Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 147 Isaac Remsen
Elementary 14K147
325 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Sandra Noyola

Dates of Review:
January 30, 2020 - January 31, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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. 147 Isaac Remsen 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to 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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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: 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: Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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: 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: 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: 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: 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: Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</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>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building and social-emotional learning is driven by a theory of action to provide training and support to staff that aligns to the schoolwide vision of creating a student-centered environment. There are specific support services for students and families addressing all students academic needs.

Impact

School leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitude that contributes to a personalized learning environment in which students are well known by adults. Student growth and the adoption of effective personal behaviors and habits are achieved.

Supporting Evidence

- Promoting an inclusive and nurturing school environment is rooted in the schoolwide belief to create and maintain a student-centered learning environment that empowers all students to have a voice in the classroom and in school affairs. School leaders and staff members shared that they believe that students are most likely to achieve at the highest level when school life is designed to support students’ social-emotional growth in addition to academics. Students and parents voiced that they feel part of the school community and students have ample voice in school decisions. The school council has a representative from each grade that focuses on promoting ideas to improve the school. An example being when students collaborated and made a concerted effort to keep the school grounds clean by not littering. To this end, students requested placement of additional garbage receptacles outside the school, which leadership granted. Additionally, daily morning student led assemblies serve as opportunities for students to share their feelings, address concerns, or suggest new ideas.

- The Lighthouse Committee ensures that students’ social emotional needs are met by implementing strategies that encourage them to attend school every day and maintain positive attitudes. All students reported that the staff knows them very well and shared that they feel that they could approach any adult to discuss an issue or confide in someone. Likewise, daily engagement in morning assemblies allows students to express themselves and encourages positive peer-to-peer interactions. To promote regular daily attendance, the school leaders developed an attendance committee to monitor and celebrate students’ attendance, and intervene for students that have excessive absences or are at-risk of becoming chronically absent. Daily attendance rates are posted at the entrance of every classroom and signs promoting the importance of attendance are displayed around the school. At the time of the school review, the vast majority of classrooms had average daily attendance rates of 90 percent or higher, validating the positive impact of the schoolwide attendance initiative.

- The majority of staff members have been trained to use Leader in Me strategies. These include the seven habits of highly effective students to create a positive and inclusive learning environment while promoting the adoption of effective personal and academic behaviors. This professional development (PD) allows them to teach students strategies they can employ to self-regulate their behaviors and make alternative positive choices. At the time of the school visit, students reported that the win-win strategy was the habit for the present month. Parents explained that their children are applying learned strategies at home, such as persevering with their work or being proactive by starting school projects early. Additionally, positive behaviors are being adopted that have resulted in data that shows student suspensions for the 2018-2019 school year were zero as compared to five the previous year.
Findings

There is a schoolwide belief that students learn best when participating in challenging academic tasks and high levels of discourse. Teaching strategies align to school goals and provide entry points into lessons for a variety of learners through the use of scaffolds.

Impact

Teaching practices lead to the development of meaningful and high-level work products across classrooms. However, high quality extension activities related to the tasks were not as yet in evidence.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders and faculty have placed a strong focus on teachers being explicit in designing student-centered lessons. In support of this, leadership and faculty share the belief that classroom instruction must engage students in purposeful higher-order academic tasks and discussions. As such, the instructional leadership team requires teachers to provide multiple entry points into lessons and differentiate tasks so that all students have access to the lesson and are cognitively challenged. Use of graphic organizers support students in organizing their ideas and accountable talk sentence stems provide assistance for students during discussions. The use of technology to support instruction was evident throughout the classes. To engage students visually and to provide additional support for English Language Learners (ELLs) smart boards were employed. Additionally, academic vocabulary posted on word walls, use of small group instruction, and anchor charts were consistently seen across classrooms.

- School leaders and teachers identified the workshop model and reciprocal teaching as the best way to align instructional practices to the instructional foci, beliefs and promote coherence. The workshop model, was observed being utilized across classrooms and grade levels to teach reading and writing. Likewise, math lessons employed reciprocal teaching, in which students become the teacher in small group sessions. Teachers modeled how to solve multi-step math problems using strategies like think-aloud to show their rationale for using the strategy. Students learn to guide group discussions using four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting.

- Teachers use protocols, routines, and scaffolding to provide structure and entry points into lessons and academic tasks for a variety of learners. A first-grade writing workshop lesson began with the teacher using the smart board to model how good authors capture their audience’s interest by providing a hook at the beginning of their stories. Students then transitioned to ability-based groups to write their own introductory hook while the teacher provided further small group instruction or individual assistance to students who were struggling to develop their ideas. It was evident that students had mastered the routine of transitioning to independent or group practice, as minimal prompting was required. Students were provided with picture boxes, referenced anchor charts, or received coaching from their peers to support them in developing their ideas. While some teachers used common strategies to promote cognitive challenge and engagement, not all lessons provided high quality extension activities that aligned to the lesson objective. Students in an English Language Arts (ELA) class were directed to find something to read when they had completed their group work; however, some students did not actively search for a book. In a class in which students had finished a letter word identification activity, they were prompted to restart the activity. Challenging extension activities were not in evidence across the vast majority of classes.
**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 aligned to the instructional foci and State standards with integrated strategic, college readiness habits. Curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and tasks and are embedded in a coherent manner.

