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>To what extent does the school...</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Celebration</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Area</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
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#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Area</td>
</tr>
<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>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness with families.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability exists around teachers’ support of each other in ensuring that teacher-team meetings and information sharing protocols are effective. Information sharing and successful partnering with families through online platforms and sessions support students in their academic progress toward expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are shared with staff through presentations at faculty meetings and through a variety of tools and platforms, including emails, memoranda, weekly professional learning (PL) sessions, summer learning sessions for new staff, and a faculty handbook. An example of a schoolwide expectation that was supported by PL was in whole-faculty use of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). This system involves a teacher sharing academic and behavioral concerns with a grade-based liaison. Then, based on student need and interest, an individualized intervention plan is developed. Integral to this initiative was the PL for all teachers on use of the Pre-Referral Intervention Manual (PRIM).

- The school community’s culture of mutual accountability is evident in teachers’ reliance on their colleagues to be fully engaged in teacher-team meetings. This means that all teachers hold each other accountable to arrive at teacher-team meetings prepared with student work samples, ready to engage in data analysis, inquiry of student work, and review of the different strategies that teachers use to address students’ needs. Teachers also discussed relying on their coaches to connect them with specific colleagues for intervisitations, so that particular strategies and methods could be observed and discussed for the purpose of professional growth.

- High expectations are shared with families through multiple online platforms. Parents praised school leaders and staff for their multiple methods for partnering with them to maximize their children’s success. Parents discussed the great value of monthly interactive visits, during which parents visit the school while classes are in session. One parent shared, “My daughter loves it when I am here and it helps me see first-hand the teaching that teachers are doing with my child.” Other parents shared that visiting the school during instruction has helped them to be able to better help their children complete their homework and understand daily lessons. Additionally, when students are engaged in the MTSS process, parents take part in designing the program, receive regular updates regarding their children’s progress, and receive a detailed list of the strategies that teachers will employ along with those that can be implemented at home.

- Multiple workshops are offered for the purpose of serving parents in their endeavor to support their children academically. For example, workshops are provided that guide parents through read-alouds, followed by coaching in how to conduct a read-aloud at home in order to fulfill instructional goals, along with inspiring a love of literature. The principal or parent coordinator often lead these sessions. Other workshops include those designed for the parents of Multi-Lingual Learners (MLLs), as well as stress management techniques for parents and children as State exams approach.
Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are inconsistently emphasized across curricula. Additionally, planning is beginning to reflect an effort to provide diverse learners access to the curricula and tasks.

Impact

Curricular documents evidence an inconsistent focus on rigorous instruction for students of all levels, including MLLs, and students with disabilities. While there is evidence of planning for differentiated materials, student groupings, and additional supports so that diverse learners can have equal access to instruction, the depth of this planning is inconsistent.

Supporting Evidence

- Rigorous instruction is included in a grade-three reading lesson plan that requires students to compare and contrast two characters, using a variety of strategies. A grade-three writing lesson plan indicates that students are to brainstorm the character traits for two characters. Afterward, students are to take both sides of an argument and defend both positions, using textual evidence. However, not all lesson plans evidence the same level of rigor. For example, a grade-three social studies lesson plan includes an activity in which students are to use different versions of a graphic organizer to identify facts about China that they already know, and to predict the facts that they would like to learn. There is no planning for students to use content to derive meaning, investigate, analyze, or evaluate information. A grade-four science lesson plan states that students will learn how to measure the volume of water in a container in units of milliliters, without needing to select a measurement procedure from various methods, categorize or organize data, interpret data, design inquiry, or conduct any analysis of the data they collect.

- A reading lesson plan for a class containing only students with disabilities and MLLs shows that students are assigned to differentiated groups based on reading level, Individualized Education Program (IEP) reading goals, teacher-team data, and English language acquisition. Additionally, sentence starters are provided as scaffolds, while one group is to create their Venn diagram on the floor using hoola-hoops to meet their multi-sensory needs. Additional evidence of differentiation is in individualized spelling word walls, non-verbal on-task focusing prompt cards, nonverbal-language cards for use by paraprofessionals with specific students, as well as a detailed reference sheet including each student’s IEP reading, writing, and math goals. A grade-three lesson plan for an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class that includes fifteen MLLs, indicates that various graphic organizers are available for students with differing needs. In addition, the lesson plan includes the details of each student, so that teachers can listen-in while students work with specific knowledge, based on their needs.

