Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 212 Midtown West
Elementary 02M212
328 West 48 Street
Manhattan
NY 10036

Principal: Kathleen Loua

Dates of Review:
January 7, 2020 - January 8, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 212 Midtown West 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>
<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>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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## 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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</tbody>
</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>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The school’s approach to culture building, discipline, and social-emotional support results in a safe and inclusive environment. Structures, such as grade looping, are in place to ensure that each student is known well by at least one adult.

Impact
The school’s safe environment and inclusive culture is conducive to student and adult learning. Students and adults treat each other respectfully, and student voice is welcome and valued. Students are well-known by at least one adult who provides guidance and supports that align with student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s focus on culturally responsive practices and implementation of a schoolwide social-emotional program results in a safe and inclusive environment. Other structures and supports include movement breaks, mindfulness workshops for students and staff, weekly school community meetings, class and grade celebrations, and professional development (PD) sessions on implicit bias and emotionally responsive schools. Students report they feel safe and use strategies they have learned if they need to cool down or are dealing with stress. Through the school’s collaborative efforts around responsive and social-emotional practices, the school’s environment supports student and adult learning as evidenced in the reduction of behavior incidents and school survey results.

- Student voice has a meaningful impact on the culture of the school and there are multiple ways students take on leadership roles. Through the school’s community service programs students can volunteer with various groups including the green and healthy team, the student action team, peer mediators, peer tutors, and the library squad. Students shared that through these activities, they have the opportunity to share their ideas and work with other students across all grade levels to organize community fundraising and other service projects. Students shared that one example of their work with these groups is a reduction in trash at the school and are now looking at other ways to reduce trash in other parts of the school through composting. In addition, older students visit the younger grades to present on the importance of waste reduction. Students also shared about the various clubs that students can participate in throughout the year by completing an interest form. Opportunities include a writing club, a film club, and a dance club along with a community news club that conducts interviews with students and staff and reports out at the weekly school community meetings.

- Students reported that there is at least one adult who knows them well through the use of grade looping, a system where students stay with the same teacher for two years. There are also adults who work with students to organize grade-specific and schoolwide activities. Students also reported that staff members speak with them about the middle school application process and preparing for the next grade level. The school’s Academic Intervention Team conducts regular check-ins with students at risk for social-emotional or behavioral issues and works with support staff to create routines and systems to support those students. Several staff members are trained in emotionally responsive practices. The school has partnered with several community-based organizations in supporting the social-emotional needs of students. Through these structures, the school works to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, and a standards-based report card that align to the school’s curricula. However, these practices do not occur in the vast majority of classrooms.

Impact
Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and the assessment practices in most classrooms reflect adjustments to meet the learning needs of students. However, not all students understand their next learning steps across subject areas and grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Four main categories are addressed in the schoolwide standards-based report card used to assess a student’s performance, classwork, special projects, assessments, and participation. Student work samples evidence the use of rubrics to provide feedback. One example of feedback states, “Your writing shows clear evidence to support your claim. Make sure you have evidence from throughout the story.” Another example states, “How did you know to start with one-fourth and then move on to one-eighth? Is there a different way that we can break up these numbers?” A shared opinion-scoring rubric in English Language Arts (ELA) lists pertinent categories including clearly introducing the topic, appropriate conclusions, and linking ideas with transitional words and phrases. In math, a beginning of the year assessment rubric was used to assess students’ ability to solve problems correctly and to create correctly labeled graphs and legends. A review of student work and speaking with students reveals that while rubric descriptors are circled or highlighted, there is limited teacher feedback regarding actionable next steps to improve their subsequent work.

- On a fifth-grade informational writing assignment, students used a checklist to assess their work. Some of the self-check statements included, “I worked to make my writing understandable to readers and I explained different aspects of the subject.” Students are also provided with an opportunity to reflect on their assignments. One student wrote, “I’m proud of how I used too many details. A goal of mine after this unit is to add more to my setting.” Students also develop goals that they are going to work on during the year across subjects such as reading more independently or solving addition and subtraction problems within 100. Students reported during the student meetings that while they have opportunities to reflect on their work and next steps, those opportunities occur more often in their ELA classes than in other subjects. Across most classrooms, students are provided opportunities to self-assess their progress and identify next steps, but this is not happening in the vast majority of classrooms and content areas.

- Teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress toward goals, primarily in math and ELA. These assessments include pre- and post-on-demand writing, beginning and end of year math assessments, end of unit assessments, conference notes, and running records. Teacher analysis of reading and writing assessments found that students were not receiving full credit for their constructed responses and some students were struggling with reading fluency. In response, teachers are providing more scaffolds and practice with on-demand constructed responses and are reviewing the selected books to improve fluency. Conferencing notes demonstrate the use of data, primarily in math and ELA, to group students and to plan multiple entry points for specific students. Scaffolds, such as the use of graphic organizers and vocabulary supports, are provided to learners as needed. Teachers use exit tickets and checklists during classroom instruction to assess student learning, but these are not consistently used across the vast majority of classrooms or across all content areas.
### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to State standards. Across grades and subjects, strategic reading and math strategies are implemented with an emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students.

### Impact

Coherent curricula support college and career readiness for all students. Groups of students have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the State standards, with the school using a schoolwide writing and phonics curriculum in ELA. In math, the school uses a common curriculum across grades and the school ensures curricula coherence with the New York City (NYC) Social Studies Scope and Sequence and the New York State (NYS) science standards. School leaders and grade-level teams monitor the pacing and implementation of each curriculum and necessary revisions and adjustments are completed by the teacher teams throughout the year. As a result of the alignment of curricular documents across grades and content areas, with a focus on providing opportunities for independent thinking and problem solving, college and career readiness is promoted for all students.

- Curricular documents evidence consistent alignment with the State standards. For example, the objectives for a fifth-grade math lesson describe how students will make sense of problems and persevere in solving them, reason abstractly and quantitatively, and use mathematics to understand real-world problems. For example, students were tasked with identifying delivery routes that would maximize the ability to deliver fresh produce using only one tank of gas. A teaching point in a second-grade writing lesson describes how writers rehearse their writing by talking through their big ideas. In this lesson, student groups verbally brainstorm what they would like to write about with a partner before writing on their own. As a result of the alignment in unit and lesson plans to the State standards across grades and subjects, students are supported in preparing for the next grade level.

- All lessons and units are refined for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities. A fifth-grade math lesson describes a focus on extending the concept of using common wholes to subtract fractions and extending the number line as a reliable, flexible strategy that works with all wholes and when drawing a relationship between different wholes. There is a clear explanation of the student task and the strategies used to support groups of students, including strategic grouping and modeling of the finished product. To support varying levels of MLLs and students with disabilities, student handouts with illustrations and graphic organizers are provided. A lesson plan for a second-grade writing class describes how students are to work on their informational writing task based on their levels of mastery and focus on either progress and stamina, organization, or editing and revising. Students needing extra support were to not only revise their writing but also identify an area to receive feedback from another student. A fourth-grade lesson plan focused on literary essay writing with students developing a claim about the story they are reading and identifying evidence from the text to support their claim. Students are grouped with a learning partner and are provided examples of the anchor text and visuals as well as an audio version of the story to listen to. Lesson and unit plans demonstrate that curricular and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for groups of students including MLLs and students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

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<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 practices align with curricula and reflect the school’s belief that students learn best through building independent thinking, problem-solving skills, and cooperative learning. Teacher strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Alignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the school’s instructional focus allows students to provide evidence of their learning, engage in appropriately challenging tasks, and produce meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- In a first-grade science lesson about sound and light, students sat with their science partners and made predictions about the sounds they could make with a spoon gong made of a spoon, string, and paper cup. The teacher asked the students to think about how changing the position of the cup affects the sound they hear and to write their predictions and noticing down. The teacher modeled for students how to make a prediction before having the students practice on their own with a partner. During a second-grade writing lesson, students worked with a partner to verbally describe their favorite parts of their books to prepare to work individually on their opinion writing assignment. Across classrooms, opportunities for independent practice, problem-solving, and cooperative learning are provided for students to demonstrate their thinking and learning.

- In a third-grade Social Studies class students were learning about the geographical features of China and how those features influenced the way people settled and formed communities. Students worked in pairs and trios as they looked at primary sources such as political and geographical maps or pictures of crops grown in China on the computers located throughout the classroom. In a fifth-grade math lesson on rates and ratios, groups of students, including MLLs and students with disabilities, used a graphic organizer to record their notes and met with the teacher for a mini-lesson as the rest of the class worked on the activity. Across grades and subjects, teachers provide students with similar learning opportunities, ensuring that all learners engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking.

- In a second-grade math class, students were sitting on the floor as they worked in pairs and practiced solving problems that contained doubles and near doubles as the teacher circulated and checked their progress. After a student turn and talk, the teacher reviewed the concept, asking students to explain their understanding and to explain how using a number line was helpful to determine solutions. Students then transitioned to their math groups where they continued working on additional problems. In a fifth-grade reading class, the teacher modeled for the whole class how to analyze the choices writers make when creating the setting and mood in a story. Students then moved to their book clubs to read independently and take notes in their notebooks. As the teacher walked throughout the room, students were reminded to identify the setting and mood of the story and to address how mood and tone affected the story and characters. Across classrooms, teachers used writing, discussion, and strategic grouping based on assessment data and identified areas of need to support student thinking and the production of meaningful work products.
### 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 the entire staff with a focus on independent thinking and culturally responsive practices, the school’s instructional focus. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations for a path to college and career readiness to families through meetings, workshops, and newsletters.

