Quality Review Report

2019-2020

I.S. 289
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 02M289

201 Warren Street
Manhattan
NY 10282

Principal: Zeynep Ozkan

Dates of Review:
December 17, 2019 - December 18, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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

I.S. 289 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></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>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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The vast majority of teachers uses or creates assessments and rubrics that align to the curricula to monitor student progress toward mastery of Standards. Teachers use analyses of assessment data to monitor student progress with specific close monitoring of at-risk students and students with special needs.

Impact

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

Supporting Evidence

The vast majority of teachers use assessments and track student progress toward mastery of grade-level, school-identified competencies that align to the school-wide curricula and State Standards. Data is shared via an online platform so school leaders, teachers, and specialists can observe trends and patterns across grades and subjects. There is particular monitoring of the progress of students at-risk. Grade level teams meet weekly with specialist teachers to review the efficacy of instructional practices that are used to meet the needs of struggling and high-risk students. A review of the impact of additional interventions, as well as program adaptations used to address identified trends that lead to achievement gaps are analyzed and reflected upon. For example, an analysis of the State English Language Arts (ELA) and math tests along with common grade level assessments revealed that incoming sixth grade students struggled with perseverance and experienced difficulty refocusing after transitioning between classes. As a result, a decision was made to adopt double period instructional blocks to minimize disruptions to instructional time and maximize small group instruction opportunities. Similarly, teachers disaggregated the data by ability range to purposefully assign students to instructional groups in the classroom. The use of the data was also used to identify students for additional targeted, intensive interventions by learning specialists and support staff.

- All teachers use a variety of assessments to create a clear picture of student progress across grades and content areas. Grade level teams analyze conference notes and assessment data to determine instructional groupings and provide students with differentiated lessons and tasks to improve their progression of mastery of the competencies in each discipline. Additionally, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teams use data to plan strategies for students with disabilities. Explicit small group instruction and strategies such as, how to identify the key language to solve math problems were incorporated into their planning. Resulting assessment data evidence that the percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding proficiency on both the State ELA and math exam was 19 percent higher than the statewide average.

- Teachers and teacher teams use a variety of assessments to inform adjustments to curricula and to plan scaffolds and activities that support all learners, including lower performing students. Item analyses of student constructed responses on the State ELA assessment and teacher-designed tests led to the collective decision to increase the teaching of literacy across the curricula, create a text rich environment in all subjects, and provide students with multiple opportunities to reflect on and revise their work. Students’ tracking their growth increased and promoted student ownership of monitoring their progress in mastering the grade-level competencies. These practices led to 70 percent of students meeting proficiency on the State ELA assessment in 2019, which was 23 percent higher than the citywide average.
Findings
Teaching strategies align to the school wide goal of providing small group instruction and multiple entry points into lessons for a variety of learners. However, strategic provision for access and quality extensions for all students was not as yet in evidence.

Impact
Students’ demonstrate active engagement and participation in group and partner discussions. However, challenging tasks, high levels of discourse, and extended learning activities were observed in some but not the vast majority of classes observed.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers use research based instructional strategies to engage students in challenging and relevant academic tasks that require critical analyses of artifacts, documents and texts. Tasks often relate to local, state, or national current issues and events or social justice themes such as inequity in education. Students are required to make inferences regarding what theme each rendition represents relevant to their unit of study. Additionally, students were asked to make connections to themselves, multiple texts, and their community. Some students were placed in groups based on the goals of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), analysis of data or work, or the most recent conferring notes. Universal supports including graphic organizers, thought partners, note catchers, and small group guidance from the teachers were provided. However, they were not always strategically designed to address specific, individualized student needs.

- Across the classrooms visited, students were observed participating in group and partner discussions. Most teachers utilized accountable talk protocols and collaborative structures such as gallery walks, which fostered student engagement. Some teachers employed instructional strategies to promote student ownership as students completed challenging tasks. For example, in a science class, students participated in a gallery walk and analyzed their peers’ Hudson River ecosystem project to discover similarities and differences prior to incorporating their learning in their own project. This required students to work together and come to consensus as to what they should use for their own projects. Some students were overheard strategizing with one another on how to improve their work, resulting in some of the students taking ownership for completing the gallery walk and applying what they learned as they did their own work.

- While most teachers used routines, structures, and protocols to engage students in high levels of cognitive challenge, as yet, these practices were not prevalent in all of the classes visited. Across classes, structured group work held students individually accountable for engaging in cooperative tasks and contributing equally to the work of the collaborative learning groups, resulting in most students taking ownership of their learning. Students shared that the level of participation in high-level peer-to-peer discourse occurs in most classes, with most students participating equally in academic conversations and holding each other accountable for staying engaged in the discussion. However, there was evidence that some students still opt to complete tasks independently diminishing their exposure to varied thinking and discussion.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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Findings
Curricula and academic tasks align to the school wide instructional foci of using the workshop model of instruction to strategically integrate the state content Standards across grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are purposefully planned to emphasize rigorous habits and academic tasks that challenge all learners.

