Quality Review Report

2019-2020

The Brooklyn New School, P.S. 146
Elementary 15K146
610 Henry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231

Principal: Anna Allanbrook

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

Lead Reviewer: Glenda Esperance
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 Brooklyn New School, P.S. 146 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>Proficient</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>Developing</td>
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</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>Area of Celebration</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings
The approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support is grounded in the belief that students learn best when they feel safe, understood, as well as known and cared for by the adults and peers in their lives. Structures, such as the Conversations about Color Club, are in place to support the coordination of social-emotional learning and youth development for academic success.

Impact
The effective implementation of the schoolwide belief leads to positive student academic and personal behaviors and student involvement in school decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have created clubs across grade levels to ensure that student voice is incorporated into the school culture. Students’ personal needs and experiences guide the topics chosen for club discussions. The Adoption Club talks about the experience and emotions felt by adopted children. The group strives to ensure that no one feels alone. The Conversations about Color club provides a safe environment for students to discuss race. The Disability Activists & Allies Community club is a forum for students to address life as a student with a disability. Additional clubs include the Gender and Sexuality Club and the Grief Group, which provides support to those students dealing with the loss of a loved one. Groups are open to all students. A fourth-grade student explained that students are allowed to speak during club meetings about things that are not traditionally spoken about. The diverse groups that have been developed ensure student voice and their ideas are incorporated into all aspects of school life.

- Across grade levels, the faculty ensures that students are well known by at least one adult. Kindergarten-to-grade-five students participate in daily conversations about their emotional well-being. Each morning, teachers and students greet each other and share important information about the flow of the day. Additionally, students shared that they are encouraged to discuss their feelings when they are upset. At the beginning of the year, all teachers have a meeting with each parent in their class to learn as much information as possible to support the needs of their students. School leaders and teachers pride themselves on building trust with students. During a parent meeting, one parent stated, “The school community knows us really well as individuals. Our children feel safe and they can always tell someone at school what is on their mind.”

- Specifically selected grade-five students participate in student government and are charged with the task of addressing schoolwide concerns. In the past, the group has addressed bullying, bus behavior, and global or local issues. However, this year the focus is on environmental concerns. The team meets on a consistent basis and creates action plans to address identified issues. Team members wrote a letter to the school foods department regarding the overuse of plastic in packaging. School foods came and spoke to the students and addressed their concerns. Additionally, several students have worked on trying to reduce the amount of plastic use across the building. These students serve as class recyclers and conduct garbage vehicle checks to ensure staff and students are putting trash in the appropriately designated bins. Afterwards, they share their updates and findings on the loudspeaker. Students have spearheaded the No Trash Day initiative to raise awareness of the excessive amount of trash accumulated in a day.
Findings
School leaders and faculty administer ongoing common assessments across grade levels and content areas. Teachers use tracking sheets to conduct in-the-moment assessments during daily lessons and rubrics that are aligned with the school’s curricula.

Impact
Although there are common assessments administered and teachers conduct checks for understanding during lessons, feedback is both limited and not actionable. Inconsistent instructional adjustments result in limited and varied support for all students.

Supporting Evidence
- School leaders indicate that teachers take criteria from rubrics and craft student-friendly checklists to guide students’ performance on learning tasks. For example, several writing samples included a checklist, which were used to evaluate organization, evidence and details, word choice, and punctuation. However, this practice is not occurring across all content areas. For example, a review of student work across grade levels revealed limited evidence of students receiving actionable feedback. On multiple samples of students’ projects, essays, and assessments, a grade and tangible next steps to improve performance were not evident. Additionally, a review of the use of grading policies and rubrics indicate inconsistent impact on student performance.

- Schoolwide common assessments include benchmark tests in reading and mathematics. In addition to these, staff utilize content-specific assessments to track student learning. Assessments in English Language Arts (ELA), for kindergarten through grade five include sight-word inventory, fluency screeners, running records, informal reading inventories, and informal checks for understanding. In mathematics pre-assessments, post assessments, math sprints, and Math Collective assessments are used. Teachers for grades three-to-five measure student success using performance-based assessments that evaluate students’ ability to apply the skills and knowledge learned from their grade-specific unit of study. However, despite the use of these common assessments, data that measured the on-going progress of the students was not available.

