled Instruction. This phase will implement coherent structures in anticipatory sets, lesson planning, pacing, questioning, and performance tasks and portfolios. As a result of these professional collaborations, the achievement gap is closing for students with disabilities as per the 2017-2018 School Quality Snapshot.

- Distributed leadership practices are in place so that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Teacher leaders include grade, department, and content leads who are responsible for facilitating teacher meetings and ensuring alignment in curricular documents. The teacher leaders then meet with Administration to discuss schoolwide goals and their implementation. New teacher mentors serve as a support for newly appointed teachers to guide them in their pedagogy and becoming acclimated to the school environment. As a result of these structures, there has been an increase in students Level 3 and Level 4 in ELA from thirteen percent to twenty-two percent as per the 2017-2018 School Quality Snapshot.