Quality Review Report

2019-2020

J.H.S. 201 The Dyker Heights
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 20K201

8010 12 Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11228

Principal: Robert Ciulla

Dates of Review:
January 8, 2020 - January 9, 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

J.H.S. 201 The Dyker Heights serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. 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>To what extent does the school...</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>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>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>
</table>
## School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</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>Area of Celebration</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>
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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>Additional Finding</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>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>
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<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>
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<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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Area of Celebration

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

The school community’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social emotional support is grounded in the belief that children learn best in a safe, positive environment where they are respected, accepted, and valued as unique individuals. Structures are in place, such as the Social Emotional Awareness Team, to support the coordination of social emotional learning.

Impact

Each student is known well by at least one adult. Positive student behaviors and involvement in initiatives such as student leadership teams and daily advisory are in evidence across the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- To promote inclusion and tolerance, school leaders have implemented the Social Emotional Awareness Leadership team (SEAL), to embrace and uphold standards of behavior and high expectations of respect for all. The team is comprised of students across all grade levels. They work collaboratively to coordinate a variety of schoolwide initiatives that support the year’s theme. This year it is “It’s Nice to be Nice.” For example, the team created bookmarks for the entire school community with quotes that embodied the theme “never give up.” The team has also created a public service announcement video for teachers to share with their classes depicting what it looks like to be kind. The video features students demonstrating acts of kindness that include holding the door for a peer, assisting students with disabilities access to resources, and ensuring that no one eats alone at lunch. Finally, the team published a monthly newsletter that provides its readers with strategies to help recognize emotions and make responsible decisions. In one issue a tip on how to overcome challenges and obstacles along with the importance of staying positive were included. These initiatives clearly contribute to the positive climate felt within the school building amongst all its constituents.

- School leaders have created a student council to ensure that student voice is incorporated into the school culture. Selected grade six to grade eight students meet on a consistent basis and create action plans to address identified concerns related to school tone. Students created a list of ways to motivate peers and spread enthusiasm throughout the school and discussed ways to build school spirit. For instance, during a brainstorming session, the team decided to transform an empty hallway wall into one that promotes diversity and showcases the uniqueness of the school Students created posters, banners and flyers and established the theme Dyker Proud and Strong. Upon arrival into the school building students are greeted with a banner that states, “When you Enter This Loving Building Consider Yourself One of the special Members of an Extraordinary Family.” This is the platform that enables student voice and ideas to be incorporated into the school community.

- Across grade levels, the school faculty ensures that students are well known by at least one adult. All students participate in advisory on a daily basis. During these sessions teachers and students greet each other and share important information about the day. Specific student-generated topics are discussed as well as schoolwide concerns. During one session students completed a survey that required them to conduct a self-assessment identifying their biggest sources of stress. The school used this information to generate ideas to provide students with support to decompress and manage the stress levels at school, at home and from friends. Students indicate that this structure has helped them discover new ways of managing their feelings which enables them to concentrate and reach their academic goals.
Area of Focus

<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 and instructional tasks consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula so all learners can participate in high-level academic tasks.

Impact

Teachers’ use of scaffolds provides accessibility to challenging tasks for a variety of learners, and the school’s grouping practices ensure student involvement in the learning process. However, as yet opportunities for student ownership of their learning are limited in some classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the majority of classrooms, teachers incorporate grouping that offers multiple entry points to all students. In a grade-eight Living Environment class, students were conducting a lab experiment entitled Diffusion Through A Membrane. The teacher created variations of the experiment to ensure accessibility to the wide range of learners in her class, including one version to address the needs of the highest performing students. Additionally, there were adjustments that included follow-up questions to gauge student thinking, along with hints and sentence starters as scaffold supports for students. In a grade-seven Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, the teacher created three versions of the math activity to accommodate the wide range of student learners. Students performing below grade level were provided with extra scaffolds and supporting documents to help them complete the activity. Students in this group also received a reference sheet that displayed definitions and tips on using the distributive property and how to combine like terms. Students performing on grade level were provided with additional higher-level questions that required them to think about the activity. However, similar strategic student groupings were not observed across the vast majority of classrooms visited during the school visit.

- Across content areas students were provided with opportunities to partake in student discussion with high levels of participation in evidence. In a grade seven math class the teacher conducted a class discussion centered on distinguishing the difference between sales tax, discounts and totals. Questions were posed with students being asked to turn and talk to discuss ways they solved the problem. The teacher used a cold call strategy to randomly select students to participate in the conversation. In a grade six science class, students conducted a discovery lab on simple machines. Students held discussions with lab group members about the various types of simple machines that could be found in a Hess dump truck and shared questions on their observations with each other. In a grade eight ELA class, students held small group discussions on the different types of conflicts featured in the book, *The Outsiders*. Students discussed the characteristics of external and internal conflicts, identified various conflicts between characters and cited evidence from the text to support their opinions.