- During the lessons observed, teachers conferredenced with groups of students to assess learning. However, across classrooms, there was limited evidence of adjustments being made to provide supports to struggling students and extension opportunities for high-performing learners. In a grade-three math class, the teacher tracked students using grade-specific numeration standards. According to the tracking sheet, students were assigned to specific groups based on teacher observations during the lesson. However, this practice was inconsistently seen in the classes visited. During a fifth-grade ELA lesson, the teacher tracked students’ performance on creating a non-fiction paragraph. While a number of the students’ demonstrated mastery of the concept, the teacher simply encouraged students to continue on the same task without in-the-moment adjustments to further challenge the learners. Scaffolds or additional ways to access the learning for struggling students were not observed.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Curricular and learning tasks include opportunities for interviews with experts, hands-on learning, and field trips. Data are used to plan and refine academic tasks and consistently emphasize higher order skills.

**Impact**

Learning tasks are designed to be cognitively engaging and provide access for a wide range of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across grades, thematic literacy units provide for multiple entry points for diverse learners and opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning. Inquiry-driven social studies lessons incorporate reading, writing, technology, field trips, and interviews with relevant experts. For example, grade-four students conducted a study of Native Americans. The unit explores the origins of the Native peoples of New York and how their cultures evolved in relation to the natural world around them. By the end of the study, students were to discuss how culture develops over time. The unit plan includes leveled libraries that consist of texts ranging across grade levels on Native Americans, shared readings at different levels, graphic organizers, and scaffolds for students with disabilities. Additionally, trips to the Botanical Gardens and American Museum of Natural History are included. Utilization of the Green Studio space and Legos are also embedded in the unit to create simulations. Planning learning experiences such as these, consistently promote rigorous habits for a wide variety of students including students with disabilities and Multilingual Learners (MLLs).

- Analysis of curricula shows that lesson and unit plans include supports that address the needs of struggling students and students with disabilities. These provisions are determined based on teacher observations and a review of student work products. A grade-two ELA lesson plan that required students to write a descriptive narrative includes graphic organizers and access to an adjective and adverb word banks and simile sentence starters. A grade-three ELA plan requires students to research and gather information to complete an integrated text project. Some of the requirements incorporated into the task were the inclusion of multiple texts, pictures, and an interactive component such as a puzzle or lift-a-flap. Students struggling with the organization of their research would be supported with a note-taking checklist, how-to-take-notes anchor chart, and non-fiction text features chart.

- Curricular documents include evidence of planning and refinement to ensure that students have access to academic tasks. In a grade-three math lesson plan on combination of tens, the independent task included three problem sets designed to address the learning needs of all students. One set was designed to cover single-digit numbers to address the needs of the lowest achieving student. Another problem set was designed to cover three-digit numbers to address the learning needs of the highest-achieving students. This practice is present in many plans but not evident across the vast majority of lesson planning documents.
Additional Finding

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide students multiple entry points into the curricula. Additionally, across classrooms students conduct collaborative hands-on work and discussions within groups.

Impact

Intentional groupings allow a wide range of learners, including students with disabilities, to demonstrate high order thinking skills. Student discussions reflect high-levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade-four science class students analyzed the teeth and skulls of various animals to discover what kinds of foods the animals consumed. Students worked in groups and sorted skulls into whether they belonged to omnivores, herbivores, or carnivores. The task required learners to identify which skull matched with a specific animal. Students discussed their views on the topic with their peers and cited evidence from the text to support their opinions. In a grade-three science class, students were given materials such as rubber bands, popsicle sticks, and straws and were asked to create a harmonica. Students were provided time to manipulate the materials and then explored different ways to adjust the pitch and sound of their instruments. After exploring and adjusting the sounds created, students were able to explain the correlation between the sizes of the rubber band with the pitch being produced. The inclusion of these interactive activities helps provide a deeper understanding of the concepts being taught and supported student learning.

- Across content areas students were provided with opportunities to participate in discussion. In a grade-five Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) literacy class, students explored various ways authors create strong leads for nonfiction pieces. Students were provided multiple mentor texts and asked to jot down the techniques the authors used. Students discussed their findings with their group citing specific examples from the mentor text that helped them formulate their opinions. In a grade-two literacy class, the teacher blew bubbles around the classroom and asked students to write a descriptive piece based on their observations and share it with their table partners. Students described the variety of colors present in a bubble with one student referring to a bubble as a transparent orbiting planet. It was evident that students used higher-order thinking skills throughout the lesson and were cognitively engaged.

- Across multiple classrooms, intentional groupings were observed. In a grade-three literacy ICT class, students conducted research as they worked on a project on West Africa. Predetermined groups were given scaffolded supports ensuring accessibility to all learners. One group had a pre-annotated text while another group had a step-by-step note-taking sheet. An occupational therapist pushed into the classroom to support the sensory needs of some students. In a grade-three math class, the teacher created three versions of the day’s activity focused on performing multi-digit arithmetic. Students performing below grade level were provided with visual aids and scaffolded questions to help them complete the activity. Students in this group also received a number line, grid paper, ones and tens colored rods, and anchor charts that displayed tips associated with the skill. Students performing on or above grade levels were provided with additional higher-level questions that required them to think about combinations using 100s.
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 expectations and provide training to all members of the staff. School staff successfully partner with families through parent workshops, monthly memos entitled Anna’s Letters, and progress reports.

