Quality Review Report

2019-2020

Norma Adams Clemons Academy
Elementary 17K006
43 Snyder Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11226

Principal: Sharon Porter

Dates of Review:
January 15, 2020 - January 16, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Deborah Glauner
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

Norma Adams Clemons 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to State 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 State standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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 State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through their handbook, schoolwide and team meetings, and through one-to-one conferences. The staff and school effectively communicate expectations and partner with families to support students to meet them.

Impact

Staff and families are a part of a culture of mutual accountability that supports student progress toward high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration provides consistent communication to all staff through a variety of measures including weekly schoolwide meetings, weekly team meetings, the staff handbook, and professional development (PD) that support and lead to a culture of mutual accountability. Some of these include expectations and non-negotiables such as classroom environment, pedagogical and assessment expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, sharing of best practices, and school goals. Leaders hold teachers accountable through formative classroom visits as well as formal and informal observations with both teachers and leaders speaking to clear and consistent feedback around school priorities. Administration provides PD designed to further grow teacher practice, including off-site PD opportunities, intervisitations, individual coaching and support, as well as model lessons. As a result, teachers, coaches, and administration create a culture of mutual accountability, with ongoing meetings where all parties are expected to actively participate in a close analysis of student data and student work.

- The school leaders and staff communicate high expectations around college and career readiness and partner with families to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of expectations and the progress of students. The principal and staff host workshops to engage parents in discussions about curricula, pedagogy, and preparation for the next level. The guidance counselor, the school social worker, and the parent coordinator work with families to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the middle school process and support families in attending middle school fairs, visiting open houses and schedule one-on-one appointments to ensure that families can navigate the application process. Staff also provides coaching sessions for families around the New York State (NYS) exams, new programs, and initiatives at the school and strategies they can use at home to involve them in their child's learning progress and to ensure they are aware of the expected grade level outcomes. Parents were aware of their children's reading levels and were clear on the expectations for growth throughout the school year.

- Parents shared that they feel that the school has partnered with them to support their students in reaching high expectations and a path to college and career readiness. For example, parents spoke to multiple workshops designed to support them in understanding the academic expectations and how to support their children at home, most notably with the implementation of a new research-based mathematics program. Both staff and families spoke to online supports designed to provide additional practice, support, and enrichment at home. Parents reported being welcomed into classrooms to learn with their children during the school day, as well as being able to come in every Monday after school to meet with their child's teacher. They also spoke to ongoing and frequent communication with teachers via phone and in person. Parents shared that at the end of June they had received appropriately leveled books and materials to support their children in reading over the summer. This partnership has supported student achievement as evidenced by a 13 percent increase in the number of students scoring at proficient levels as measured on the NYS English Language Arts (ELA) exam, from 20 percent in 2018 to 33 percent in 2019.
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 and create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices reflect the use of a variety of checks for understanding and student self-assessment through checklists and task-specific rubrics.

Impact

Though teachers provide written feedback to students, it is not consistently personalized and meaningful, resulting in missed opportunities for students to increase mastery. Although teachers make instructional adjustments resulting from in-the-moment checks for understanding, student awareness of their next learning steps was evident in some but not the vast majority of classes.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level, teacher-created assessments and rubrics, such as writing rubrics for informational and opinion pieces and standards-aligned rubrics for mathematic performance tasks are used across classes. Student work across classrooms is accompanied by age-appropriate, student-facing rubrics that are aligned with the curricula. For example, a review of rubrics demonstrates attention to the development of literacy skills. Rubrics for information writing in kindergarten and first-grade address structure, development and language conventions using "I" statements such as "I drew and wrote about important things about the topic." along with images to support the building of literacy skills. Rubrics for information writing in third and fourth grade focused on more complex skills such as elaboration and writer's craft. While these rubrics and checklists were evident across classrooms there were missed opportunities for students to receive personalized and meaningful feedback to drive mastery and craft next steps.

