Quality Review Report
2019-2020

J.H.S. 157 Stephen A. Halsey
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 28Q157
63-55 102nd Street
Queens
NY 11374

Principal: Vincent Suraci

Dates of Review:
March 10, 2020 - March 11, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Lisa Wang
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>
<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>Well Developed</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>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

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

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<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>Well Developed</td>
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<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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
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</table>

### Findings

School leaders effectively communicate high expectations to the entire staff, and successfully partner with families to communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness. High expectations for learning are enhanced by college partnerships and enrichment programs.

### Impact

A culture of mutual accountability is reflected in the cooperative professional development plan communicating high expectations. Families share ongoing communication on student progress results in next level learning. Feedback and supports for students result in increased academic proficiency.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are communicated to new teachers during an August orientation and the first professional development session for faculty focuses on schoolwide expectations, the uniform grading policy, and instructional goals encompassing the analysis of school data. In review of the professional development plan and teacher team notes, teacher support is maintained throughout the school year ensuring alignment of pedagogical practices and planning. For example, school leaders created a power point for science teachers to guide their planning of a new unit. Structures ensuring mutual accountability result in teacher leaders working with the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) to identify and communicate department-focused expectations. This results in the calibration of curriculum planning strategies using a tuning protocol, as well as pedagogical strategies through peer observations and feedback. Teachers are given professional learning support survey to provide feedback to leaders. As observed in the professional development plan, topics are prioritized based on teacher rankings. In addition, professional learning is supported by teachers' willingness to share their areas of expertise with colleagues.

- Faculty partner with families to communicate high expectations and student progress using online portals and social media. School leaders provide workshops on instructional initiatives such as the study the problem, organize the facts, line up a plan, verify your plan with action, examine the results (SOLVE) method in mathematics and hold Saturday family engagement activities building family access to cultural institutions across the city. The Multi-Lingual Learner (MLL) workshops provided to students and families newly arrived to the United States, help them acclimate to the city and support the use of English language acquisition strategies at home. A parent shared, attending the MLL workshops has helped her whole family learn English, resulting in her student’s acclimation to the school community and ability to handle more rigorous coursework. Parents shared the school holds many events for families supporting college and career readiness such as Career Day and college visits. Parents agreed, enrichment opportunities provided for students as early as grade six, help to set them on a path to college and career readiness.

- School faculty provides opportunities for students to access and reflect on their progress. Feedback is provided for students in the form of glows, grows, and next steps. Faculty provide an accelerated pathway for all students, including high need subgroups, leading to taking Algebra I in grade eight. Benchmark data shows an average increase in students’ proficiency level by twenty percent, reflecting the impact of targeted feedback and supports on students’ academic growth. School leaders offer enrichment programs, intervention, and second language acquisition support year-round. Students unanimously shared, something is offered for everyone’s interest. A grade seven student who has moved up to the honors program this year, credits supportive teachers and access to college and career focused activities in helping her take classes more seriously.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

Teaching practices align to the gradual-release workshop model and reflect a schoolwide belief that students learn best when learning opportunities are interactive, structured, engaging, relevant, and inclusive of all. Teachers strategically provide multiple entry points, high quality supports and extensions into the curricula.

Impact

Learners are engaged in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products. However, there is a need to expand learning opportunities that are inclusive of all, which foster the use of high utility words and academic language supporting the mastery of language goals.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade seven math lesson, students explored the probability question, “Which one has a higher chance of happening, your stick being picked, or your stick being picked and then your friend’s stick being picked immediately after?” Student discussions supported there was a higher chance in picking one name than picking two names consecutively. The teacher introduced the formula for finding the probability of compound events. Students applied the formula using data sets differentiated for their each of their cooperative groups. In a grade-eight English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, students read an excerpt of Omnivore’s Dilemma. Students engaged in a conversation in response to the question, “In your opinion, do these articles support the author’s theory that American has no food culture?” Students discussed the idea that Americans have evolved the idea of veganism and claim it as their own food culture. Thus, teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs that students were interacting with each other, and engaged in meaningful conversation; thus, a hallmark of the schoolwide beliefs of how students learn best.

