Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx
Secondary School 09X568
1865 Morris Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453

Principal: Lemarie Laureano

Dates of Review:
March 5, 2019 - March 6, 2019

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

Young Women's Leadership School of the Bronx serves students in grade 6 through grade 12. 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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<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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 Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

All teachers are engaged in content and grade-level professional collaborations. Distributed leadership practices such as a Peer Collaborative Teacher (PCT), a Transition Leader, and a Students with Disabilities Liaison are embedded in the school structure.

Impact

The professional collaboration of teachers has resulted in schoolwide coherence via the inclusion of the Hochman strategies to support English Language Arts (ELA) across the content areas. Teacher voice is integral in student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A social studies team engaged in a professional collaboration to analyze student work to assess their students’ ability to use analysis in their writing. The team assessed how well or whether the student work met the standard to infer meaning, analyze information, and develop valid ideas based on evidence and analysis. The task required students to explain a belief system and discuss the influences that the belief system had on the lives of its followers or the society in which it was practiced. Using the Looking at Student Work protocol, teachers noted their observations such as that students produced a writing piece that was organized, but struggled with contextualization of the belief system, the significance, and the causation of their belief system. Teachers created a plan to provide targeted feedback to the students on their writing. Teachers shared that as a result of meeting as a team, teachers have vertically aligned the social studies standards across the grades. In addition, there is an infusion of the Hochman strategies in the Humanities such as the multi-paragraph outline plan for analysis writing, thus resulting in schoolwide instructional coherence.

- A review of teacher team notes revealed that the math department met weekly and analyzed student work products and assessment data. Teachers checked in on where they were in the curriculum. Teachers engaged in deep dives in mathematical routines such as “Notice and Wonder,” “Which one does not belong?” and “Number Talk/Algebra Talk.” As a result of the teacher-team work, the math department adopted the Hochman strategy in solving word problems such as the Single Paragraph Outline, the Word Problem Outline, and Number Talks to support literacy. The science department notes revealed the department set goals such as vertically aligning research and literacy skills, infusing Hochman strategies, and streamlining the laboratory revision policy. This collaboration resulted in a succinct and manageable process for students to resubmit reports for an improved grade. The department created a universal lab format used across the grades.

- Distributed leadership practices are embedded so that teachers have an integral voice in key decisions that affect student learning. There are Peer Collaborative Teachers (PCTs) within several departments. In the Humanities department, the PCT works with teachers to infuse the Hochman strategies across the grades and in vertically aligning the rubrics. The PCT in the math and science department has worked on aligning teacher team work with personal and professional goals. The Transition Leader has facilitated professional development Individual Educational Plan (IEP) writers to support the writing of transitional goals. Similarly, the Students with Disabilities Liaison facilitated professional development sessions to align IEPs to a revised Present Level of Performance (PLOP) thus supporting teachers when working with students with disabilities.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Teacher use scaffolds to enable all students to access the curricula and to engage in classroom discussions.

Impact

The strategic use of scaffolds to provide access for Students with Disabilities, English Language Learners, and high-achieving students has yet to be evidenced thus contributing to missed opportunities for students to demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use scaffolds, questioning, and the Kagan cooperative learning strategy of grouping students in order for them to access the content and tasks; however, the strategic use of scaffolds to meet the needs of students with disabilities, English Language Learners (ELLs), and high-achieving students has yet to be evidenced. In a sixth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) English Language Arts (ELA) class, the learning target required students to use a transitional outline to make comparisons between elementary and middle schools. All students used the same scaffold in creating topic sentences for their transitional outlines. Student work in their notebooks showed concept maps, and statements that claimed whether the quantity of homework was excessive or not in elementary and middle schools. Students engaged in student-to-student discourse in their groups and discussed the editing of their outlines. In a pre-calculus class, all students used the same scaffold in order to write an equation for a graph of polynomial functions with certain data points provided. There was some student-to-student discourse about the task, but it was not pervasive in the classroom.

- In a tenth-grade ICT ELA class, students reviewed the expectations for their upcoming performance task. Additionally, students were tasked with writing a research paper about bullying being a social justice issue. Students were grouped by their Lexile level and served as support to one another for specific members within their groups. Once the teacher explained the expectations of the performance task, students engaged in student-to-student discourse and discussed their articles and conducted an introductory activity by completing the missing words or phrases in their performance task. The teacher convened a small student group in the rear of the classroom to delineate the expectations for the performance task. In a seventh-grade ICT math class, students engaged in a station activity that determined if two quantities are in a proportional relationship, identified the unit rate, and represented proportional relationships using equations. Students used differentiated scaffolds that were aligned to the station activities, and student groups were differentiated based on summative assessment results. Students groups discussed units rates and proportional relationships while showing evidence of their work on their scaffolds.

