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

Mount Eden Children's 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>
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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>Well Developed</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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</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

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

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through observations and professional development. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations via progress reports connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
The school’s high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability and allow the school to successfully partner with families to support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- There are verbal and written structures in place to ensure that teachers are aware of the mutually agreed upon expectations of designing and implementing effective lessons. This shared expectation is actualized through intervisitations and professional development which are focused on providing a support structure for staff. Communications about having open-ended effective discussions and other school priorities are shared through informal conversations, emails, informational and instructional meetings, and the staff handbook to make sure students are making progress and receive engaging instruction. During teacher question-and-answer meetings, an overwhelming number of teachers confirmed that they receive clear communications about how their classrooms and whiteboards should be arranged for a productive learning environment and how to design challenging academic tasks. As a result, there is a well-coordinated system of support that helps administration and pedagogues ensure that expectations are executed effectively.

- School leaders work together to ensure that the classroom environment protocols are followed in creating an environment of respect and rapport as well as systems to manage student behavior. School leaders and staff send out newsletters and make daily announcements to communicate consistent expectations about the use of vocabulary and to encourage student voice in lessons. In turn, teachers support each other to ensure that they incorporate these practices into their daily routines. During one of the teacher team meetings, teachers had specific examples to share about the support they receive from consultants, administration, district personnel, and other teachers to ensure that their lessons include daily opportunities for students to participate in think-pair-shares or small-group discussions. An overwhelming majority of teachers shared that because they hold administrators responsible for supporting their pedagogical needs, more teachers are seeing improvement in their overall Advance ratings.

- The principal stated that a strong connection between home and school is essential in establishing trust and understanding between parents and educators and contributes to student success. The school partners with parents by inviting parents to participate in activities within their children’s classrooms throughout the year including, but not limited to, publishing parties, guest readers, and special celebrations. Parents attest that they have a partnership with the school and shared that they are invited into the building anytime, which gives them an opportunity to have face-to-face time with teachers, staff, and administrators on a daily basis. These informal interactions provide both families and staff the opportunity to address minor concerns and continue to build relationships. Teachers regularly send home progress folders that allow parents to view recent assessments and data to support conversation and planning between teachers and parents on how to best support students at home. Parents shared that high expectations permeate all members of the community and that they love the team approach to schooling which has resulted in their children’s success.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
While there are structures in place for administrative cabinet members to regularly evaluate and monitor curricular and instructional practices, there were missed opportunities for alignment between what is taught and how it is taught in different subjects. Administrators and teachers collaborate to evaluate the quality of teacher teamwork and professional development offerings each semester.

Impact
Leaders and faculty do not always make purposeful and timely adjustments to the instructional core and systems for improvements so that it results in greater coherence of practices across subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff consistently review student work and assessment data to gauge student understanding of important concepts being taught. However, there are missed opportunities for greater alignment and coherence between what is taught and how it is being assessed across all grades and departments. Some departments, like the English Language Arts (ELA) department, have multiple measures for determining if teaching is effective based on student writing products and their teaching methods. The mathematics, science and social studies department have similar techniques, but rely heavily on the outputs from the ELA department. The administrative cabinet shared that they are working with other departments across the school to help teachers evaluate the outcomes of multiple measures to ensure they are reliable and valid across all departments. Systems and structures for planning, teaching, and assessment are not always coherently demonstrated across all departments and grades.

- The school’s decisions about resources, goals, and long-term plans are adjusted as needed to increase the quality of student work products. In addition, there are structures in place to assess the effectiveness of the professional development occurring and the work of teacher teams at analyzing student work. As a result, teachers shared that they have been unpacking their understanding of the standards to pay close attention to what they need to support student mastery of priority Common Core Learning Standards and content standards. However, this structure is not yet purposefully evaluating school-level practices across the vast majority of teacher teams to ensure that there is greater alignment with what teachers need to learn in order to effectively support more students achieving mastery of the standards for state exams.

