Quality Review Report

2019-2020

The Maurice Sendak Community School
Elementary 15K118
211 8th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11215

Principal: W Elizabet Garraway

Dates of Review:
October 16, 2019 - October 17, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jennifer Eusanio
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

The Maurice Sendak Community School 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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>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>
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</tbody>
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## School Culture

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

*To what extent does the school...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<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>Well Developed</td>
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<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>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 schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</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>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 State standards</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>
## Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

Professional learning, family outreach, schoolwide structures, and student-learning experiences are strategically developed and aligned to support social-emotional learning and meaningful interactions throughout the school community and ensure that students are personally well known by an adult.

### Impact

The combination of structures and learning experiences offers increased opportunities for all stakeholders to engage as a community and foster improved student academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school is engaged in an initiative involving a student learning experience called Playshop. It was observed in a kindergarten through second grade class, where it is embedded within the curriculum and instruction each week and uses the elements of social play while integrating reading, writing, listening, and speaking to support social-emotional interactions and positive academic and personal behaviors. Teachers receive professional learning (PL) and secure times in their schedules to observe students’ abilities to organize materials, communicate clearly within a given scenario, or self-regulate through a given task using a rubric and a checklist to guide them. The observations are used to inform future class lessons. Students are also offered the opportunity to self-reflect on their experiences after Playshop and determine solutions for improving the way they interact with each other during future Playshop sessions, further elevating the supportive environment around positive behavior building.

- The Wild Ways is a character education curriculum created by a team of teachers from within the school that promotes the community and social-emotional upbringing of the students. Students shared that one of the school’s core values is perseverance and they provided several examples of how they are able to sustain this habit in school every day. One student described that reading at times can be hard when a book is difficult, but uses what she knows about reading to help her through the harder words so she can be successful. Other students shared similar stories of academic and personal success. Teachers have been supported through PL and parents are also informed of the program in order to reinforce the character education values at home.

- Multiple structures enable students to be recognized and known across the school and support positive academic and personal behaviors. A student-based inclusivity committee was trained on the importance of diversity and supporting inclusive environments. According to the students, the committee engaged in an assembly and open mic share with students across the school, which impacted their perceptions on how they perceive themselves as learners and their peers, and has encouraged them to work more collaboratively with other students. Other personnel work closely with specific students, including guidance counselors, individual teachers, and members of the student assistance team, to identify those in need of personalized attendance outreach or other assistance to support them and foster student success within the classroom. Regular outreach with parents and teachers to support all students is conducted and there is ongoing progress monitoring by all involved. Additionally, several youth development opportunities are offered across each grade, which students report offer opportunities for them to reinforce responsibility, yet another of the key core values from the school’s character education program.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teaching strategies do not currently include strategic high-quality supports, other tools, and extensions into the curricula in some classrooms, as reflected in student work products or discussions.

Impact
In a few classes, there are missed opportunities for academic challenge and high levels of student participation and ownership in student work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Multiple entry points through the use of varied tools, questioning techniques, and strategies were observed across classes. In one third-grade reading workshop class, students worked in small groups or with a partner to discuss the book, *The Hundred Dresses*, focusing on one of the main characters in the book. Several students commented on her character traits. To further support their conversations and increase the level of rigor in their thinking, the teacher listened into each groups’ conversations and posed analytical questions to help the partners or group think about the complexity of the character they were focused on, which promoted critical thinking across the class. However, in a few classes, entry points were either not strategic or extensions were not in place to further challenge students.

- During a fourth-grade read aloud, teacher questioning led to student responses that reflected recall and basic inferences. In a fourth-grade math class, the teacher worked with a group of students while other students worked independently as part of a review of skills in rounding with addition, subtraction, and using word problems. Although all students were engaged in a variety of math problems, which ranged by skill level, many of the problem-solving skills with which students were engaged resulted in basic computation. There were limited opportunities for students to analyze and make reasonable assumptions to extend or further challenge their thinking through dialogue, as required by the task.

- In a second-grade writing class on revision, students had several opportunities to assist each other in revising their writing pieces, both as a group and in pairs. In one partnership, two students debated whether the word *terrified* captured the meaning of what the character was feeling in one particular scene in the story. In a first-grade science class, student groups conducted investigations using different objects to determine the effect of a placing objects made with different materials in a beam of light. Each student took a lead role in the development of their secret museum project. However, this level of student ownership was not present in a few classes. In a first-grade reading class, although students fully participated in a lesson on adding word endings, the lesson was primarily teacher-led and facilitated, with limited opportunities for student-to-student discussion. In a third-grade math class, students were provided with opportunities to work in small groups with an adult or independently. Although all students participated in this activity, some students were not as actively engaged as others.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and staff ensure that the curricula are strategically aligned to the State standards, with a target focus on fluency in math, as well as supporting claims development and using text evidence in English Language Arts (ELA). Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking are coherently embedded across grades and subject areas.