- In a grade seven literacy class, students engaged in independent reading by taking part in station-learning tasks. An activities menu was provided that included topics such as central ideas, author’s purpose, and making inferences. Students were allowed to select the strategies they wanted to practice. Students were encouraged to work collaboratively with peers to tackle the assignment. The teacher incorporated scaffolds and supports to ensure the accessibility of the task to all learners. Although teaching in this class showed evidence of student ownership, this practice was not observed in the vast majority of classrooms.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

Unit and lesson plans include academic tasks with scaffolds and emphasize rigorous habits that are planned and refined using student work products.

Impact

Across grade levels and content areas diverse groups of learners are cognitively engaged in higher order thinking activities.

Supporting Evidence

- Analysis of curricula shows that lesson plans across all subjects and grade levels are designed to include supports that address the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. A seventh-grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan includes leveled readings, graphic organizers, images, and tiered work products. In a grade eight algebra unit on systems of equations, students are required to use equations to solve real world problems. Differentiated versions of the task were created, one designed for students performing at grade level and the other incorporating scaffolds. In a grade eight ELA plan, the teacher provided a graphic organizer, which included pictures and word banks tailored to the needs of ELLs. Guided notes were made to support the needs of struggling readers and students approaching grade level. Although students were given different supports, all students were able to engage in the day’s task that required them to work collaboratively to analyze how a character’s actions can impact the course of events in a story.

- Across most content areas, teachers create unit and lesson plans that cater to the instructional needs of diverse learners. For example, a grade-seven science unit on fossils incorporated supports such as graphic organizers, visual aids and a broad range of texts to aid students in completing an informative essay on the topic of fossils and their formation. A grade-seven social studies unit included the use of photographs, dictionaries, flash cards, and maps to help students’ academic vocabulary acquisition. According to the curriculum map, these features were included to ensure the cognitive engagement of both ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Curricular documents include evidence of adjustments and refinements based on student data. ELA plans include student independent work activities and learning groups determined on reading levels derived from pre-assessments. In a grade-seven ELA lesson unit the teacher incorporated a variety of mentor texts to support the wide range of reading levels in the class. Students read books such as, *The Outsiders, House on Mango Street, The Road Not Taken, Thank you Ma’am and the Seventh Grade* to address the essential question, “How does society influence an individual’s decision or choices in life?” Math lesson plans include evidence of refinements based on data from formative assessments and teacher observations. In a math plan, students were grouped based on their performances on previous formative assessments. Based on this data, the teacher created three activities and students were assigned either to one of three groups: intervention, an on grade level, or enrichment group. The task was specific for each group and differentiated based on student needs.
**Additional Finding**

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

Ongoing common assessments are administered, and the data placed into online tracking sheets used by the Academic Intervention Team as well as the classroom teacher. Across classrooms rubrics and grading policies are aligned with school curricula.

**Impact**

Common assessment analysis result in adjustments to classroom instruction as well as actionable feedback to learners and teachers. Student intervention programs meet the learning needs of all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers use data derived from the analysis of summative and formative common assessments to create individualized Response to Intervention (RtI) plans for selected students. These personalized documents, developed by school leaders and staff, provide a summary of specific student strengths and primary areas of concern. Anecdotal records of social behavior and academic forms are included to help monitor the strategies being used to address the needs of identified students. Student progress towards grade level milestones is logged on tracking sheets and reviewed on an ongoing basis during the Academic Intervention Support team’s monthly meetings. Teachers use this document to determine the types of interventions and supports incorporated into their lesson plans. This system advances the faculty’s efforts to address the achievement gaps of those students who struggle with specific aspects of the curricula.

- Administrators have a structure in place to monitor benchmark levels by grades and content area. This data set is discussed during weekly department meetings when teachers are provided the opportunity to revisit curricula and make necessary adjustments to instruction. Across content areas there is evidence of teachers using summative assessment data to plan instruction, monitor student performance, and implement differentiated activities. Evidence of teachers re-teaching topics and adjusting unit plans was indicated. Students in grade six to eight took a math benchmark and teachers reviewed the item analysis of the exams. Their findings were used to revise the grade seven pacing calendar for students in need of support and extensions. This resulted in some classes beginning the year learning adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing rational numbers while other classes received extensive review on fractions and decimals. As a result, these adjustments students demonstrated progress in these identified areas on a follow-up benchmark.

- Across classrooms, student writing is evaluated using a common rubric. There is evidence of specific and timely feedback being provided to students from teachers. For example, samples included a writing-progression rubric on which teachers indicated at least two specific items, which needed improvement. However, this practice is not evident in the vast majority of classrooms. A grade-seven student was provided a numerical score on a math assessment and feedback on how to improve his math practices. Yet, on another sample of student work, the teacher assessed the student with a level four on their project but did not include a rubric to support the rational for the grade.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff through a staff handbook, professional development opportunities, and a weekly memo. School leaders and faculty provide parents with access to resources and workshops such as, the High School Forum, that support student understanding.