- During instructional cabinet meetings curriculum documents and assessment tools are revised to ensure that they provide access to all students. Conversations are held regarding how well teachers across grades are using standards and reflecting on how well lessons are taught. The cabinet reviews assessment data, including performance tasks, to make correlations between what is taught and how well students are understanding the content. Additionally, school leaders review teacher feedback to students to ensure that all students understand the feedback and students are progressing as a result of the feedback. Grade leaders are privy to information to enable other staff to make strategic decisions related to elements of the instructional core. While these conversations take place within cabinet meetings, there is not a formalized system to ensure that all members of the school community are involved with these conversations and the monitoring and revising process.
Additional Finding

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

Across grades and content areas, teachers and school leaders tactically plan in-depth units of study reflective of the instructional shifts and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. Rigorous habits for all students are coherently and strategically embedded into each task and unit of study.

Impact

Carefully constructed units of study have resulted in coherence and student demonstration of learning in a rigorous learning environment that emphasizes higher-order thinking and college and career readiness for all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- The curriculum maps integrate the Common Core in a distinct level of consistency and coherence across the school, as evidenced by academic tasks. To improve higher-order thinking skills, an additional template that promotes close reading has been added to unit plans across subjects, including the arts and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math.

- Teachers strategically include opportunities for students to question and pose problems, think independently and be innovative as evident in the lesson plans. In all classrooms, students engaged in peer discussion about their reading. Students with disabilities and English Language Learners are supported with necessary scaffolds for these units, which include the use of a variety of graphic organizers, manipulatives and targeted small-group instruction.

- Units in Reading Workshop reflect genre studies in both informational and literary texts and align to current science, social studies and/or writing units for continuity and depth in writing from sources. Students in kindergarten and grade one participate in “Books & Beyond” which focuses on comprehension skills and extension of knowledge and understanding in grade-appropriate literature. Grades two to five participate in literature periods where students read grade-level complex literary texts and engage in discussion and activities that deepen academic thinking, comprehension and text-based conversation. Guided reading engages students in both informational and literary lessons that are specifically targeted to the needs and levels of the small group. Additionally, tasks reflect a variety of informational and literary sources in classes such as science, social studies, and writing, to build knowledge in the discipline through engagement in text.
Additional Finding

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

Teachers’ instructional strategies provide all learners with multiple entry points into the curricula so that all students demonstrate high levels of thinking and discussion.

**Impact**

Across classrooms, students are challenged to engage in rigorous tasks that promote higher-order thinking. However, in some classrooms visited, students did not have ownership of learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across most classrooms visited, teaching strategies utilize scaffolds including concept maps, annotated note-taking tools, visuals, technology, and academic vocabulary to ensure tasks were accessible. During classroom visits, supports for high-level discussions were identified in all classrooms. For example, there was evidence of sentence starters and prompts to support student-to-student discussions. In some classrooms there was also evidence of teachers encouraging students to explain their thinking.

- Across classrooms, students had structures for conversations, strategies to support their learning, clues, and notes to help them with close reading activities. In addition, there were academic word lists, highlighters, experience charts, highlighted and annotated texts, and laptops for research available to support student work. Teaching practices in most subjects included project-based activities, collaborative learning, and discussions that promote high levels of student thinking and engagement. The use of effective multiple entry points was evident in classes visited. These included using students’ native languages to support their understanding of content. The teacher modeled when necessary or used other students as supports during the learning process. Students were actively working and motivated to explain their thinking, utilizing the manipulative materials or strategies-based approach that they learned.

- Most teachers provided students with challenging tasks that required critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. Teachers asked students open-ended questions; the students then speak to a partner or in a small group. Teachers’ questions varied; some provided questions that encouraged students to make connections between concepts and to synthesize complex material or which promoted meta-cognition. Students in an ELA class shared thoughts comparing two main characters with complex texts they were reading. While there were a few missed opportunities for students to take ownership of discussions, there were classes where students engaged in evidence-based talk and helped to determine the direction of the lesson, which is aligned to the school’s instructional focus. Across the classrooms visited, students were observed engaging in discussions that promoted participation and student to student interactions.
Findings
A variety of precise and thorough feedback to students promotes a reflective culture focused on progress for all students. Pre- and post-assessment data, checklists, and benchmarking cycles determine student groupings and provide a clear portrait of student mastery.