Impact

The targeted focus on specific skills rooted in tasks emphasizes rigor for all students, supporting schoolwide curricula that promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers plan their reading and writing curricula to reinforce target State standards on supporting claims and using text evidence, especially in the use of elaborate descriptions for character development in narratives or details for essays. In a fifth-grade reading lesson for supporting students in book clubs, the lesson focuses on providing a text-based rationale to help students elaborate on their claims and use text evidence, then revisit their reading response and revise to incorporate their thoughts for a more thorough, interpretative response. In a fourth-grade unit, students will be exposed to essay structures focused on writing claims and using text evidence while learning about Native Americans. Additionally, students will be reading across multiple texts to synthesize ideas in order to develop content-rich concepts. In a second-grade narrative writing unit, several lessons are dedicated to revision and for students to add more comprehensive descriptions using a mentor text to make their writing stronger and more detailed.

- In math, an emphasis on number sense and fluency concepts is embedded across the math curricula. In a third-grade math unit, students focus on adding and subtracting numbers with fluency, and understanding the properties of operations and their relationships up to 1000. Similarly, in a first-grade unit, students work on deconstructing numbers into parts and learning how to demonstrate fluency for addition and subtraction of numbers up to 10. In a fifth-grade unit, students are required to apply the same fluency concepts when understanding the place value of fractions and decimals and applying addition and subtraction concepts, demonstrating grade-to-grade coherence in the development of fluency concepts.

- All units embed rigorous tasks where all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners/Multi-Language Learners, are able to demonstrate critical thinking. In a second-grade social studies task, students are expected to conduct research on an influential African American person in U.S. history. The task requires students to read texts, take notes about their chosen person, and develop claims using text evidence to assert reasons why they chose this person to be highlighted as a hero. A third-grade math task requires students to develop complex math word problems and develop their own addition equations. In science, across grades, students are expected to engage in research projects and real-world investigations on topics such as conservation and climate change. In a first-grade unit, students are expected to plan and conduct an investigation to determine the effect of placing objects made with different materials in the path of a beam of light to answer the question, “How does light pass through different objects?” Similarly, a fourth-grade task requires that students construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction, with a focus on insects.
**Findings**

Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding, including one-to-one conferences, self-assessment, and common assessments across grades and subjects, to monitor student progress.

**Impact**

Teachers make effective adjustments to the curricula and during small group instruction and their next steps support meeting all students' learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Benchmark assessments are commonly used across subject areas to inform flexible, small group instruction. This year, curriculum adjustments are focused on performance outcomes, such as making inferences in reading and measurement in math based on recent State exam scores. Running records in reading are checked quarterly for progress monitoring, where the results are used to place students into guided reading or skill-based strategy groups. In math, module assessments are analyzed and used to support small-group instruction. Teachers use data to adjust their pacing calendars to meet the curricular needs of their students across grades and subjects.

- Teachers check for understanding through one-to-one conferences and mid-workshop interruptions. Across classes, teachers and educational assistants checked for student understanding and adjusted instruction using questioning or specific prompts. In a first-grade reading class, the teacher asked students to state a sentence using the word, *plays*. One student stated, “We *play* at the park.” The teacher used questioning strategies and adjusted her instruction to help the student rethink his response, which resulted in a new sentence, “My little brother *plays* in the park.” Students reported that teachers regularly assist them when they do not understand a concept and will reteach a strategy, if needed, thus ensuring that students’ needs are met.

- Students are expected to assess their own work, and that of their peers. This provides students with perspective to enhance the quality of writing across the school. Student writing and math work are reflected on bulletin boards, with student comments on their own and on each other’s work. Students reported using checklists to self-assess their writing, and to determine what they need to work on. In a kindergarten social studies class, students were provided with a three-part checklist to self-assess the completion of their drawings. As students completed their drawings, they independently, and with adult assistance as needed, used the checklist to determine whether they fully completed their drawings and labeled them before moving onto the next step. In some cases, the teacher questioned students to address and adjust their use of the checklist when misconceptions occurred, in support of meeting their learning needs.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently communicate high instructional expectations to promote student access to the entire staff. School faculty and leaders effectively communicate and successfully partner with families on the schoolwide expectations connected to meeting the State standards.