- During a grade seven literacy lesson, students discussed the figurative and literal meaning within the text Shooting Kabul. Students transitioned from group conversations using a Three Reads protocol to a whole class discussion. During the student-led conversation, there was evidence of text to self and text to world connections as students discussed the characters’ traits and actions. In another grade-seven class, a similar lesson was observed using the same text. Scaffolds were provided including specific discussion prompts for student groups needing additional support. While the majority of students engaged in the student-led discussion, a few students did not, resulting in the shift to a teacher-led led discussion. While teaching teams across the school believe in student-to-student collaboration and discussion, the shift in the structure of this particular share-out resulted in a missed opportunity, such as scaffolding questions and adhering to a longer wait-time for responses, to deepen student discourse.

- In a science lesson for MLLs, students were placed in differentiated learning groups to identify the states of matter of objects using the academic language and knowledge acquired from prior lessons to justify their answers. Each student was assigned a specific role and given individualized scaffolds, such as graphic organizers, vocabulary charts, and visuals, in order to engage in both the task and group discussion. As a result, all students were able to use their understanding of the content to convey the impact that temperature had on the different states of matter they observed. Across all grades and academic contents, students are given similar individualized supports to engage with the content and tasks. In review of student work products, a menu of high-quality tasks and extensions were provided so that all students were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and able to convey their knowledge of the content.
## Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and are embedded across all grades and subjects. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and pretest data to anticipate and troubleshoot potential misconceptions within the lesson plan.

## Impact

All curricula documents incorporate language objectives, identified supports for students with disabilities, and rigorous extension activities in alignment to Individualized Education Plans (IEP); so that, all learners have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

## Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans reveal challenging tasks and texts designed to cognitively engage all learners to explore essential questions across content areas. Grade six ELA lesson plans on “How does the past influence our perspective of a situation?” focusing on plot development within the text, *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, are adapted to all learners. Tasks reflect a range of learning modalities using discussions, collaborative posters, and graphic organizers, so that all students can demonstrate their thinking. A math lesson plan on simplifying radicals reflects differentiated math tasks for all learners. An academic vocabulary briefcase is incorporated in the tasks to identify rational and irrational numbers and engage in simplifying polynomials, so that MLLs and students with disabilities can convey their thinking. Enrichment tasks determining the outcome of quadratic equations with rational and irrational numbers are embedded in the lesson so that high-achieving students can demonstrate their thinking at the next level.

- A review of curricular documents reveals lessons reflecting rigorous tasks focusing on students’ essential understandings and skills. Teachers use pre-test results to determine misconceptions and develop targeted instructional strategies. Students are grouped by proficiency level data via benchmark assessments, New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT), IEPs, and student work. A grade seven lesson plan on chemical weathering includes a language objective for MLLs, “students will explain weathering using compare and contrast key phrases and scientific vocabulary,” and supports such as sentence stems, word banks, and color-coding ensuring access to the task. Teachers’ plans focus on modeling, integrating various instructional strategies, tiered questions and materials to support individual student needs. In a math lesson plan on area of trapezoids, the teacher noted students calculated the correct area in the pre-test but forgot the units, found the perimeter, or used the formula for triangles. An adjusted mini-lesson included guiding questions, “What important information do you need when solving an area of a trapezoid problem? Why are units important?” A modification chart noted new strategies for MLLs and students with IEPs, such as an area formula scaffold, inverse operations checklist, dimensions key, and small group instruction to ensure all learners are cognitively engaged.

