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

Kappa III 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>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>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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<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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<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 articulate high expectations to the school community through assigned mentors and written structures such as the Professor’s Weekly, the Kappa Mentor, and the Weekly Chronicle. School leaders and staff effectively communicate to families a path to college and career through classroom visits, reviewing student portfolios, and being kept abreast of student progress through various mediums.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability is sustained through the Pineapple Chart noting the teacher intervisitation schedule and area of specialty. The members of the school community partner with families to support student progress for achieving high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate clear expectations through a weekly communiqué known as the Professor’s Weekly. The newsletter outlines expectations for instruction such as student choice of activities and grouping in order to maximize student motivation and engagement. Additionally, the newsletter delineates the rationale for resource centers in the classroom, the use of parallel teaching in Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes, and involvement of paraprofessionals during the instructional period as leveled support for students. The written communication to the staff encompasses excerpts from professional articles as well as areas of celebration and focuses on engagement of student learning to ensure that it is at the forefront of instruction. Similarly, the staff handbook articulates the expectations for professionalism and instruction. Teachers are held accountable via the classroom observation process and informal walkthroughs.

- Expectations for professionalism and instruction are communicated to new teachers through their assigned mentor. The mentor works one-on-one with the mentee to provide instructional guidance that is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Expectations are further articulated through a Kappa Mentor newsletter. Teachers provide input on the topics in which they need support which is used to customize the professional development (PD) sessions for veteran and novice teachers as well as on- and off-site sessions. Topics include deepening student learning, scaffolding Socratic seminars, using formative assessment to provide students with feedback. In addition, teacher conduct calibration exercises to ensure norming of the Danielson Framework for Teaching practices. Mutual accountability for these expectations is achieved through the school’s in-house teacher-created intervisitation system known as the Pineapple Chart. Each week, the names of teachers and their areas of specialty such as classroom management or checking for understanding are listed with the period of availability for intervisitation.

- Effective communication that is connected to college and career readiness is imparted to families through various platforms thus, fostering a partnership to support student progress towards expectations. Parents are kept abreast of their child’s academic performance through online grading platforms such as PupilPath and Class Dojo. Quarterly progress reports, report cards, emails, text messages, and weekly parent engagement meetings provide families with access to their child’s academic progress via scheduled conferences with teachers. The Weekly Chronicle is a newsletter for the parents that outlines school events and parent workshops on topics such as the Common Core Learning Standards, State English Language Arts (ELA) and math sessions that provide parents with resource materials to help their children prepare for the exams. Families partners with teachers through classroom visits to observe the instructional practices in their child’s classes. Parents are encouraged to review student portfolios to monitor their child’s progress. Parents volunteer at the school for school events, fundraising activities, and workshops that culminate in certificates for childcare.
## Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

All teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations using various protocols to consistently analyze student work.

**Impact**

The work of grade teams results in strengthening teacher capacity but has yet to achieve schoolwide instructional coherence and mastery of goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- All teachers engage in grade-level collaborations using an inquiry approach to analyze student work using the analyzing student work protocol. A seventh-grade team analyzed *iReady* assessment data in ELA and math with a specific focus on citing pieces of textual evidence to support short responses and the number system. Data analysis of the student work revealed that students in ELA needed support in analyzing evidence and including relevant details. In math, students struggled with reasoning and proof. Based on the student work, the teachers decided that across the content areas, students needed to be re-taught reasoning and proof. In math, teachers will reteach this concept using stations on number systems while other stations will focus on reasoning and proof. In science, ELA, and social studies, teachers will focus on claim, evidence, and inference in their mini-lessons. Support for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities included guided notes and anchor charts specific for making an inference. As a result of their collaborations, teachers noted the strengthening of their instructional capacity through the sharing of best practices. Additionally, this teacher team work is beginning to demonstrate grade-wide versus schoolwide instructional coherence.

- A review of teacher team notes revealed that a math team analyzed student work using the analyzing student learning protocol. Learning standards of focus such as unit rates, identifying and computing the quotient of fractions were noted. Students were grouped based on a range from exceeding the standard to performing below the standard. A goal of seventy-five percent and above for students meeting the standard was set. Instructional plans for each student group were constructed. Next steps cited a decision for students to self-reflect on their quizzes and provide tutoring for students to review quiz corrections. Subsequent meetings showed teachers delineated plans for re-teaching and deconstructing steps during the problem-solving process. Although teachers are consistently meeting in teams, analyzing student work, and implementing instructional supports, it is unclear what progress is attained for groups of students, as well as student mastery for all groups of students.