- In a twelfth-grade ELA class, students discerned the difference between revising and editing in order to make their papers more concise. Students read their colleague’s paper and provided feedback using the revision checklist and commented on their Google doc. A student recounted revising their introduction based on the student's feedback. Another student pair read each other’s paper and served as a thought partner to one another while providing feedback. In an Advanced Placement United State History class, students engaged in a peer editing exercise that provided their colleagues with feedback on their thesis statements. A student group conversed with one another and stated, “I like your thesis and you gave context can be more specific.” “You explained cause and effect.”
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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</table>

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the school adopted curricular planning template and integrate the instructional shift of citing textual evidence of the Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula and academic tasks are refined using data cycles.

Impact

The use of the schoolwide instructional planning template and the citing of textual evidence has resulted in coherence across the grades. Curricula are refined so that individual and groups of students are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lesson and unit plans revealed that there is a schoolwide lesson and unit-planning template adopted across the content areas. The elements of the template cited: assessment data, essential questions, the learning objective, the learning target, English as a Second Language strategies, power standards, and strategies for grouping students. Lesson plan and unit plans across content areas integrated the Common Core Learning Standards as well as the instructional shift of citing textual evidence. An Algebra II unit plan on growth mindset articulated the desired skills derived from standards such as starting a problem, explaining one’s process, and collaborating with peers. The desired knowledge derived from the Common Core Standards mentioned the definition of growth mindset, and the Mathematical Habits of Mind. An eleventh-grade ELA unit plan on the Harlem Renaissance articulated that students learned about the occurrence of the Harlem Renaissance, the activism and artistic expression of the time, and connect as well as draw conclusions to larger ideas and themes beyond the Harlem Renaissance.

- Teachers across grades and subjects use student work and data cycles to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks. In a sixth-grade Literacy lesson plan on how to begin extended writing, the objectives of the lessons were tiered and showed a range of student expectations such as students generating multiple topic sentences and details independently to students utilizing the support of the teacher and partnered activities. Additionally, the lesson plan recalled tiered student groupings based on their Lexile level, and the supports for students such as co-teaching practices versus stand-alone teaching. In addition, the Universal Design for Learning strategy delineated in the lesson plan showed multiple representations of content, engagement and expression. An eighth-grade Literacy lesson plan on the text Night, demonstrated tiered student groups. All students were grouped by their Lexile levels. Students with disabilities received differentiated graphic organizers, while English Language Learner (ELL) students received sentence starters and strategic pairing of students to enable access to the task.

- An eleventh-grade ELA curriculum map tasked students with reading the text, The Crucible. Students with disabilities received guided reading notes and sentence starters while English Language Learner students read the graphic novel version of the text in order for students to access the curricula. A social studies unit plan on immigration, tasked students with completing activities that emphasized the challenges of industrialization, and the United States decision to intercede in global conflicts. The unit plan mentioned that students learned about the promotion of urbanization, and to understand the effects of large-scale industrialization. Lastly, students wrote a document-based essay on an assigned topic.
Findings

Teachers use the four-point mastery-based rubric across content areas and is aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers use data cycles to determine student progress across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The results of data-cycles are used to adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers provide actionable feedback to students using the mastery-based rubrics.

Supporting Evidence

- A standards-based approach to grading and assessments is a schoolwide practice. Teachers conduct data cycles to analyze assessment data to determine if students are not meeting, approaching, meeting, or exceeding the standard(s). Changes to curricula and instruction are informed by the findings of the data cycles. A teacher conducted a data cycle for AP US History to determine how well students constructed an argument by creating a clear position or thesis statement based on sound logic and valid evidence. All students attempted to write a complex thesis statement but struggled with producing a thesis statement that answered all parts of the prompt. Most students were approaching the standard. The next steps cited incorporating an additional document-based prompt into the weekly lessons and conferencing with students to provide one-on-one feedback on their thesis statements. Similarly, a teacher conducted a data cycle on a stars lab activity. The standards analyzed were application of vocabulary, forming conclusions from the data, the ability to transfer information to a graph. Students showed strength in applying vocabulary but struggled in the other standards. The adjustment to instruction included a lesson on accuracy and precision, and an explicit lesson on graphing.

- As a schoolwide practice, students conduct and submit revisions of performance tasks and unit tests. Students recalled that in doing the revisions, they learn from their mistakes. In some cases, one student mentioned, they can use the revision information in Global History and apply it to ELA, thus being meaningful in this instance. A review of student work revealed actionable feedback to students using the standards-based rubric (exceeds, meets, approaching, not yet). A writing sample included feedback that commended the student for providing a great example of a rebuttal. The student was cautioned to include a second piece of evidence to support the prompt, “Are protests by athletes effective?” Another piece of student writing was assessed using the standards-based rubric and provided next steps such as varying the student’s use of transitional words, and not capitalizing common names. A student’s lab report was assessed using a standards-based rubric that included categories such as precision, scientific literacy, argument and plan. The student received feedback on areas that were approaching the standard through a question such as, “Was your procedure accurate?” Similarly, another sample of writing cited the student’s need to include more details to show their research.