- While most students are given actionable feedback through these assessment practices, a review of student work revealed that feedback tailored and individualized to the learner and his or her work is not evident across the majority of tasks. For example, in a kindergarten classroom, an appropriately leveled rubric was used to provide strengths and challenges, however, there was little personalized, meaningful feedback for students to frame their future work. A third-grade published piece of student writing was graded with a rubric, however, teacher feedback consisted of a glow which stated, "You did an amazing job sharing what you know about super heroes" and a grow which stated, "Work on capitalization and punctuation marks." A fifth-grade published piece of writing also had positive feedback stating, “Great lead. Hooked the reader. Great organization.” The teacher did provide actionable and meaningful next steps stating “Develop ending. Connect back to and highlight what the text was mainly about.” While rubrics and checklists were consistently used across classrooms, there were missed opportunities to push a diversity of learners further toward achievement with individualized feedback.

- Teachers use student work and conferencing to check student understanding and to inform student groups and activities. In some classrooms, teachers were observed monitoring student learning in the data-driven groups and making further adjustments based on formative assessments during the class. For example, in a second-grade math class, as the teacher was working with a small group she noted that the group was struggling with using fact families so she adjusted her lesson to include a review of what a fact family was and modeled how students could use that to access the day's lesson on solving word problems. Similarly, in a grade-four literacy lesson on research, a teacher identified through whole-class questioning that students were not understanding a portion of non-fiction text. She implemented a turn and talk protocol so that students could share their understanding of the text with each other and then elicited from students the correct interpretation. While some teachers did check for understanding and adjusted lessons to meet students’ needs, there were missed opportunities across classrooms for teachers to have students identify their next learning steps.
Findings
School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the state and content standards across grades and subjects. Using student work and a variety of data, teacher teams plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact
Purposeful curricular decisions result in curricular coherence across grades and subjects, promote college and career readiness skills while building academic skills, and use strategic scaffolds and supports to ensure that all students have access to curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders and faculty collaborate to ensure that curricula are aligned across grades and subjects. Teacher teams review summative assessment data from the previous year, as well as from current pre- and post-assessments and formative classroom assessments to ensure that curricula reflect the needs of their learners and that it promotes college and career-ready skills for all students. For example, a review of the writing curricula for second and third grade shows both grades focused on narrative writing through the development of stories using elaboration and author's craft ensuring that the assessments were aligned to grade-level state standards. Similarly, while math is aligned to grade-level standards a review of curricula also evidences vertical alignment with mathematical reasoning as an area of focus for curricular adjustments with grade-three studying sums and differences to 100 while grade-five applied abstract reasoning using their understanding of place value.

- A review of lesson plans and curricula demonstrates consistency across grades and subjects including planning opportunities for students to collaborate to make meaning, checks for understanding, differentiated support, and small group instruction to support the needs of varied learners in the classroom. A second-grade math lesson in an integrated co-teaching (ICT) class showed notes regarding the different tasks for students at different levels in the classroom that would allow all students to access the learning target while a grade-three literacy lesson showed notes with varied supports for targeted students. Students were in strategic groups and tasks were planned that required peer collaboration. A grade-four math lesson on multiplication also had the same learning outcome for all students and showed notes regarding scaffolds, supports, and enrichment for students based on formative assessment data, as well as plans for student-to-student discussion. As a result, curricula are coherent and students have access to curricula and are challenged by tasks that promote college and career readiness.

- Teachers refine curricula to meet the needs of the learners in their classroom through a review of data that is then brought to team meetings. Lesson plans across classrooms showed notes made to adapt shared lesson plans to meet the needs of the specific learners in the classroom. Teacher teams collaborate to unpack curricula and then collaboratively design modifications to the curriculum. A grade-three lesson on biographies showed additional readings embedded to provide additional models for targeted students with specific strategies like chunking the reading passages and identifying keywords along with supplemental graphic organizers so that students with varying levels of English proficiency could demonstrate their understanding of the task. Similarly, a grade-two math lesson on making ten in an ICT class showed additional modeling planned for the class with targeted problems and scaffolds for students demonstrating different levels of mastery. Also evident in the plans were opportunities for students to share their ideas with a partner before whole class shares to ensure that all students had the opportunity to speak and to listen to each other. As a result of these refinements, all students can access the curriculum and are cognitively engaged.
Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy
Rating: Proficient

Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs including explicit modeling, small group instruction, and varied scaffolds and supports. Teaching strategies that provide multiple entry points and promote higher-order thinking are apparent.

