Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 257 John F. Hylan
Elementary 14K257
60 Cook Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206

Principal: Brian De Vale

Dates of Review: October 22, 2019 - October 23, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Robin Posner
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


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>Proficient</td>
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</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>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>Additional Finding</td>
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</table>

## 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>
</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>Area of Celebration</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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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<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
School leaders and peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with strategic cycles of observation and opportunities for peer intervisitations. Feedback from leaders and peers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact
Clear expectations and articulated next steps for improvements in teacher practice supports professional development (PD) and aligns with individual and schoolwide goals.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent observations of instruction and provide teachers with effective and meaningful feedback and next steps, both in writing and during follow-up face-to-face conferences. Feedback speaks to the teaching strategies evident in the lesson and references are made to a specific domain from the *Framework of Teaching* and ties into teacher goals. A teacher was given feedback on giving students more accountability during group work by assigning each group member a role. Resources including a teacher to visit, videos to watch, and sample lesson plans were provided to support that teacher in implementing the strategy. Student work and data from exit tickets, as well as conference notes with students are examined during post-observation conferences. Teachers shared that feedback received from leaders is always supportive with meaningful, actionable next steps that can be put into practice immediately. Teachers shared that leaders always follow-up to see if feedback is implemented as evidenced in the review of *Advance* reports.

- Teachers shared that intervisitations provide them with opportunities to watch peers with strong instructional practices try out a strategy or implement new curricula. It is also a chance to provide each other with high-leverage feedback. Teachers can choose to visit a colleague on their own, or suggestions for intervisitations are also made in observation feedback. Teachers meet in advance to discuss the planned lesson. The visiting teacher uses a form to record noticings around how the lesson is structured, how students demonstrate the skills being taught and evidence of purposeful conversation and meaningful language. The teacher additionally reflects on three new ideas to bring back to their own classroom. Leaders follow-up during informal and formal observations to see if new practices are being implemented. This practice is also used for teachers new to the profession to see more experienced teachers and learn from them. Teachers shared that intervisitations have had the greatest impact on their professional growth. One teacher stated that “seeing a peer incorporating strategies helps me target exactly what I need to do to drive my lessons forward.”

- Teachers meet individually with school leaders at the beginning of the school year to review professional goals from the preceding year and create new goals for the current year. A review of observation feedback revealed that leaders consistently link next steps to individual and schoolwide professional goals including the use of feedback and student engagement. For example, in an October report, the school leader gives feedback on ensuring students remain engaged in the lesson by utilizing a timer and then having high-leverage extensions available for early finishers including additional articles for students to highlight or a higher-level thinking question to which students can research and respond. A teacher shared that she had a goal of eliciting more student voice and her last observation included feedback to that end. Overall, a review of *Advance* reports indicates that feedback is aligned to teachers’ professional goals.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers create and use assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. In addition, teachers’ assessment practices such as exit tickets and turn and talk reflect the use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Although teachers check for understanding and provide students with actionable feedback on their academic progress, not all feedback to students is meaningful thus, leaving students unsure of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use data from assessments and student work to provide students with verbal and written actionable feedback to support them in revising their work. Students and leaders shared that some teachers hold conferences with students during writing to review work and provide feedback. A review of student work provided evidence that some students apply teacher-recommended strategies and next steps in their work. However, students shared that feedback is often does not include a follow-up, leaving them wondering if they were implementing the feedback. Other students shared that the feedback is often only a glow or a grow, not both, so they are unsure of how to implement feedback to drive their success on future assignments.

- Across grades and content areas, not all samples of student work products show teacher-written meaningful feedback on rubrics and checklists that are aligned to the task or curricular area. On many examples of student work, feedback was a checklist and not customized to the individual student. For example, teacher feedback on a variety of writing assignments included things under glows like “stayed on task” or “sentences made sense.” Grows included “did not stay on topic” or “sentences did not make sense.” Glows or grows were checked off without any additional meaningful feedback that students could implement to improve their work. A student shared a math exemplar with written feedback on it about making his thinking visible. However, that student was unable to articulate examples of implementing that feedback and other students shared a rubric for the same math task with no written effective next steps for improvement.