- There are lesson plans that show no evidence of planning for differentiated instruction. For example, a grade-three math lesson plan does not indicate that supports or differentiated materials have been planned to meet the needs of the seven MLLs included among the students assigned to that class. A grade-four science lesson plan does not include evidence of planning for differentiated strategies to meet the needs of the twelve students with disabilities, or fourteen MLLs assigned to that class. Although, a grade-one reading lesson plan indicates the names of students with IEPs and the reading groups to which they belong, the lesson-plan section entitled “Support for ELLs and Students with Disabilities” lists general teaching strategies applicable to all students, not representing planning for differentiation. Examples of strategies include “Connection that activates prior knowledge,” and “Turn and Talk opportunities.” Similarly, a grade-five math lesson plan that covers the span of a week contains five identical checklists of differentiation methods, one for each day of the week. However, each checklist was blank.
Additional Finding

<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 practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best when engaged in lessons that promote critical thinking and are structured within the workshop model. Students participate in discussions with peers who are within their student group.

Impact

Students across content areas complete meaningful work with, and design work for, their group partners. Student discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Instruction delivered through the workshop model was observed in a variety of classrooms. During a grade-four reading lesson, the teacher utilized the workshop model when modeling how to answer the focus question using a previously-read class text. Similarly, one of the teachers in a grade-three ICT class modeled how students were to identify the traits of two specific characters from a work of fiction. They then would focus on a trait that both characters exhibited and write about which character more strongly exhibited that trait. Similarly, a science teacher showed students how to measure the volume of a sample of water. The modeling session from a grade-three reading lesson was evident as having occurred just prior to the class visit, based on material posted on the front board.

- In addition to observations of teachers utilizing the modeling portion of the workshop model, teachers also offered direct instruction, guided students through individual and group application, and facilitated whole-class sharing by students. For example, all students in a grade-three social studies lesson worked with their groups to complete worksheets, where they detailed what they already knew about the lesson’s topic. In a grade-three reading lesson, students worked with their fellow book club members to identify character traits after the teacher modeled that strategy for them. Additionally, grade-four students worked with their partners to read through and revise their writings. Students engaged in work structured within the workshop model across grades and content areas.

- Student discussions that involved high levels of participation were evident across classrooms. For example, students in a grade-four reading lesson turned and talked with partners about the different books they had read so far this school year. Students turned and talked about the steps they planned to take to solve a problem in a grade-three math lesson. Similarly, grade-five students worked with each other to solve math problems by playing a game that required them to share the steps they would take and explain their reasoning for choosing those methods. Although students exhibited high levels of participation across classrooms, this was not evident across the vast majority of classrooms. Students in a grade-four science class were instructed to work in groups while measuring liquid. However, no instructions were given for the students in each group, who were to simply watch the group member who was measuring. The question and answer session in this class was teacher-centered, with all questions being asked by the teacher and all answers being directed to the teacher, without any student-to-student interaction. Additionally, teachers missed opportunities to have students turn and talk with other students during visited math and science lessons.
Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Also, data are used from State exams and school-based common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress across grades and subjects.

Impact

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Data show that all students, including MLLs and students with disabilities, are improving their academic success.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and subjects, examples of feedback evidence clear portraits of student mastery and feedback to students that they can use for increased achievement. For example, feedback on math assignments reminded students to use multiple methods to find an answer, describe the steps they took in solving problems, and double check their answers to ensure that they are correct. Feedback offered to students on English Language Arts (ELA) assignments reminded them to support their claims with additional text-based evidence, offer additional details in descriptive writings, and to use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Additionally, other examples of feedback from assignments across all content areas draw students’ attention to re-reading written assignments prior to turning them in to check for grammar and mechanics, as well as ensuring that claims are completely supported by text-based details.

- Students came to a quick consensus when reporting on the value of their teachers’ written feedback and their consistent framing of feedback as either a glow or a grow, accompanied by actionable next steps. One student reported that a teacher offered feedback on a writing assignment that focused on making sure that the writer’s voice could be heard when stating, “I’m writing about why chocolate milk shouldn’t be served in school and I really believe it, so I’m making sure that comes out in my essay. I also make sure to write with my voice in all my classes.” Students also shared that they are using bigger words, organizing body paragraphs to include all of the supporting evidence to support their claims, focusing more on punctuation and spelling, and re-reading everything they turn in because of teachers’ feedback. All students agreed that teacher feedback has improved their work across classes.

- School leaders and teachers use the data from common assessments to determine curricular adjustments and decide on schoolwide instructional foci. For example, data from reading level common assessments revealed inconsistencies in teachers’ use of the rubric. As a result, all teachers were engaged in a schoolwide norming process to ensure alignment, with an additional protocol to support teachers’ increased alignment. Review of common assessment data also showed that students needed help in making inferences. Teachers adjusted instructional practices and the texts they use with students. Data analysis also showed that students are struggling with multi-step math problems and that last year’s integration of the circle the key numbers, underline the question, box the action words, evaluate, and solve (CUBES) protocol was not bringing about the desired results. Consequently, teachers are experimenting with various tools to help students answer math problems in which literacy is integral to understanding and answering the question. Data show that students in all demographic groups have improved their performance on ELA and math State exams, as well as on school-based common assessments.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

| 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: Proficient |

#### Findings

Written feedback provided to teachers based on classroom observations accurately captures their strengths, challenges, and next steps, using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. An effective system drives the use of teacher observation data in the design and facilitation of PL, and decisions regarding teachers’ assignments and succession plans.