Impact

Across classrooms, students engage in lessons that are aligned to the curricula and provide varied multiple entry points so that all learners, including Multi-Lingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- In teams, teachers, teacher leaders, and administrators collaborate to analyze data and to determine the teaching strategies that would best support students in accessing curricula and tasks. For example, teacher teams identified a need for more explicit modeling to provide students with exemplars of their expectations. Across classrooms, teachers explicitly modeled tasks and problem solving for students. A grade-four reading lesson on the American Revolution led off with the teacher explicitly modeling how to identify important events from a non-fiction passage and how to take notes to use that information in a research paper. Similarly, in an ICT second-grade class on solving one- and two-step word problems, the teachers modeled solving the problem for students before moving into targeted small groups. In the small groups, the teachers modeled additional problems and guided problem-solving to support students at all levels in accessing the lesson. As a result of the explicit modeling, diverse learners had access to exemplars of high-level work.

- Across classrooms, teachers utilize small group instruction to address the diverse needs of learners. For example, in a fourth-grade ICT class on multiplication, formative assessment data was used to group the students in four leveled groups. One group was working with a para-professional annotating a word problem to support identifying the question being asked, while one group was working independently on the task. Two other groups were working with the classroom teachers who were providing additional modeling and additional guided practice. In a grade-three literacy class on non-fiction text, the teacher provided small group re-teaching strategies to support identified struggling learners in accessing the task by providing additional modeling, guided practice, and graphic organizers. Similarly, a first-grade math class on making the number ten had three targeted groups with one group working with a partner on more rigorous problems, one group working independently, and another group with the teacher modeling and providing additional guided practice with manipulatives and graphic organizers to support instruction. Through these groups, teachers were able to meet the diverse needs of varied learners.

- Teachers across classrooms consistently provide students with multiple entry points to ensure that students are cognitively engaged. Teachers use anchor charts, graphic organizers and manipulatives to guide students and to engage them in higher-order thinking skills. For example, in a kindergarten math lesson on two-dimensional flat shapes students had varied materials to meet their needs. One small group had counters, a graphic organizer, and cut out shapes to support the identification of circles, squares, and triangles with teacher support while the larger group had counters, popsicle sticks, a different graphic organizer, and used colors to make their thinking and understanding visual and transparent. In a grade-four reading lesson, students had access to varied graphic organizers and across groups, students choose the graphic organizers they would use to plan their collaborative writing piece. Students had anchor charts and exemplars to use to guide their small group work.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

Written and verbal feedback after classroom visits accurately captures teachers’ strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. An effective system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design and facilitation of PD.

Impact

Written feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them. Additionally, teacher observation data informs the professional learning focus for the entire faculty leading to improved quality of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps. One observation report included feedback on using data to drive instructive, with a specific lens on using formative assessment to determine targeted small groups. Another report detailed the need to provide sufficient time for students to independently practice reading skills taught during the mini-lesson and that teachers should circulate to provide immediate, targeted feedback during the independent practice. A third observation provided a next step regarding planning opportunities for students to speak and listen to each other to support student engagement. One teacher reported that she had weekly meetings with a school leader to examine data to support her students. Due to the feedback offered by the school leader and the coordinated support of a literacy coach, she was able to track the progress her students made, identify areas of challenge and plan to address those areas. In examining data she noted that a small group of students was able to demonstrate mastery in writing across pages and was able to re-teach the skill to students who had not yet shown an understanding. Teachers and school leaders shared that student data and work are reviewed as part of professional conferences.