- Teachers check for understanding throughout daily lessons using strategies such as turn and talk, questioning and exit slips. Teachers for make adjustments or redesign student groups according to checks for understanding during lessons. In a literacy lesson, students were arranged into pairs and small groups to find the main idea and supporting details. The teacher circled around providing support as needed and jotting notes on a checklist to use for pulling a small group for a strategy lesson the next day. In a math lesson on expanded notation, students were tasked with creating a number riddle for students to solve. Many students struggled with solving the riddle presented and although the teacher was asking questions to support the learners, the questions and the task were not targeted and did not provide insight into the purpose of creating this riddle or how to solve it. While this and other formative assessment strategies were common across classes, students are not always aware of their next learning steps to complete an assignment or task.
## Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that across grades and subjects, curricula are aligned to state and content standards with an emphasis on providing text-based evidence to support the main idea across core content areas and real-world connections. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Curriculum development builds coherence across subjects and grades and promotes college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members adjust materials for a diversity of learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a grade five unit plan, students are to deepen their understanding of problem-solving by answering real-world problems using money, requiring them to demonstrate fluency of multiplying and dividing decimals. In a grade three unit plan, students are to apply math concepts to real-world situations as they use factors and multiples to solve problems around how many pompons a group of cheerleaders would need. English Language Arts (ELA) lesson and unit plans across grades and content areas reflect a targeted focus on using text-based evidence to find details that support the main idea. In a grade two ELA lesson plan, students will read a mix of literary and informational books about animals and find two key details that support the main idea of how people care for their pets. Students are also tasked with supporting arguments with textual evidence in science and social studies lessons across all grade levels. Thus, grade and content area lessons are aligned with the standards and support college and career readiness.

- Curriculum support is provided at the beginning of each year when curricula alignment to the state standards and the Next Generation standards are reviewed. Teachers review and adjust curriculum documents based on a review of student data while meeting in vertical and horizontal teams. Team members revise curricula, including the order of units to be taught and the amount of time spent on each unit to meet the needs noted when data was reviewed. Assessments are created and planned based on this review of curricula. Teachers create differentiated tasks to provide access to the tasks for Multi-Lingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities. For example, a grade two lesson plan included three versions of the same text and differentiated graphic organizers for each group of students.

- Teachers adjust lessons to provide needed scaffolds and supports for students so that they are cognitively engaged. An ELA unit plan included a word study plan that differentiated vocabulary for students. A math lesson indicated that students were placed in student groups based on a quick assessment at the end of the previous day’s lesson. This lesson included notes on scaffolds and supports for students. All reading unit plans have all students reading at their differentiated instructional level.
## 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 an articulated set of beliefs including productive struggle and critical thinking that foster higher-order thinking. Teaching strategies, like small group work and differentiated tasks, provide multiple entry points into the curricula for most students.

### Impact

Students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The instructional priorities for all classes around how students learn best include a focus on collaborative instructional groups with differentiated activities. Additionally, the faculty emphasizes the importance that students are provided with ongoing feedback as well as opportunities for student-to-student conversation. Most of these adopted priorities were coherent throughout classes and provided students with opportunities to produce meaningful work. For example, in a reading workshop lesson, students were working on finding details in a non-fiction text. During the mini-lesson, students were asked to do a turn and talk to discuss a detail that they found and then asked to share out the detail that their partner shared. In a math lesson on multiplication, students practiced one strategy during a whole class mini-lesson and then went off into small differentiated groups to continue the work either independently or with the teacher.

- Discussions in classes reflected an instructional focus on attempts at rich discussions. During an ELA lesson on finding the main idea, students were engaged in working in small groups to determine the key details that supported the main idea. Students had to work together to cite text-based evidence that supported their findings to complete a graphic organizer that was differentiated to support the instructional level of the group. In a grade five math lesson, students worked in small groups to diagram how to solve two-step problems. Students had to discuss as a group several different ways to solve the problem, support why it was the best way, and then diagram it. At the end of the task, students were asked to create their own two-step problems for a partner to solve.

- In some classrooms, teachers provided multiple entry points into the curricula via the interactive whiteboard, individual whiteboards, rubrics, checklists, and other scaffolds. In a math lesson, each student group had a basket of scaffolds on the table including manipulatives, copies of anchor charts, problem-solving strategies, and post-its. Students were observed using all or some of these scaffolds within their groups. Students were specifically asked to write, draw and label their solution and provide a written response to support their strategy. In a math lesson on multiplication, MLLs and students with disabilities were provided with a scaffolded problem and a variety of tactile manipulatives to support them. In a grade three ELA lesson, students were provided with texts at their instructional level and paired with students for support through a reciprocal reading protocol.
**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 and teacher leaders consistently communicate high expectations through a variety of documents and forums and provide training to the entire staff. Teacher teams and staff establish partnerships with families and create a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations to students that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