**Impact**

School leaders and staff have established a culture of mutual accountability derived from clear expectations and customized teacher feedback. Effective parent outreach positively impacts student progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- At the beginning of the school year, school leaders present the Comprehensive Education Plan goals and instructional foci to the entire staff. In addition, leaders provide teachers with a faculty handbook and distribute a daily memo via email that updates staff on schoolwide events, professional learning (PL) opportunities, and compliance concerns. Additionally, school leaders use PL sessions to support and strengthen teacher pedagogy, intentionally aligning these sessions to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Administrators and teacher leaders provide faculty with next steps on an ongoing basis, with feedback on observation reports offering suggestions for pedagogical improvement. All reports include pictures, an extended narrative of the visit, an identified area of strength, and next steps for their pedagogy. In one observation report, the school leader recommended that the teacher reassess the pacing of her lesson to provide students with increased opportunities to share their learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers shared that school leaders, coaches, and teacher peers’ support is strengthening their craft.

- Parent workshops are tailored to meet the needs of the school community. The school surveys parents, and their input is used to plan a menu of parent workshops that are both academically focused and interest-based. The school has hosted a wide range of workshops dealing with literacy, math, the middle school application process, and the issues faced by LGTBQ students. School leaders also send parents a monthly memo entitled Anna’s Letters to help support student needs at home. The topics discussed in this document mirror those of the in-school workshops. For example, in one edition, readers were provided with insight on strategies to support literacy at home and the importance of providing students access to books through the use of the library. Additionally, staff at the school has developed detailed progress reports for pre-kindergarten through grade five that give content specific information on academic and social emotional progress.

- Families participate in workshops to help them prepare their children for the next grade level. At a parent workshop, parents worked collaboratively with staff to discuss the mission of the math department, review the established rituals and routines across grade levels, and unpack math problems with the goal of increasing students’ preparedness for their next grade level. Additionally, school leaders and teachers created a math video library for parents containing a collection of short instructional videos starring BNS teachers. These videos highlight the kind of mathematical thinking that is encouraged, and are available through the school website. This partnership between parents and school staff has contributed to increased student achievement.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in grade team inquiry-based professional collaborations. Distributed leadership structures, such as teacher-led committees, are in place throughout the school community.

Impact

Teacher teams are strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Through oversight over schoolwide initiatives, teacher leaders have been integral to key decisions improving student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams exist from pre-kindergarten through grade five. Each team has a specific focus. The grade-five team’s focus is to integrate math into science and social studies curricula. The pre-kindergarten team is piloting the social-thinking strategy curriculum across the grade. Each team meets on an ongoing basis, sharing student work among its members. Recommendations for improvement are made to one another. Teachers indicated that their instructional practices are strengthened through these team-based collaborations. One team created a document entitled, “Strategies for Addition and Subtraction” which highlighted best practices. This resource was adopted by other teams as well, thus impacting students across all grades. One teacher explained that by working together they get varied perspectives and brainstorm best practices to employ which lead to their improved teaching practice.

- During an observation of the grade-one team, teachers met to review lessons from the science unit addressing the concept of motion energy. Teachers started the meeting by sharing strategies they used with students during the first lesson in the unit. One teacher shared that she started exploring the topic with students on the playground. Another teacher had the students discuss terms associated with moving and used these words to create a vocabulary chart. In yet another class, a word wall was created with an invitation to the grade-four students to visit the class to support use with the academic language. The science coach presented the materials for the following lesson, with teachers taking turns in offering suggestions on how to make the planned task more accessible to students. The team made a list of possible next steps, including a revision to a student worksheet, the incorporation of a book on gravity, and allowing students the opportunity to create roller coasters.

- In addition to grade-level teacher teams, school leaders encourage teachers to join committees that oversee schoolwide initiatives that support student learning and social-emotional needs. The School Wellness Committee plans monthly programming to address the school’s need to recognize and dedicate time towards mindfulness activities. The Race and Equity Committee hosts book clubs using text and media materials such as Black Appetite White Food by Jamila Lyiscott and 1619 Project, the podcast series created by Nikole Hannah-Jones. Staff members who rotate leadership roles from one group meeting to the next, facilitate these small groups. Additionally, the hiring committee is composed of school leaders, a teacher representative from each grade level, and a special education teacher. The team works collaboratively to scout and vet candidates who best support the needs of the school community.