Impact

Staff members continuously hold themselves mutually accountable for the school’s expectations. Successful home-school partnerships foster a collaborative connection within the school community, which supports student progress toward the school’s expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders communicate their instructional expectations using a variety of methods, including a staff handbook that is provided at the beginning of the year, weekly newsletters via email, and during their Monday PL meetings. School leaders continue to reinforce these expectations throughout the year during one-to-one check-ins with teachers. They discuss the school’s expectations on promoting diversity and providing access to all students, and review teachers’ goals and their students’ progress. School leaders regularly observe teachers and hold them accountable to the school’s instructional focus on providing access and engagement for all students. Their feedback supports all teachers in meeting and exceeding their expectations.

- Teachers take initiative to hold themselves accountable for their own feedback from their school leaders and peers from post-observation debriefs. One teacher shared how he took initiative by reflecting on his observations and opening conversations with his peers about his feedback to work towards his professional growth. Others reported a common practice of intervisitations in support of working on their feedback with one another. Teachers reported that their teams’ structures enable them to hold each other accountable as they are expected to report back on what they have implemented in classrooms and work collaboratively in planning units to meet the instructional needs of students, especially as they adapt the curricula to provide access. Other teachers have taken initiative by working more closely with new teachers hired this year to ensure that they are fully capable of meeting the school's expectations in providing access in both their lesson plans and during instruction in their classes. During two classroom visits to new teachers, evidence of access to students was visible through the use of manipulatives and one-to-one support from the classroom teachers, demonstrating their mutual accountability for meeting the school’s instructional expectations.

- The successful partnership between parents and the school staff fosters a community that several parents agreed promotes an environment of community and collaboration. Coherent, ongoing communication systems are in place, where parents are made aware of how their children are performing, provided with support or enrichment, as needed, and where clarity is provided on what the State expectations are to ensure that families can understand them. Two parents shared how understanding the current math strategies and standards supported their conversations with their children at home, as well as their progress in school. Another parent shared that the workshops she attended helped her know what types of questions to ask her child at home, and also reported that her child has progressed in school as a result of this home-school connection. Overall, the school community as a whole, including families and staff, promotes student progress towards meeting and exceeding the school's expectations.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in grade-level and vertical inquiry-based teams that promote the achievement of the State standards and school goals. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

**Impact**

Professional collaborations strengthen the instructional and leadership capacity of teachers, ensuring that they have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Grade teams meet at least twice each week. Teams discuss identified students based on their review of performance data from formative assessments, such as running records, one-to-one conferences, and student writing samples to determine areas of strength and growth compared to the State standards. In fifth-grade, teachers are working on supporting students in understanding character traits and their motivations as based on recent data reviews. Teachers are currently working on using different types of graphic organizers as a way to help students organize their ideas when thinking about their characters. A review of first-grade notes reflected that teachers have been meeting to review their rubrics and small moment writing pieces and discussing options for choices of paper type to support their students.

- The grades three to five data inquiry team conducted a review of their recent State ELA data and honed in on students who received a high Level 2. The teachers looked at their running record data and intervention records from last year and the most recent reading data to determine whether each student had made progress and the types of support they would need. The group reviewed the records, students’ work, and conducted an item analysis for each student and determined that all of the students required more work on specific skills such as inferencing, author’s craft, and finding text evidence. The teachers developed a two-part action plan that consisted of an in-book assessment to accurately gauge where students’ needs are, set specific goals, and find areas in the current and next units of study to integrate their areas of need at certain points. Additionally, they discussed adding different types of prompts for reading responses including “I think…”, and “Another reason is…” to help students elaborate their ideas and talk about the book more organically. When asked, teachers felt that this process enables them to be more reflective about their practices as teachers and target skills and scaffolds in support of the school’s goal. One teacher stated that this work has helped him consider using multiple assessment measures to further understand a student’s reading ability and to not just rely on a reading level. This practice has supported more thoughtful small group instruction in his class.

- Teachers make lead instructional decisions both within their grade and on vertical teams for a variety of reasons, which are supported by school leadership. Pacing calendars are revised as needed based on data and students’ responses to units of study. A unit was revised based on student interest on global climate changes and environmental issues. To further engage students, teachers revised the unit topic to focus on the environmental issues with the rain forest, yet kept the same skill objectives from the original unit, which led to improved student engagement. Additionally, teachers have added more gallery walks in other subject areas into their classroom practices to continue their work on student engagement.