**Impact**

This coherence across grades and subject areas promotes high levels of student thinking and college and career readiness. Faculty plans and refines curricula to ensure access for a variety of learners so that all students are cognitively engaged and able to demonstrate rigorous thinking in academic tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula align to the State Standards and the school’s instructional foci by planning multiple opportunities for students to engage in meaningful higher-order discussions and the writing process. Teachers strategically integrate cognitively challenging questions, discussion starters, and problem-solving tasks into lesson plans. For example, in kindergarten through grade five lesson plans, common conversational practices are in evidence. Turn and talks foster high levels of student engagement. Furthermore, to build coherence across grade levels and content areas, the workshop model of instruction along with common strategies and protocols are employed in their unit and lesson plans. Thus, high levels of student participation and discourse promote the adoption of college and career readiness skills.

- The use of student checklists for writing ensures consistency in the writing process across disciplines. Student self-reflection is required to double check that they have included the criteria to meet or exceed proficiency on their writing tasks. Similarly, having students justify their rationale for choosing a math strategy to a partner or engage in reciprocal teaching is commonly identified in lesson plans as a means to foster student discussion and metacognition in math. Plans include opportunities for students to show their thought process and write reflections regarding their math thinking. In addition, teachers use a writing process learning progressions rubric across classrooms and content areas for consistency in writing. Accountable talk stems prompting students to use academic language in peer-to-peer or group discussions are consistently observed in plans. As a result, there is coherence in planning for all students to demonstrate their thinking across grades and subjects.

- Teachers meet weekly to work collaboratively and assess the quality of student work products, which results in their analyzing trends in common assessment data. This data is then used to revise curricula, plan lessons, pacing guides, and to develop ability-based student groups. Teachers plan targeted small group instruction and scaffolds so that all students have access to the lessons and are challenged within their proximal zone of development. Similarly, plans include multiple entry points and supports for challenging tasks. Universal norms and protocols such as student routines, checklists and rubrics, common writing strategies, and the use of common scaffolds are clearly in evidence. Revisions lead to the inclusion of annotation methodologies, graphic organizers, accountable-talk prompts, discussion stems and reciprocal teaching to ensure that all student’s learning needs are met.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

The vast majority of teachers uses or creates assessments, rubrics, and student-friendly checklists that align to the curricula to monitor student progress toward mastery. Teachers use analyses of assessment data to monitor student progress, make instructional decisions and adjust or refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

Teachers’ use of common rubrics and assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers. Teachers utilize data to make adjustments to curriculum and instruction so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers use rubrics and assessments to monitor student progress and provide actionable feedback with next steps for improvement. Additionally, teachers create student-friendly checklists to provide opportunities for students to self and peer assess their progress with their writing across grade levels and content areas. A review of student work samples showed evidence that students receive rubric-based feedback with next steps to improve their writing. For example, on a narrative writing essay, a student had received specific feedback regarding the message being sent the reader. The teacher suggested that the student focus on the choice of words in the dialogue to help ensure that she conveyed what she meant. Students reported that the feedback they receive from teachers and peers is meaningful because they can see how it is helping them become better writers. Students credit the rubric-based feedback they receive for their understanding of how to move up a level on the writing progressions rubric.

- The vast majority of teachers use assessments that align to the schoolwide curricula. Teacher teams consistently provide timely and accurate data on student progress that teachers use to make instructional decisions by using class specific exit tickets. The school leaders meet with grade-level team leaders in grades kindergarten through grade five to ensure that assessments align to the curricula and are effective in monitoring student progress. Additionally, benchmark assessments are administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the year in all content areas to monitor student progress toward mastery of identified high leverage standards and skills. Students performing below benchmark are provided remediation, and identified trends and patterns in student achievement levels leads to revisions to curricula and instruction. A teacher leader serves as a data coach to disaggregate the data. Teachers and teacher teams are then helped in assigning students to instructional groups in the classroom. Targeted intensive interventions and supports by intervention staff are developed using the data as well. These assessments provide meaningful information to teachers regarding student progress toward mastery and promote effective instruction.

- Teachers use varied assessments to inform adjustments to curricula and plan scaffolds that support all learners, including lower performing students. Assessment data, effective monitoring of student progress and adjusted instructional practices results in meeting the individual needs of students. Specialized and targeted instructional strategies for special needs students and Multi Lingual Learners such as, explicit small group instruction use of visual cues, and chunking of informational texts result from the accurate analysis of data. This strategic use of assessment results positively impact student achievement as indicated by a 10 percent increase in the overall percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding proficiency on the latest state exam.
Findings

The school leaders use traditional means, as well as multimedia platforms to consistently and effectively communicate high expectations to staff, students, and parents. Staff members provide ongoing feedback to parents on their children’s academic progress.

