Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 127 Mckinley Park
Elementary 20K127

7805 7 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228

Principal: Agatha Alicandro

Dates of Review:
November 20, 2019 - November 21, 2019

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

P.S. 127 McKinley Park serves students in grade K 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<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>Additional Finding</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
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</table>
## Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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 expectations through a variety of methods, such as the faculty handbook, and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff successfully partner with families and effectively communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists among school leaders and teachers who support each other in ensuring that teacher-team meetings and information sharing protocols are effective. Information sharing and successful partnering with families support student progress toward high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are shared with staff through faculty meetings and through a variety of tools, including emails, memoranda, weekly professional development (PD) sessions, and a faculty handbook. Among the high expectations shared in the handbook are instructional design and delivery of content-specific lessons, expectations for staff regarding participating and turnkeying PD, inquiry work protocols, data protocols, homework policy, student progress reports, and grading policies, along with standards for daily school operations and maintenance of student safety. In addition, a staff charter was developed in a collaborative process that codifies the shared expectations of staff and school leaders including being respected, supported, inspired, challenged, and appreciated. As a result, on the school survey, 100 percent of teachers reported that the principal makes clear their expectations regarding instructional goals.

- High expectations are shared with families through multiple tools, including monthly newsletters, a smartphone app, email, text messages, individual and group phone calls, and the school’s website. Workshops are central to sharing high expectations with families covering such topics as the understanding the middle-school application process, supporting students in preparing for the State exams and navigating online resources available for parents to use in supporting students. The monthly newsletter to families shares expectations of the school community along with individual grade and class expectations and ways families can support their students at home. Parents spoke of assemblies at the end of the school year introducing them to next-grade expectations and being provided with summer bridge packets to support their child in entering the next grade. As a result, in the school survey, 98 percent of families reported that school staff regularly communicates with them about how families can help their child learn and 98 percent of families report that they have had the opportunity to participate in classroom visits.

- School leaders hold the staff accountable for expectations by conducting cycles of teacher observations that include conferences, walkthroughs, regular classroom visits and by providing actionable feedback. Observations and formative feedback discussions with school leaders support teachers in strengthening their instructional practice and building a culture of mutual accountability. Also, school leaders meet with teachers and teacher teams to discuss the impact on student progress of units of study, their action plans, and the adjustments they have made or will make based on student data. Also, at team meetings, school leaders and teachers share resources and discuss best practices to implement initiatives. The school community’s culture of mutual accountability is also evident in teachers’ reliance on their colleagues to arrive at team meetings prepared to engage in data analysis, inquiry of student work, and review of the different strategies that teachers use to address students’ various needs. Meetings end with an assignment of tasks for which all participants are responsible. As a result of these structures, teachers are reflective about their craft and receive targeted, ongoing support that further reinforces accountability and improves the quality of their practice.
**Findings**

Teachers use and create content- and unit-specific rubrics and checklists that are aligned to the curricula and assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for student understanding across classrooms.

**Impact**

Teacher written feedback is not consistently meaningful so that students can achieve mastery. Students monitor their progress using rubrics and checklists, yet teacher checks for understanding do not consistently result in effective adjustments to meet students’ learning needs and making them aware of their next learning steps.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers and students use shared standards-aligned rubrics and checklists across grades and subjects to ensure that students have a clear understanding of what they are expected to accomplish in their writing, work, tasks, and projects. For example, a fifth-grade narrative writing task included a rubric to guide students to develop the characters, plot, setting, problem/solution, and to check writing conventions while a checklist was used for students to peer- and self-assess the integration of the elements of fiction evident in the writing piece. Similarly, a second-grade writing task included a checklist to support including the elements of narrative writing and called for students to develop their own next step that aligned with the rubric used to evaluate the task. In a fourth-grade social studies class, students working in groups were observed using the project rubric and the checklist provided to make improvements upon their work.

- Across classrooms, assessment practices reflect consistent use of ongoing checks for understanding. Teachers were observed conferring with students to clarify concepts and/or essential skills to address potential misconceptions or missteps. Teachers also used targeted questions to monitor student understanding. For example, in a third-grade reading lesson, the teacher conferred with a small group to support them in making predictions in reading. The teacher asked: “What did you see when you previewed the chapter?”; “What can you predict from those things?”; and “Why did you make that prediction?” In a kindergarten lesson on building a bridge, the teacher checked for understanding with questions: “What do good architects do?”; “Can you tell me what we learned from measuring steps?”; “What would happen if the steps on the right side were a different height than the steps on the left side?” Teachers also used a variety of ways to support students in assessing their own understanding. In a third-grade class, students had laminated cards they could put on their desk to indicate if they felt confident or if they needed some help. Students were able to monitor their own progress using shared class tools; however, they were not provided with personalized next steps or consistent adjustments to lessons so that they are aware of their next learning steps.