- Besides the reports resulting from official classroom observations, there are emails and in-person conversations that follow informal classroom visits that contain commendations and recommendations. One teacher shared that she had been provided with specific strategies and feedback around frontloading vocabulary in a variety of ways, such as using varied graphic organizers and visual clues. A review of observation reports shows evidence that teachers meet regularly with leadership to discuss progress towards meeting professional goals. A teacher shared that she had a professional goal to improve her assessment practices. With that in mind, she collaborated with a supervisor on tracking formative assessment and conference notes so that she was better able to track progress and areas of student need. This was evidenced in a later observation with a rating of effective in the assessment of students and she was commended on her targeted small groups and the different resources used to support varied learners. Teachers also reported that the verbal feedback they receive after formal and informal observations is aligned with their goals.

- PD is provided based on trends in teacher practices and progress towards meeting the school’s instructional goals. A review of PD documents, team notes, and feedback reports reveals that teachers are offered opportunities to visit with teachers who have demonstrated strength in targeted areas. One teacher reported working closely with a peer to develop math instruction while two teachers paired to support each other with science and social studies. In addition to supporting individual teachers a literacy coach supports PD on schoolwide needs. For example, the school has been focusing on using small groups to provide targeted instruction that enables varied learners to reach grade-level learning targets. Across classrooms, student work reflects the implementation of this support with students with varying levels of proficiency engaging in grade-level tasks. Additionally, school leaders have used the data from official and unofficial observations to make decisions regarding succession plans, and developing teacher leaders so that their coordination of programs and mentoring of teachers continuously grows.
Findings

Teacher teams follow structured protocols to systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including data-driven curricular adjustments and pedagogy. Distributed leadership structures are embedded so that there is effective teacher leadership.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in using data to drive pedagogical practice thereby increasing coherence and teacher capacity. Professional collaborations and teacher leadership structures allow teachers to play a significant role in decisions that impact student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work, including classroom practice, assessment data, and student work. Teacher teams follow a cycle of inquiry where they look at the data, conduct learning walks, modify curriculum, adjust lesson plans, and then assess the data again. In an observed grade-four teacher team meeting, teachers applied a common rubric to student work and then used a protocol to collaboratively identify trends, areas of need, and areas of strength across classrooms. In this meeting, teachers noted that there was an overall improvement in the organization of the paragraphs and that students were making an effort to elaborate on their ideas but that there were still issues that needed to be addressed grade-wide around sentence structure and the use of transition words. They then looked at the implications as it applied to the curriculum and their classroom practice and identified next steps to support student achievement, including providing additional exemplars for students, creating supplemental materials to support meeting the grade-four standards related to writing conventions and providing more practice with paraphrasing information in their writing. As a result of this practice, there has been a 13 percent increase in the number of students scoring at proficient levels as measured on the NYS ELA exam, from 20 percent in 2018 to 33 percent in 2019, with 80 percent of MLLs scoring at proficient levels on the 2019 NYS ELA exam as compared to 40 percent in 2018.

- Teachers report that common collaboration time has resulted in improvements in pedagogy and has enhanced professional practices across grades and subjects, as they have time to share instructional strategies and practices that can improve student achievement. Teachers use common planning to revise and add to curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners and also to identify students in need of targeted additional support. Teachers spoke to having identified a schoolwide need through the teacher team structures for additional vocabulary support. The administration provided PD in response to the need, leading to a schoolwide implementation of a research-based vocabulary scaffold.

- School leaders promote distributed leadership practices through teacher team structures, mentors, teacher leaders, membership on the School Leadership Team and grade leaders. Teachers reported during a meeting that they play a key role in curricular decision-making with both teachers and administrators speaking to a collaborative selection process of a new math curriculum for the school. Teachers also spoke to playing a role in the development and execution of PD, as well as to leading initiatives to support social-emotional growth for all students in addition to identifying students in need of targeted support in this area. Teachers contribute to increasing student achievement through implementing programs with fidelity and sharing reflections and next-steps with their peers to support growth in teacher practice across the classrooms. As a result, the 2019 School Survey shows that 91 percent of teachers say that they design instructional programs.