Impact

Systems of mutual accountability for staff ensure that they meet high expectations. Effective communication with families promotes students and their parents to be aware of their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s leadership team is committed to communicating high expectations to the faculty and holding them accountable. Ongoing support is provided to meet those expectations and improve their professional practice. Instructional expectations have been articulated to teachers via the Principal’s Weekly email to staff, professional learning sessions, teacher team meetings, and ongoing collegial support from the school’s instructional leads. Members from the school leadership team support teachers in advancing their professional growth and aligning their instructional strategies and curricula to the schoolwide goals and content Standards through ongoing and frequent professional learning sessions. A review of meeting agendas and sign-in sheets indicates that professional learning sessions align to the instructional expectations including reciprocal teaching and universal literacy sessions, promoting accountability for expected practices.

- The school leaders and staff have initiatives in place that include the implementation of rigorous curricula, instruction, and academic tasks by utilizing research-based pedagogy including the workshop model and reciprocal teaching. Additionally, teachers are expected to analyze data and student work products to design instructional groups and differentiated lessons that take into account students’ individual learning styles and needs. Teachers reported that the majority of the professional learning sessions align to the mutually agreed upon instructional foci and supports teachers in meeting instructional expectations. Teachers further reported that they are held accountable to the schoolwide expectations through formal classroom observations by school leaders, and by participating in non-evaluative class visits with their colleagues. This supports their emulating identified best practices in their own classrooms. Additionally, teachers hold school leaders accountable to ensuring follow up support through ongoing professional development, guidance, and instructional coaching and support. Teachers stated that this practice has improved their pedagogy. Advance teacher evaluation ratings indicate that 100 percent of teachers were rated effective or highly effective during the 2018-2019 school year.

- Structures are in place for effective communication of high expectations to families that leads to next level readiness for their children. Parents report receiving regular communications from the school, including information on curricula events, workshops, and school celebrations. Varied methods are used including Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, newsletters, emails, and an online communication platform. Parents noted that most teachers use the online platform, which allows parents to monitor their children’s academic and behavioral progress daily and communicate with the teacher via texting. Students reported that they frequently conference with their teachers so they can monitor their progress toward meeting goals. Parents were especially appreciative of the mobile application, which allows teachers to post pictures of student work and classroom events.
Findings

All teachers use a specific protocol to look at student work and are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school’s goals centered on improving teaching and learning. The reciprocal teaching strategy for literacy instruction across grades and content areas is implemented.

Impact

Targeted instructional planning and collaboration improved teacher practice, and resulted in coherence of curricula. Teacher team analysis of student assessment data advanced pedagogy and lead to progress toward mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- All teacher teams are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations to promote the implementation of the New York State standards across grades and subjects. Grade-level teacher teams are provided with common planning time to analyze student data and work to plan rigorous lessons and make revisions to curricula to ensure accessibility for all students. Teacher-team analysis of curricula and academic tasks contained in lesson and unit plans results in the identification of gaps in skill development and the provision of multiple-entry points and academic supports for students. Additionally, the analysis informs next steps in curriculum decisions. For example, the need for a student-centered, small-group instructional model providing differentiated activities and materials for students led to teachers and school leaders implementing the workshop model of instruction for teaching reading and writing. To this end, teacher teams adopted a research-based program focused on literacy-instruction as the best resource for teaching literacy.

- Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work products to devise strategies for students to help close identified achievement gaps. A review of State test and common grade-level assessment data revealed that students were struggling with academic language and explaining their rationale for selecting strategies to solve math problems. This data led to teachers adopting the reciprocal teaching model for math. Teachers agreed to use the CUBS strategy (Circle the numbers, Underline the questions, Box the math words, Set up and solve) in kindergarten through second grade. The CUBES strategy used in grades three through fifth requires the additional task of Evaluating the next steps. Additionally, the use of a structured protocol to examine student work requires teachers to reflect on the scope and sequence of their units of study, how they are differentiating curricula and instruction, and how they provide supports to address the needs of all learners. This analysis lead to teachers adopting common practices across grades and content areas promoting coherence and accelerating learning.

- A third-grade teacher team was observed using a Looking At Student Work protocol to analyze students’ constructed responses on a common end-of-unit math assessment. The team’s focus was to determine students’ progress toward mastery of solving a multiple step word problem and the ability to perform multi-digit arithmetic. Teachers noticed that students demonstrated a lack of understanding regarding how to use the strategy and struggled with organization. In response, a team decision was made to add a week to the pacing calendar to provide more time to teach foundational math skills using the Frayer model and CUBS and CUBES strategies. As a result of their effective teaching practices the overall proficiency rate on the State math test for the lowest third performing students in the school improved by 26 percentage points from 2018 to 2019.