- A further review of teacher team notes chronicled an ELA team that analyzed student’s expository writing using the student learning protocol. Two cycles (approximately two weeks) of inquiry work were conducted and the Common Core Learning Standard of focus was writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. Students were grouped based on a range from exceeding the standard to performing below the standard. Teachers devised instructional plans for the groups of students that ranged from working on elaboration to practicing annotating. Centers were created to address the students’ need during instruction. As a result of these practices, there were no students identified as far below the standard; however, this work has yet to result in increased mastery of goals for groups of students.
Findings
School leaders and staff ensure that curricular documents across the content areas are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts such as citing textual evidence and determining the central idea of a text are strategically integrated. Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking are emphasized and coherently embedded across planning documents and tasks.

Impact
Strategic integration of the instructional shifts and the embedding of rigorous tasks in a coherent way enables all learners to have access to the curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lesson plans shows use of the Effective Instruction Planning Tool which includes elements such as: the learning target, Common Core Learning Standards, and/or content standards, Bloom's Taxonomy verbs, desired results, essential questions, plans for differentiation, checks for understanding, and assessment. All plans reference the workshop model for instruction as well as the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence and determining the central idea, resulting in coherence and promoting college and career readiness.

- Curriculum maps across the content areas show alignment to the Common Core and include the instructional shifts of citing textual evidence and determining the central idea. Skill sets, that students need to master before moving on to the next grade, are cited as well as a plan to support student transfer of knowledge. In math, all maps include: study the problem, organize the fact, line up a plan, verify your plan with action, and examine your results (SOLVE) strategy thus, demonstrating coherence and promoting college and career readiness.

- Rigorous tasks are emphasized in the curricula so that all learners have access and demonstrate their thinking. An Algebra I linear inequalities performance task requires students to graph a solution to an inequality to determine how to get on the honor roll. Another math task requires students to create a table and graph to show the rate of change in determining how many scholar dollars are needed to attend a movie. A sixth-grade ELA task requires students to write a literacy analysis and connect common themes in the text The Lightning Thief while citing evidence from the text. A social studies task requires students to analyze documents and artifacts to write an essay about the Early River Valley Civilizations. All tasks include plans for scaffolds for ELLs and students with disabilities such as differentiated graphic organizers, tasks in students’ home languages, exemplars, sentence starters and leveled informational texts.
**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching practices exemplify the workshop model and student-to-student discourse.

**Impact**

Student discourse in their partnerships reflects high levels of thinking and participation, thus enabling students to produce meaningful work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teaching practices exemplified an articulated belief that students learn best through the workshop model and student-to-student discussions. In a seventh-grade ICT ELA class, students engaged in partner discussions to analyze excerpts from the text *Lyddie*. Students then analyzed the excerpts to gain a deeper understanding of the character. The teachers modeled the analysis of an excerpt from the text and demonstrated how to use the partner-to-partner protocol to conduct student discussions; there were some student-to-student discussions via a turn and talk regarding a quote about a character in the text. In an eighth-grade science class, students investigated how forces affect the motion of an object. Using manipulatives, the teacher demonstrated the concept of Newton’s First Law of Motion; however, there were limited opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse with each other.

- Students engaged in student-to-student discourse that reflected high levels of participation and made their thinking visible. In a seventh-grade science class, students discerned the difference between an electrical charge and an electrical current. In an introductory lesson, students used materials such as a battery, light bulb, and two wires to create a circuit. Students used academic language in their groups such as electron flow, insulation, electric current and circuit and explained to one another why the battery was generating heat. In a sixth-grade ELA class, students interpreted different stanzas from the poem "If." Students in their groups used context clues to interpret the poem and collaborated with one another to improve the meaning of their interpretations thus, making their thinking visible.

- In a seventh-grade ICT math class, students solved real-world problems using percent. Students engaged in a station activity and provided feedback during a turn and talk about the stations that posed the greatest challenge or was not clear in its expectations. In a sixth-grade social studies class, students engaged in a Socratic seminar to determine if Hammurabi’s Code was fair. Students in the inner circle used accountable talk stems to agree or disagree with their classmates whether penalties for the crimes were excessive such as death or amputation of extremities. As a result, students engaged in discussions that reflected high levels of thinking and participation.
Additional Finding

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

Teachers use State ELA four-point rubrics across content areas that are aligned to the school’s curricula and conduct mid-lesson interruptions and provide students opportunities to peer-assess.