High expectations create a culture for learning marked by mutual accountability and strong partnerships with families that support student progress toward those expectations while all students are supported with effective guidance, own their learning, and are prepared for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school’s mission and vision statements clearly and consistently communicate high expectations for staff in providing students with a respectful environment where they are loved and respected for who they are, and valued as individuals as they work towards common goals including improving test scores, focusing on student growth and ensuring that student voice is a priority across classrooms and the school. This is to be provided through opportunities for enrichment and immersion in the arts. The goals, mission statement, and vision statements are clearly posted in every classroom and across the school. Teachers receive an opening day memo detailing these expectations and it is reviewed during PD, as well as during grade and vertical team meetings. Leaders ensure teachers have opportunities for ongoing PD through a PD calendar that evolves based on what teachers need to meet school goals. Teachers and leaders shared there is a culture of mutual accountability where both teachers and leaders feel a sense of ownership for ensuring these professional responsibilities are carried out.

- The school partners with families in an ongoing fashion to engage parents in the school community and in learning. Teachers and leaders send home monthly, translated, school and class newsletters. There is ample time provided for teachers to meet with parents before school, after school and during the weekly parent engagement time. Teachers communicate with parents daily via an online communication tool and with monthly progress reports. Parents are often invited to sit in on classes and learn alongside their children. Teachers and leaders provide families with ongoing workshops on school initiatives including academics and social-emotional learning, with strategies that families and caregivers can use at home to support their students. There is a weekly parent engagement night with English classes for families and students. Parents feel informed about all aspects of school life. Parents articulated the high level of trust they have for the leaders, teachers, and all school personnel. They spoke highly of all levels of communication and shared that all members of the school community value their thoughts and ideas around school improvement. They stated that parent engagement was one of the things that the school does really well and gave examples including the creation of a parent resource center to support parents in supporting the academic growth of their learners.

- Students are provided with clear communication around high expectations. All students interviewed shared that reading texts at their level, as well as the small group instruction they receive across core content areas, allows them to own their own learning and be prepared for the next level. Fifth-grade students shared that they receive support in attending middle school fairs and completing applications, to find a middle school that is perfect for them. One student shared, “Changing classes in fifth grade has taught me how to be more responsible and ready for middle school, while still in my safe place.”
**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**

Most teachers are involved in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of state and content standards using protocols like the looking at data protocol and the tuning protocol. Teacher teams consistently analyze and review data and student work for shared students.

**Impact**

These collaborations have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity. Teacher teamwork also typically results in progress towards goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers report that they have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaborations. In one case, teachers and leaders reported about a vertical English as a New Learner inquiry group that reviewed all four modalities assessed on a New York State assessment. The team determined that writing was a weak area for most MLLs. They selected a target group and reviewed their work using a tuning protocol. A colleague shared the reword, answer, write and explain (RATE) writing strategy to help students formulate their writing. Teachers went back and implemented this strategy with the targeted group. When teachers next reviewed student on-demand writing there was evidence of increased writing organization, word choice and tier two vocabulary. This strategy was then implemented for all students across classes.

- The grades three and five teams reviewed the benchmark assessments and noted that students were having issues with question stems, particularly as it related to fractions. As a result, teacher teams decided to focus on this area beginning in second-grade and extending through fifth-grade. The teacher met vertically to share strategies, including creating math vocabulary that would be used across grades and classrooms. They also created cohorts of students that included both struggling students and high flyers and researched strategies that might support and push both types of learners. As a further result, teachers reordered how they taught some of the math units to provide more scaffolding of skills. A review of student data on unit tests evidences an increase of progress towards goals for students.

- In addition, teachers at the kindergarten team meeting spoke about the importance of reviewing the curriculum and expectations for grades above their own to ascertain what students need to know. After reviewing grade one curricula, and reviewing their own data to note trends and patterns on the initial kindergarten benchmark, teachers worked on grouping their students based on the benchmark, their knowledge of other skills, and where they need to go to meet school goals. As a result, this was done at grade one and two teacher team meetings as well. After a review of the data, second-grade teachers made the decision to extend some of the units of the phonemic awareness program into third-grade to ensure that students have mastered the foundational skills needed and to support students still struggling with those skills in third-grade. A teacher shared that, “Looking at student work and data has helped us put things into practice, like screeners or writing strategies, that really support students’ foundational skills which, in turn, helps them to be more successful on grade-level curriculum.” As a result, students are showing improvement as evidenced by chapter and unit test results.