- Students are encouraged to provide rubric-aligned feedback to each other and teachers circulate consistently using questions to elicit evidence of understanding and providing verbal feedback to students. Written feedback from teachers on student work was neither consistently meaningful, nor did it contain concrete next steps for students to improve subsequent assignments and achieve mastery. For example, feedback on a fourth-grade task on using area models to multiply two-digit numbers had a student assessment and reflection and teacher feedback that stated, “I wanted you to use 45 x 33. You did a nice job on your example. Try to reflect on your work.” while feedback on a published piece of student narrative writing gave a next step of, “Work on run-on sentences as well as punctuation.” Similarly, feedback on a grade-four writing piece stated, “Nice job. Work on neatness.”
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
Curricula are strategically aligned to the State standards and demonstrate integration of academic vocabulary across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
School leaders and faculty establish curricular coherence across grades and subjects that promotes college and career readiness for all students. Revisions to lesson and unit plans support individual and groups of students in having access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular materials are aligned to the State standards and show evidence of strategic integration of academic vocabulary that is evident across the vast majority of unit plans and lesson plans. Planning demonstrates attention to academic vocabulary that would support skill acquisition. For example, a grade-three English Language Arts (ELA) map highlights character analysis with a focus on words like infer and trait while a grade-four ELA map focuses on the words analyze and identify. In a second-grade science lesson on the effects of water on rock salt, teachers reinforced high-leverage words, such as identify. In a grade-five math lesson, the teachers reinforced vocabulary that was in high use, such as data, models, and multiple strategies.

- In grade- and content- team meetings, teachers and school leaders review and revise curricula and instructional foci. In a grade-four and grade-five ELA teacher team meeting, teachers reviewed previously identified targeted high leverage vocabulary words with a lens on ensuring multiple exposures to high impact academic vocabulary across grades and disciplines, such as identify and distinguish. Additionally, after an analysis of previous year-end data, teachers revised their curricula in order to provide ways for students to have increased opportunities to apply reading skills through the integration of novels in the ELA curriculum. For example, the grade-five ELA curriculum was revised to include four trade books that were identified by the team as aligned to the research-based curriculum in place.

- A review of curricular documents and academic tasks evidences the planning and modification of instruction to meet all student needs. For example, a third-grade lesson on comparing and contrasting two characters from a text calls for students to be grouped according to reading level; groups will be provided with leveled texts and guiding questions so that all students are challenged appropriately. A grade-four math lesson on arrays and partial products demonstrates attention to mastery with strategically planned re-teaching points for struggling learners, independent practice for students on level, and an enrichment task for students that demonstrated mastery. Similarly, a fifth-grade math lesson on multiplying decimals and whole numbers in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class includes a re-teach activity for struggling students to work in a small group with scaffolds, such as laminated grids, dry-erase boards and additional teacher support; students demonstrating mastery would be provided with independent practice and more challenging tasks. Other planning documents include student groups based on data from online and formative assessments, scaffolded materials, differentiated graphic organizers and visual supports for targeted students so that all students could have access to the curricula and cognitive engagement with tasks.
Additional Finding

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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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best when they can engage with their peers, have differentiated supports and access to task frames. Multiple entry points are provided so that all learners have access to curricula.

Impact

All learners, including Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, have access to appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers consistently implement real-world connections in tasks and opportunities for peer-to-peer conversation to engage a diversity of learners. For example, in a grade-five math lesson, students were asked to think about how math is used when studying bats and how the topic, multiplying decimals with whole numbers, could be relevant. Students then followed a turn-and-talk protocol, back-to-back, face-to-face, that allowed for thinking time before exchanging their ideas with their peers. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) grade-two class, the teacher used the same protocol to activate students’ prior knowledge by asking students to share with their partner their personal experience with storms prior to reading their shared text.

- Across classrooms, teacher support student ownership of learning through age-appropriate task frames that enable students to have an understanding of the expectations of the specific task and the steps needed in order to complete the task. For example, a task card for a lesson in a kindergarten class provided images as well as the written steps so that all students had access to the task, planning how to build a weight-bearing bridge. Similarly, in a fourth-grade social studies lesson, students were provided with task cards designed to help ensure that students could fully respond to the task of understanding how the Lenape people used the natural resources of their environment and evaluate their work and their progress.

- Differentiation of instruction exists in most classrooms thus, providing students with multiple entry points into the curricula. Students with disabilities and MLLs were provided with supportive structures and opportunities to be engaged in their learning. During lessons, most teachers allocate time to confer with students in a differentiated group setting or one-on-one, and are aware of students’ levels of understanding. In a first-grade ICT math lesson, students were in strategic and targeted groups with differentiated scaffolds in the form of counters, white boards and laminated worksheets that allowed teachers to see student thinking as all students were expected to understand how to solve subtraction problems through creating an equivalent sum. In a third-grade reading lesson, students were grouped according to reading levels and had appropriate texts and tasks that would allow them to complete the learning target which was that students will be able to compare and contrast two characters from the text. For example, while all students used a graphic organizer, some groups of students received a graphic organizer with a higher degree of scaffolding and students needing translation had access to iPads in order to have the text in English and in their home language.
## Additional Finding