- A further review of data cycles showed teachers analyzed math summative assessments for their classes. The standard of focus was to identify the constant of proportionality in tables, graphs, equations, diagrams, and in verbal descriptions. Student performance varied among showed growth, stayed the same, declined or missed the assessment. Next steps cited a need to implement small group instruction, spiral the content to address misconceptions, and conference individually with students. Similarly, another data cycle looked at students’ ability to analyze details in a text as well as the sequence of details. For students with disabilities and ELLs, a plan to work on close reading skills was enacted. Bookmarks with guided questions and self-monitoring questions, small group instruction and repetition of the concepts were implemented.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

High expectations are imparted to the school community by the administration through written communication such as the staff handbook and through professional development sessions. Families are kept abreast with their children’s progress through an online grading portal, progress reports, emails, and texts.

Impact

School leaders hold staff members accountable for their expectations via the observation process and through school-based workshops to support families with those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the school community around instruction and communication through written structures such as a staff handbook, and *The Weekly*. Expectations for effective long-term planning are delineated in the staff handbook and include a suggested list of steps to support ongoing learning through clear learning goals, essential questions that foster investigation over time and designing assessments to evaluate whether students have met the learning goals. *The Weekly* communicates school events and expectations for professionalism such as adhering to the classroom checklist, classroom management structures, and expectations for displaying bulletin boards via a bulletin-board rubric. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through feedback from their department chairs.

- Teachers new to the profession engage in professional development to support their practices via a new teacher orientation. During the orientation, the teachers learn about the culture of the school, lesson planning, Universal Design Literacy (UDL), and the instruction domain of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In addition, teachers are assigned a mentor and an instructional coach who provides cycles of coaching to support their practice. Professional development sessions include Data Fridays that provide teachers with support on how to use assessment data to revise lesson and unit plans while ensuring vertical alignment of curricula. An instructional rounds session enabled grade teams to present to one another their work, what has been ascertained thus far and how their work has impacted instruction. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations centered on professionalism via the observation process.

- Parents are apprised of their children’s next learning steps through an online grading program that is regularly updated. Parents receive ongoing communication from the teachers via phone calls, emails, progress reports, message applications, parent-teacher conferences and report cards. Incoming students in grades six and nine are invited to a summer bridge program that provides them with instruction on topics such as growth mindset, critical thinking skills, and becoming familiar with their learning styles. Parents are invited to the school for events such as orientations, back-to-school night, and have specific times to meet with their child’s teacher. Parents have the opportunity to attend workshops on the college admission process, family literacy nights, financial literacy workshops, and other college information sessions. During parent appreciation week, which occurs twice a year, parents are invited to attend their children’s classes to observe instruction. The administration adopted an accountability system for parents to note their attendance at meetings which includes rewards for their attendance. As a result of this program, more parents have attended school events.
## Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

School leaders capture feedback on teachers’ strengths, and next steps in observation reports. Observation data is used to inform inquiry cycles.

### Impact

School leaders provide feedback to teachers that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* in order to promote teacher professional growth and reflection.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive feedback on observation reports that delineates strengths and next steps to support the teacher practice. Feedback on the observation reports focuses on using assessment in instruction and how it was informed by learning walks. An observation report mentioned that the teacher struggled in the area of using assessment in instruction. Next steps for the teacher cited the use of a rubric in the lesson so that students can track their levels of mastery to guide subsequent lessons. In feedback on another lesson plan, a teacher was commended for utilizing checks for understanding during the lesson to assess student mastery of the content as the teacher memorialized the data. The next steps suggested that students peer-assess one another using a rubric. Teachers also engage in intervisitation to learn best practices. An intervisitation tracker is used to record teacher visits on topics such as Socratic Seminars in mathematics, and using models to teach the distributive property.

- School leaders utilize online platforms to capture teacher observations and provide teachers with instant verbal feedback that is tracked for trends and patterns. Observation data is used to inform professional development for the staff. For example, a review of the trends and patterns observed in the observation data led to focused professional development sessions on the instruction domain of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Similarly, observation data is used to provide differentiated professional development and support for novice and veteran teachers. Professional development for new teachers included meetings with their mentors and workshops included Universal Design for Learning strategies in lesson planning, bulletin boards and observations. In part, as a result of incorporating feedback in their practices, twenty-four percent of the teachers were Highly Effective and seventy-four percent were Effective as per the 2017-18 Measures of Teacher Practice.

- School leaders used observation data that informed the next steps in their inquiry cycles. For example, a review of observation data revealed that teachers were struggling with questioning and discussion strategies during instruction. As a result of the data analysis, teacher leaders facilitated two inquiry groups to support teachers in this area. Leadership opportunities created included department chairs and grade leaders who facilitate grade, department meetings and teacher inquiry groups. The Coordinator of School Activities facilitates student council meetings and serves as the senior advisor. In addition, the Leader Teacher manages the advisory curriculum for all grades. Observation data, and teacher interest serves as the basis for these leadership decisions.