Impact
There is curricular alignment and coherence across grades and subject areas that promote rigorous habits and cognitive challenge. Teachers plan lessons that challenge all students and require students to demonstrate their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula align to the content Standards and the school’s instructional foci by planning multiple opportunities for students to engage in literacy-based skills. Tasks are planned that stress meaningful higher order text-based discussions with ample writing across the curricula. Teachers strategically integrate cognitively challenging questions, discussion starters, and problem-solving tasks into units of study and lesson plans. Across grades and disciplines, lesson plans and curricula contain common practices that teachers utilize to foster high levels of student engagement. Students are asked to make connections to current events and social justice issues. The use of higher order question prompts, turn and talks, and gallery walks are in evidence. For example, eighth grade teachers created a cross-curricular “Disrupting Race” unit of study while the seventh grade team added lessons that require students to explore the structures of oppression in the United State and abroad. The school leaders, instructional consultants, and teacher teams evaluate the level of rigor present in the units of study and the depth of the alignment to the content Standards during weekly common planning time. Curricula documents and supplemental resources are organized in digital folders using the school’s online-shared drive. This affords teachers access to plan cognitively engaging lessons that are accessible for all learners. Teachers reported that the shared folders are effective and provide them instant access to curricula. Additionally, this allows for efficacy when learning specialists and support staff are planning parallel lessons, specialized instruction or interventions.

- To build coherence across content areas, school leaders and teachers have adopted the workshop model of instruction and use common strategies and protocols in their unit and lesson plans. A review of lesson plans indicates that teachers typically begin the lesson with a mini-lesson, followed by independent or collaborative practice in a “workshop” setting. Opportunities for students to process the information and reflect on their learning and next steps is evidenced in the vast majority of plans. In math, the department team has adopted the structure of launch, explore, and summarize which mirrors the workshop model while the science department focuses on scientific interpretation, explanation and synthesis.

- Lessons are planned and revised using student work and analysis of assessment data and conference notes so that individual and groups of students, including students with disabilities have access to the curricula. Grade level teachers meet weekly to plan instructional groups for students and to look at student work to design lessons and identify scaffolds to address skill deficits. For example, teachers collaboratively plan tier one and two scaffolds such as using modeling, anchor charts, mini-charts, work partners, and one on one instruction to address the needs of their instructional groups. Special education and ICT teachers meet weekly to ensure that specialized instruction and supports are strategically planned for students with disabilities.
**Additional Finding**

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Well Developed |

**Findings**

The school leader and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to students and their families through the “What’s Happening” newsletter, frequent emails and the school’s own website. Striving for mastery of the grade level Standards has been established and this instructional focus is effectively communicated to the school community.

**Impact**

Systems of accountability for students and partnerships with families ensure that all students, including students with disabilities and their families, are aware of their progress toward college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and staff members implement effective strategies for communicating high expectations about college and career readiness and ensure that all students are supported in meeting those expectations. Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school’s expectations to prepare all students for the next level. They receive regular updates on their progress through progress reports and report cards, in addition to student-led parent-teacher conferences and student portfolio reviews. Parents reported that communication between the school and families is outstanding. The Grade-level What’s Happening newsletters, along with regular email communication to families results in constant updates to the information posted on the school website.

- Parents feel the school leaders and staff make a concerted effort to have parents become partners in their child’s learning. Parents are regularly invited to learn how to support their students’ progress during family curriculum events and workshops. Eighth-grade students and their parents shared they are provided with guidance and support in deciding how and where to apply to high school. Opportunities to visit prospective schools are provided all families. School leaders, teachers, and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) work in partnership to ensure that faculty and students have adequate resources for students to receive the necessary support in meeting the academic and behavioral expectations. The PTA partners with the school and provides financial support to ensure students have adequate school supplies. Staff is beneficiaries as well, and is provided professional development support through an outside consultant who facilitates learning regarding the practice of the workshop model, and use of supplemental classroom resources.

- One-on-one student conferencing, academic coaching and student portfolios support students in progress toward their literacy goals and prepare them for high school. Parents reported that if their child is struggling in a class they are immediately notified, and their child is provided with additional in-classroom support or academic intervention. All students are aware of the high expectations the school leaders and teachers have set and express their being prepared for high school and college. Additionally, students and parents are aware of strategies to improve literacy skills, such as maintaining their reading logs and meeting the minimum required reading time. Applying the feedback and next steps for improvement they receive from their teachers and peers is encouraged and expected. As a result, students are keenly aware of their progress toward the expectation of meeting or exceeding grade level competencies. Their path to college and career readiness and the need for their taking ownership of their learning is well understood. The impact is evidenced by 100 percent of students passing core subjects in 2019, as measured by the NYC Department of Education’s Core Course Pass Rate index.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

An observation system that promotes collegial support from instructional coaches is in place. Cycles of observation provide each teacher with feedback, including strengths, challenges, and next steps for improvement.