Impact
Ongoing collection and strategic use of formative and summative assessment data across classrooms has resulted in precise tracking of student progress, prescriptive next steps, and effective instructional adjustments at teacher team and classroom levels, leading to increased mastery for all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- In reading, students are assessed continually through benchmarking cycles using running records to measure progress toward grade-level reading standards. Running records are also utilized between these cycles to monitor progress and challenge students who are ready to move to the next level and to identify student independent and instructional reading levels, revise guided reading small-group instruction, and identify students' strengths and areas of need. Teachers use unit assessments in ELA and math to help inform the revision of units and lessons to address areas of need; weekly math quizzes inform immediate need for intervention. Vertically-aligned writing rubrics based on the Common Core Learning Standards inform writing lessons and identify areas of need in structure, conventions, and genre resulting in consistent student growth data in running records.

- Across classrooms, flexible writing groups are formed utilizing pre-assessment data according to skills and strategies specific to the targeted writing genre. Unit checklists assess writing behaviors, as do student work folders which are further analyzed by teams of teachers to assess progress and mastery. Students receive a checklist reinforcing sentence structure, adding picture details, handwriting neatness, punctuation and making sure the sentence make sense. Additionally, students reflect on their writing samples. To scaffold assessment practices for kindergarten students, teachers focus on a goal from a developmentally appropriate writing checklist which is unpacked for individuals and groups of students based on their needs. For example, students conference with teachers to identify goals and receive specific feedback to ensure movement toward mastery.

- The school developed a spreadsheet to enter data from literacy and math assessments to monitor the progress of individual students and identify trends and patterns among the different subgroups. The school leader also tracks students based on those who entered kindergarten with prior pre-kindergarten experience. This system allows the school to look at the data for individuals and groups of students, and the information gathered in the analysis of this data is utilized for planning instruction and to adjust the curricula to meet the individual learning needs of the students. For example, in reviewing the data, the school found that the students needed support in phonemic awareness. Teachers incorporated more phonics to support students.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The principal has established a distributed leadership structure that ensures the vast majority of staff engages in ongoing grade level and content area inquiry-based teacher professional collaborations.

Impact

The ongoing work of teacher teams results in instructional coherence, increased student achievement, and teachers playing a key role in instructional decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- To build teacher capacity and support teacher teams in data driven inquiry work, the school provides opportunities for all teachers to meet daily. In grade-level teams, teachers utilize a common-planning debrief form that includes a focused agenda, captures next steps, and outlines a timeline for the work to be completed. Follow-up meetings begin with a discussion of next steps from the prior meeting, resulting in modifications to mapping and lesson delivery. In addition to the instructional team, the grade team doubles as a child study team. The purpose of this team is to create action plans for struggling students, which includes an action plan and follow-up supports to ensure the proper supports are implemented. Across subjects, all content curriculum maps are living documents that are regularly revised during focused professional collaboration and shared schoolwide to elicit feedback and to build coherence across grades and subjects. In writing, teachers created more scaffolds for students to encourage writing, such as drawing a picture and then writing.

- Teachers stated that communication happens all the time as part of the teacher-team learning culture. They enjoy working together and sharing information. They shared that one of the most effective forms of professional development is visiting classrooms to look at environments and to observe colleagues. Teachers regularly visit classes independently. One teacher stated, “I can learn from my colleagues during team meetings and intervisitations.” Another teacher stated, “We have learned so much about reading and writing through sharing information and strategies across grades and meetings such as designing differentiated homework packets based on weekly analysis of student performance data.

- Teachers stated that leadership structures have led to thoughtful involvement in school matters. Each grade has an assigned subject leader in the areas of reading and writing. Teachers share responsibilities including facilitating planning in their particular content area and act as liaisons with the administration in regard to communication and record-keeping. All teachers on the grade collaborate and write the monthly grade-level newsletter. Moreover, teachers play a vital role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Teachers lead both the grade-level and vertical teams with which they participate. The team leader collaborates with his or her colleagues to set the agenda, find additional resources and assign next steps. Teachers have a voice with instructional initiatives. During the interview, a teacher stated “We modify curriculum to develop our students' inferential writing.”