Impact

School leaders and staff establish a culture of accountability set forth by clear expectations and parent outreach, which supports student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders’ opening day presentation to staff included information about the most recent schoolwide test data, the school goals included in the Comprehensive Educational Plan, and the school’s instructional focus. In addition to the handbook, a weekly school memo is distributed to consistently communicate high expectations to staff. An analysis of teacher observation reports reveals that school leaders conduct frequent classroom visits with feedback to teachers aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In September, teachers received a professional learning calendar detailing the support being provided to meet expectations. Training topics were derived from trends identified from prior year’s classroom observations and are designed to accelerate teacher development. Teachers are given the opportunity to attend internal and external workshops based on individual needs. Staff agreed that school leaders’ open-door policy creates a culture of collaboration and accountability consistent with the school’s expectations.

- At the beginning of the year, the school faculty hosts a curriculum night to review the schoolwide academic and social expectations to parents. School leaders hold a meeting with each grade and outline for students and parents the major curricular areas and concepts to be taught. Families participate in workshops to help them prepare their children for the next grade. For example, the school hosted a High School Forum that provided parents with support with the high school application process. School staff also hosts an end-of-year workshop that provides parents with insight on the expectations for the upcoming school year with the goal of increasing students’ preparedness for their new grade. Parents shared that this partnership with school staff has helped strengthen their role in supporting their children in meeting school-wide expectations.

- There are on-going efforts to communicate academic expectations and student progress to families. Grade and content area teacher teams meet weekly with parents to discuss student progress. The parent coordinator provides workshops for parents with the information and training needed to effectively become involved in planning and decision-making in support of the education of their children. The online grade book is a communication platform utilized by parents, students and teachers to ensure the entire school community is actively informed about schoolwide programs. It provides its users with an outlet to share their concerns as well. For example, parents are encouraged to access the school’s online communication platform regularly. This system gives parents the opportunity to stay informed regarding their children’s progress in class. At present, most parents use this software to stay current about academic expectations and monitor progress. One parent shared that she accessed her child’s assessment results and shared her concerns with the teacher through the online platform. The teacher then invited her child to attend tutorial classes, ultimately improving her child’s performance.
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 inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations consistently analyzing student work. Distributed leadership structures, such as grade leader and teacher-led committees, are in place throughout the school community.

Impact

Professional collaborations result in improved teacher practice. Opportunities for teachers to have a voice in schoolwide decisions are evidenced across the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades six through eight, teacher teams meet during content specific, common planning periods to engage in inquiry-based work centered on the academic vocabulary acquisition initiative. For example, the grade seven math team decided to limit the number of words introduced to students per module and researched methods to effectively incorporate the use of the Frayer model with students. Teams meet on an on-going basis, sharing student work among its members and making recommendations to one another for improvement. The grade eight ELA team met to review the results of a pre-test and noticed that most of the students struggled with questions related to point of view and setting. As a result, the team decided to reteach the concept to students and incorporate a technique to help emphasize and identify these concepts in their writing. These professional collaborations are helping teachers achieve school goals and building their instructional capacity evidenced in the most recent Advance data.

- During an observation of the grade six ICT teacher team, teachers presented student work samples to evaluate the use of highlighters to reinforce academic vocabulary. A team member served as a facilitator to ensure norms were upheld and the inquiry work was completed with fidelity. The facilitator opened with a recap of the last meeting, and then each member took turns sharing his or her thoughts on the selected common practice. Each teacher presented samples of student work to the team while their colleagues listened and took low-inference notes. There was a three-minute wrap-up conducted at the end of each presentation regarding the documents. Overall, the team noticed that use of highlighters was effective when teachers directed students to do so and it was not as effective in social studies. At the end of the meeting, the team collaboratively created a list of possible instructional next steps, which included increasing the amount of explicit vocabulary instruction in social studies and incorporating increased visual supports as an additional strategy to support vocabulary acquisition and development. The team members indicated that collaborations such as this enabled them to try new strategies and improve their teaching practices.

- School leaders ensure that faculty members have a role in school decisions. Teacher leaders assigned to curriculum, social-emotional learning, professional learning, and community service teams meet with school leaders regularly to plan initiatives to support the mission of the school. Grade team leaders work collaboratively with administrators to maintain coherence across grade levels and present instructional strategies to staff that help support student growth. Administrators encourage faculty to take the lead in ensuring on-going staff development. For example, teachers facilitated training on advanced literacy and provided participants with checklists and other resources to help them intentionally plan lessons that support literacy development.