#### Impact

Communication and PD around high expectations result in a culture of mutual accountability. Partnerships with families support students in their progress toward college and career readiness.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, and actionable next steps ensuring that teachers clearly understand expectations. Those expectations are also communicated and supported throughout the year through staff memos and PD that emphasize the school’s instructional focus on independent thinking and culturally responsive practices. School leaders outlined the school’s instructional focus and what instructional practices, such as flexible grouping and looping, would be implemented for the focus to be realized. Teachers are asked to check frequently for understanding and adjust lessons based on these checks, which directly aligns with the Danielson rubric for designing coherent instruction and using assessment. As a result of feedback and professional learning, teachers are supported in meeting the school’s expectations.

- School leaders consistently communicate the expectations around the school’s goal of promoting individuality and interactive learning strategies to support students in productive struggle with rigorous tasks. They do this through a variety of means including the staff handbook, emails, memos, and PD. Teachers are expected to use student assessment data in the planning of instruction and in the differentiation of tasks to provide opportunities for independent thinking for students. The staff is also expected to identify students who need additional supports and identify next steps to monitor and support the progress of each student. Teachers shared that school leaders meet with the instructional cabinet and collect teacher feedback to inform PD. As a result, the staff understands the high expectations of school leaders and there is mutual accountability.

- School staff works with students and ensure they are on track for the next grade level and middle school. Parents spoke of the partnership they had with the school and specifically referenced the parent meetings and workshops the school provides throughout the year on emotional resiliency and academic supports. Parents are informed about the middle school application process through one-on-one meetings and workshops. School leaders attend PTA and School Leadership Team meetings and inform parents of the progress the school is making toward the school's goals. Parents spoke positively about the availability of the staff and having open access to visit the school and help in their child’s class on a weekly basis. The school staff also communicates expectations through emails, phone calls, newsletters, curriculum meetings, family conferences, and home visits. There are parent representatives from each class who provide regular class updates with the rest of the families in each class. Thus, through a variety of strategic methods the school is successfully partnering with families to support students in meeting all expectations.
## 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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teacher teams, including loop-level and grade-level teams, consistently analyze data and student work.

### Impact

Teacher collaborations are strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and supporting progress toward goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Grade-level teams have two periods a week to review students’ work, analyze data, and modify curricula. Loop-level teams who are with students in a two-year cycle meet weekly to discuss the trends and patterns they see across grade levels. Cross-grade teams also meet throughout the year during PD to align curriculum. The Academic Intervention Team composed of teachers and support staff from across the school meets twice a month to assess the needs of specific students and develop intervention plans. As a result of the different teacher teams, the implementation of the school’s instructional focus on independent thinking and culturally responsive practices is promoted and the instructional capacity of teachers is strengthened.

- A review of agendas and minutes shows teams review student work and data. Teams look at trends and patterns in student work and why they thought students made specific errors. Teams are expected to develop work plans and next steps that will address the gaps they identify in student learning. An example from third-grade team meeting notes stated that some students struggled with addition and subtraction and had a lack of fluency and used inefficient strategies when using landmark numbers or splitting numbers. One action plan included introducing math games to reinforce the use of known skills to solve multiplication problems along with using math games to support the use of landmark numbers and the use of number strings. Teachers shared that they are participating in PD that is supporting their learning around using data analysis to adjust their instruction and learning best practices in supporting students in becoming more independent in their thinking by rethinking how scaffolding is using during instruction. Analysis of student work and data by teacher teams is resulting in progress towards goals for groups of students on city and state assessments in math and ELA.

- During an observation of the Academic Intervention Team, one member of the team presented an overview of the two student case studies they were going to discuss during the meeting. Next, the other members of the team reviewed copies of student work and assessment data to identify areas of strength and gaps in the student’s learning. After reviewing the student work and assessments, team members asked clarifying questions about the student before identifying next steps and developing an intervention plan. Members of the team took on different roles including team lead, timekeeper, and note-taker. The team followed an agenda that included time markers for each part of the meeting. The team identified next steps for the specific students discussed during the meeting such as providing additional academic and socio-emotional strategies and having students meet with specific support staff members for targeted interventions. Members of the team shared that they will follow up in four to six weeks on the progress of the students and identify next steps or adjustments on the intervention plan. As a result, the work across various teacher teams impacts not only teacher practice but also progress for groups of students as evidenced in formative and summative assessment data.