#### Impact

Written feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, delineates the supports available to help teachers meet them, and aligns with their professional goals. Additionally, teacher observation data informs the PL offerings for individual teachers, small groups, and whole-faculty PL sessions.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Observation reports included feedback that captures teachers’ strengths. For example, in one report, the teacher was praised for enhancing the lesson through the use of visual tools. Another report included praise of the teacher for facilitating a classroom in which students self-monitored their behavior. Similarly, other reports included descriptions of teachers bridging math instruction to lessons that were aligned to the previous curriculum, and students self- and peer-assessing in response to teachers’ prompts. In addition, feedback to teachers acknowledged their checking-in with students to assess their progress, suggesting next-steps, and answering their questions. All of the teachers who earned ratings of highly effective in all areas for which they were rated were asked to continue their practices and share them with other teachers.

- School leaders capture teachers’ weaknesses, which are accompanied by next steps teachers should take in order to improve both their practice and student success. For example, in one observation report, the school leader recommended that the teacher “…not only provide wait-time before asking the students to turn and talk, but also to ensure that they make their thinking visible by using conversation stems.” Another teacher received feedback on the importance of providing students with feedback in the forms of glows and grows so that they can know exactly what they did well, and where they can improve. Other recommendations addressed the need to provide students with sufficient wait-time, facilitate student-to-student discussions, and encourage and celebrate students’ use of key academic vocabulary.

- The in-house professional learning log, as well as sample agendas from Monday PL sessions, showed that teachers receive PL focused on questioning, developing students’ love of reading, and de-escalation strategies. Additionally, the two instructional coaches provide various PL opportunities through the facilitation of classroom lab sites, during which coaches accompany a group of teachers to observe a model teacher. Each lab site visit is followed by a debrief to maximize the group’s learning. Instructional coaches also provide individual PL by providing real-time coaching during instruction, as well as large group PL sessions catered to teachers’ common needs, as made clear through observation data and by teachers’ choice.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

All teachers are engaged in teams that consistently analyze student work in cycles of inquiry focused on a group of five students each teacher has identified. Teachers are empowered to positively affect student learning through service as content-team leaders.

Impact

Collaborations within inquiry teams, called Focus 5 teams for the five identified students who are the focus of the teachers’ study, strengthen teachers’ instructional capacity, schoolwide instructional coherence, and student achievement. Across the school, teachers build leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are organized into Focus 5 teams, where each teacher selects five students based upon ELA or math data. Teachers bring work samples from the same identified group of five students to Focus 5 meetings throughout the course of the school year. During a grade-five Focus 5 meeting, two teachers shared that they are currently working with students on explaining their thinking while solving math word problems. They also shared positive observations about students in their class showing their work instead of only writing the answers, and paying more attention to their vocabulary when speaking with each other and in written assignments. The increase in students’ use of vocabulary was attributed to teachers’ providing key academic vocabulary words prior to their being assigned the word problems in which those words are central. The strategies these teachers used in effectuating these positive results for students were shared, while participants took notes so that they could take similar steps within their classes. Teachers then discussed the common problems that occur when students are absent from school due to being taken on extended vacation, and that it would be valuable for teachers to create an action plan for students to catch-up once they return from these trips.

- A review of calendars, agendas, meeting minutes, and communications shows that there are multiple Focus 5 teams conducting the same level of focused inquiry across grades. Focus 5 teams also conduct sessions outside of their weekly meetings, during which they plan together. Additionally, Focus 5 Teams regularly meet with a member of the cabinet and an instructional coach for Data Talks. During these talks, the teams bring data to review, and ultimately determine next steps for their team and respective students.

- Teachers serve as leaders of their Focus 5 teacher teams. Teacher voice has also played an integral role in determining schoolwide initiatives. For example, the initiative to embed making thinking visible throughout the school was teacher led. This involved presenting the idea to the whole faculty, followed by a classroom walkthrough, so that examples of where it was already in place could be used as a resource of in-house best practices. Other examples of schoolwide initiatives where teacher voice was integral include the Reading Buddies program, which involves connecting upper- and lower-grade students as reading partners, as well as the book Falling in Love program, which was identified by all school community members, including multiple parents, as positively impacting students’ love of books.