**Impact**

The effective observation cycles and collegial support from teacher peers, results in feedback that outlines expectations for quality instructional practices and promotes professional growth and improved pedagogy.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Formal teacher observation reports and informal follow-up collegial conversations provide all teachers with actionable feedback related to their instructional practices. Teachers new to the profession or school or those requiring additional support, receive support from school leaders, peers, or PD consultants prior to follow-up observations. This provides them with ample time to reflect on and improve their practice based on recommended next steps. The school leaders and PD Committee analyze data, gathered from teacher observation reports, classroom walkthroughs with consultants and teachers, student data, and student work products to determine progress toward school wide instructional goals. Findings are shared with teacher teams so they align their work to the instructional foci of implementing the workshop model and common structures, routines, and instructional strategies to promote coherence across classrooms.

- Teachers report that structured observation cycles and collaborative teamwork result in a supportive culture that improved professional practice. Weekly grade level meetings focused on the actionable feedback provided by the school leaders and outside consultants produce the desired result. While there is no formal inter-visitation structure in place, teachers reported that they frequently invite one another to observe a lesson and provide collegial feedback on strengths and possible next steps for improvement. Teachers reported that peer-to-peer visits, in conjunction with sharing best practices at collaborative team meetings, has strengthened their pedagogy and helped them implement strategies to support school wide goals. Especially noted was their adoption of student-centered protocols resulting in increased student engagement. As a result of this work, several committees were formed that meet regularly to improve student academic and social emotional learning outcomes. A racial equity, co-teaching, and scheduling team have been developed to assess effectiveness of pedagogical practices. The team focuses on student-based inquiry and determines next steps for improvement in instructional practices school wide.

- The school leaders’ instructional expectations are clearly articulated at the team meetings as well as during one on one conversation with teachers during post observation conferences. Teachers participate weekly in professional learning and collaboration with their team to adhere to the RtI process and promote coherence in pedagogical practices. Outcomes include Identification of gaps in instruction and the development of targeted support to strengthen teachers’ ability to close these gaps. A “silent and solo” protocol to observe and assess student thinking and learning was a strategy implemented across math classes to address the need for increased student processing time and teacher assessment time.
## Findings

Teacher teams use grade-level common planning time to analyze student data and engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations.

## Impact

Teacher teams' effective use of a structured protocol and inquiry cycles has resulted in the implementation of common practices leading to increased coherence, strengthened teacher instructional capacity, and improvements in student achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers participate in inquiry-based collaborative learning sessions to promote the implementation of rigorous, curricula and adoption of best practices and protocols to build school wide instructional coherence. The need to increase students' ability to develop stronger literacy skills resulted in teacher teams adding additional reading and writing opportunities across content areas. Teachers adopted common strategies and protocols such as turn and talks and gallery walks to increase student discourse, self-reflection, and peer-to-peer feedback. Teachers and school leaders noted that the implementation of common instructional designs such as, the workshop model helps students better organize their thoughts and plan oral or written responses in each of their subject classes. Similarly, the ICT teacher teams, and support service staff identified the use of several practices such as, using exemplars and mentor texts, explicit small group instruction, and the provision of universal scaffolds as the most effective way to support the diversity of learners in the school, including students with disabilities.

- Grade level and department teams meet weekly to analyze student assessment data and student work products to identify patterns and trends and devise strategies to help close identified achievement gaps. Use of a variety of progress monitoring tools, including student observation and conference notes, along with benchmark assessments, help teachers determine changes to student groups. Targeted instruction by learning specialists at all grade levels or additional intensive interventions for students at-risk of not meeting grade-level benchmarks or competencies results. Grade teams consistently analyze and disaggregate data so members can plan additional individualized supports such as differentiated tasks that are within students' zone of proximal development. For example, an eighth-grade teacher team was observed examining student work samples to determine students’ ability to synthesize information from a variety of texts. Since the majority of students were struggling with the task, the team determined to research instructional strategies that could be implemented, including researching the cognitive challenge involved in the task to best align the specific strategies to employ.

- Teachers analyzed conference notes and formative assessments to determine students’ ability to make inferences and to cite evidence with sufficient supporting details to justify their rationale when making a claim. To ensure that all teachers were checking students’ ability to make inferences, teacher teams made the collective decision to take conference notes and use a “notice and wonder” protocol along with gallery walks to increase collaboration and make student thinking visible. An increase in coherence is reported by the school leaders and evidenced during classroom visits in which the protocols were observed being utilized.