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

Teacher growth is supported by strategic use of cycles of classroom observations, data analysis, and teacher peers. Meaningful feedback captures strengths, challenges, and actionable next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

### Impact

Observation cycles and formative feedback along with collegial support from teacher peers, including intervisitations, results in professional growth, reflection, and improved pedagogy that aligns with teacher goals.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders support the PD of teachers and provide actionable feedback on instructional practices via classroom observations, strategic learning walks, checklists, and follow-up collegial conversations. School leaders conduct targeted learning walks and identify common trends across classrooms around schoolwide initiatives. School leaders analyze learning-walk notes, teacher observation data, and student data to determine progress towards meeting the schoolwide instructional goals. For example, school leaders conducted a walkthrough to provide support regarding the implementation of a turn-and-talk protocol, back-to-back, face-to-face. Teachers were provided with targeted and strategic feedback through conversations. Formative and evaluative feedback also included the schoolwide focus on effective grouping with feedback regarding heterogeneous and homogenous grouping, as well as recommendations on intervisitations to support implementation of best practices in these areas and elevate instructional practice.

- Teachers reported that the structured observations, formative feedback, and PD, have resulted in a supportive culture that has improved professional practice. Teachers spoke about cycles of intervisitation that enabled them to share best practices and to learn from each other. For example, the school provided PD to support implementation of a program designed to promote social-emotional learning. To further support implementation, teachers participated in learning rounds in order to see how each teacher was adapting the program for their classroom. Teachers provided feedback to each other as part of the process. One teacher stated, “When we first started, everyone adapted it a different way; so when we participated in intervisitations, we were able to see other ways to use it, such as for vocabulary. I was able to see different ways to use it and I knew which colleagues to ask for support.”

- A review of observations demonstrated attention to both schoolwide foci and teacher’s professional goals. For example, one teacher spoke about wanting to improve in the area of questioning and discussion and was provided with actionable feedback to support growth in that area: “You may want to try to incorporate turn-and-talk protocols for student-to-student discussion, such as back-to-back, face-to-face...This protocol was introduced through our English as a New Language (ENL) team during Monday professional learning time...” A different teacher received goal-related feedback on explicit modeling of expectations, which was addressed in another observation stating, “... When giving the students the task of using the organizer to write the haiku, it would be beneficial for you to model using the graphic organizer.” Another teacher spoke about being supported in ensuring that students shared ownership for group work, and about working with administration to develop ways to monitor participation in small-group tasks.
### 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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**Findings**

Teacher teams use common-planning time to engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations and use a structured protocol to analyze student data.

**Impact**

Teacher team work has resulted in implementation of schoolwide initiatives and strengthening of teacher instructional capacity; however, the impact is not yet reflected in data for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders ensure that teachers engage in inquiry teams that meet regularly and purposefully plan and adjust curricula, analyze student assessment results, and formulate next instructional steps. Teams follow an inquiry protocol to look at student work. For example, a multi-grade inquiry team looked at student writing and identified the need for increased vocabulary building. This resulted in teachers implementing "shades of meaning" across classrooms, a structure designed to expand student vocabulary and to explore the nuances between words. In addition, an interdisciplinary team comprised of fourth- and fifth-grade teachers identified common academic vocabulary, such as distinguish and analyze, that would support students in being able to understand content and respond to higher-order questions. This has resulted in 100 percent of teachers reporting in the school survey that at their school, teachers make a conscious effort to coordinate their teaching with instruction at other grade levels.

- In an interdisciplinary team focused on improving content-specific skills through deepening student understanding of vocabulary, teachers reviewed the work of targeted students with a lens on collecting data to support the analysis of the efficacy of embedding academic vocabulary throughout student-facing documents. Teachers referenced a shared text as well as articles from professional publications that would guide their thinking and practice. Also, teachers shared graphic organizers that they wanted to use to support this initiative. Teachers also set the goal of having the students utilize the target words in their responses as an additional way to determine student mastery of the vocabulary and agreed upon a timeline to monitor progress and revise if needed. As a result of these structures, teachers have increased their collaboration and work together to examine and analyze student work and data as well as instructional practice. However, the impact of this work is not yet reflected in the data for all students.

- Teachers report that common collaboration time has resulted in improvements in pedagogy and enhanced professional practices across grades and subjects as they have time to share specific instructional practices that can improve student achievement. Teachers reported looking at student work, at assessment data such as benchmark and grade-level assessments, and informal assessments like exit tickets, to determine if students were able to respond to prompts containing academic vocabulary and to create next steps to remediate or challenge student learning. Scaffolds and supports for a small group of targeted students have been implemented and progress is being monitored throughout the cycles of inquiry which has resulted in growth for the targeted students. For example, inquiry work done around increasing the understanding of the nuances of vocabulary resulted in growth for all five targeted students with three out of the five demonstrating mastery.