**Impact**

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students apprising them of their next learning steps. Teachers make effective lesson adjustments thus, meeting the learning needs of all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding via mid-lesson interruptions and through a line of questioning. In an eighth-grade math class, the learning target of the lesson was, “How can we model exponential growth?” The teacher checked for understanding by posing the question, “Explain the difference between linear growth and decrease and exponential growth and decay?” The teacher adjusted the pacing of the lesson to provide students with additional time to answer the question. In a seventh-grade ELA class, the learning target stated, “I can support claims with relevant evidence?” The teacher asked, “What part of the process are you in?” The teacher adjusted the lesson via a mid-lesson interruption by stating, “Make sure the conclusion goes back to the thesis, connect your warrant to an if-and-then statement.” Students peer-edited one another’s writing using an argumentative essay organizer and an editing tools anchor chart thus, meeting the learning needs of students.

- In an eighth-grade ICT math class, students were tasked with representing initial values and rates of change in real life. Students engaged in a hands-on learning experience by measuring the rate of change by adding metal washers in a bucket. The teacher checked for understanding by conferencing with students and when asked “What is the rate?”, a student responded, “It goes by six.” The teacher conducted a mid-lesson interruption and modeled for the students demonstrating that their answers should be written to reflect the academic language. In a seventh-grade ICT math class, students self-assessed by answering a reflection question about their station activities and placing their answer on a sticky note.

- Teachers use the State ELA four-point rubrics across the content areas to provide actionable feedback to students on their writing. Students receive feedback in the form of glows and grows on their work. A student was lauded for her science project on sexual and asexual reproduction including an introduction of the topic and sequencing in writing. The grow mentioned that the student needed to organize their ideas using strategies such as definition, classification, compare and contrast, and cause and effect with a concluding statement. In an ELA writing sample, a student was commended for using some details but needed to use the senses in order to create imagery in her writing. Another student received commendations on his math work for identifying and showing all of his work but needed to explain reasoning behind his work. All students stated that the feedback provided by the teachers helped them to improve on future assignments thus, making the feedback actionable.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Feedback to teachers captures strengths and next steps that are aligned to the school’s instructional focus of student engagement and assessment in instruction. Data from Measures of Teaching Practice (MOTP) are used to inform professional development and succession plans for teachers.

Impact

Expectations for instruction are clearly expressed on teachers’ The Pineapple Chart and through feedback on observation reports to implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive feedback from administrators that is referenced by areas of celebration and next steps on observation reports. Feedback shows alignment to the school’s instructional focus of student engagement and fostering student-to-student discourse. In one observation report, a teacher is being commended for engaging students in the learning tasks and needed support in designing differentiated coherent instruction. Additionally, the Analyzing Student Work resource was recommended to modify the lesson to meet student learning needs. Subsequent observation reports show trends in teacher commendations in the area of student engagement and classroom environment. Patterns in teacher recommendations cite designing coherent instruction, using assessment to inform instruction through trackers and students generating questions for discussions. As a result of the feedback, ninety-three percent of the teachers were rated effective as per the 2017-2018 MOTP.

- Coaches, mentors, and peers support teacher development by modeling practices and participating in teacher intervisitations. Teachers receive feedback from their colleagues through a school-created system known as the Pineapple Chart that organizes the schoolwide intervisitation schedule. This chart is updated weekly, is visible for all staff, and chronicles the teachers that are engaging in the intervisitation process. Each week, there is a specific focus for the visit such as classroom management strategies, student engagement, checking for understanding, and ICT model teaching. Teachers willingly select a teacher to visit based on their area of need. The data collected from the visit is memorialized in writing. The visiting teachers glean instructional practices to be included in their practice. To date, fifty-three percent of the teachers are rated effective as the 2018-19 MOTP.

- School leaders use data from the MOTP to inform the professional development plan for teachers. A review of the data gleaned reflects a need for professional learning sessions on student self-assessment, co-teaching strategies, and using data to inform instruction. These sessions are referenced on the professional development plan thus, exemplifying evidence of the use of data to inform professional development. Succession plans for teachers include leadership roles such as mentor and content-specific coaches, a monthly rotation of Principal for the Day is held by teachers, and a restorative circles coordinator support the school’s focus on restorative circles to bolster school culture.