- Adjusted curriculum maps allow for a pathway to the Algebra 1 Regents curriculum. Revisions reflect grade level and next level curricula, academic and high utility vocabulary, learning and language goals, rubrics, Next Generation Standards indicators, essential questions, differentiated performance tasks using the SOLVE method, and end of unit assessments. For example, in a grade seven math lesson plan measuring variability in box plots, tasks were scaffolded by content complexity for student groups. One group was assigned a scaffold for information recall. Another group’s task built upon prior skills using SOLVE, noting their previous success when information is chunked, and guiding questions are provided. Students shared that coursework is challenging.
Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school’s curricula. The school uses an assessment calendar to track student progress toward goals across grades and subjects and adjust instructional decisions.

Impact
Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students in the form of glows, grows and next steps, as well as incorporate opportunities for peer feedback and self-assessment. Curricular adjustments to target instruction have resulted in increased mastery for all subgroups.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback using standards aligned rubrics. For example, next steps provided to a student on an essay on *To Kill a Mockingbird* include “Continue to add more vocabulary to your writing in evaluation, and on a government responsibilities project, “Be sure to use more transitional words and phrases.” Students shared, the feedback that they get during the drafting process helps them to reflect on their writing and make revisions in preparing for the final product. One student shared how feedback on participation in debate was very helpful in thinking about how to project voice and use it to emphasize points. This feedback helped in preparation for future debates and presentations in other classes. Another student shared that teacher feedback focusing on going into more depth when writing an essay for social studies encouraged him to learn the rules and laws for reincarnation across various religions and helped him realize the importance of learning more about a topic before writing about it.

- Students shared that teachers create opportunities for them to provide meaningful feedback to their peers. On a grade eight shark tank presentation, peers evaluated each other’s presentations for originality of project, market analysis, purpose of product, qualities of presentation and provided next step feedback such as, “Demonstrate numbers more clearly; clarify target audience; the benefits of the product should be more clear.” A student provided feedback for a learning partner on their holocaust argumentative essay, “The facts added were in chronological order, but [student] needs to work on adding claims, an engaging hook, a rebuttal and a counter claim, and add stronger vocabulary.” Students shared there are multiple opportunities for them to debrief with their peers to better understand the feedback given and to learn from it. One student shared, “We use feedback to help our peers at our table. I helped my peers organize their writing for the Black History essay so they would know how to their writing on their own for the next essay.”

- A schoolwide assessment calendar charts periodic benchmark assessments to track student progress. Department teams consistently use benchmark and pre and post unit assessment data to track impact of instruction on student proficiency, make curricula and student group adjustments, set student goals, and target instructional strategies. As a result, teachers identify at-risk student subgroups, developing scaffolds needed to reach mastery level. As a result, grade eight MLLs receiving math targeted math intervention show a steady increase in performance from the baseline to the second benchmark assessment. Grade eight literacy data for students with disabilities shows a 9.69 percent increase from the baseline to the benchmark assessment, MLL data shows an 8.8 percent increase. Social studies data on the grade eight imperialism pre to post-tests show a 44.63 percent growth for students with disabilities, 43.51 percent growth for students with disabilities and 30.19 percent growth for students in a self-contained class.
**Additional Finding**

<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, mentors, coaches, and teacher leaders conduct frequent cycles of observations, and analysis of student work and data and provide effective feedback, next steps, and curriculum support. School leaders have a strategic, transparent system for managing professional development utilizing experienced teachers in the building.

**Impact**

Teachers' participate in coaching cycles, intervisitations, and professional development to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection across departments and grades, resulting in improved quality of student work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders are each assigned to a specific department and grade level engaging in cyclic teacher observations and providing written and verbal feedback supporting instruction aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and Learning. Mentor teachers support new teachers through non-evaluative observations and feedback. Coaches and team leaders are assigned to specific departments, based on formal observation and assessment data, to support teachers with planning, and co-teaching to model best practices in instruction. Teacher teams serve as a support system for teachers, offering the opportunity for constructive feedback and guidance as the team engages in an in-depth analysis of instructional practices linked to student data, such as the science team's implementation of phenomena-driven instruction. A professional learning partner provides coaching support for math teachers focusing on problem solving methods using the SOLVE. Teachers shared that their pedagogical practices have improved as a result of the professional development.

- There are strong systems for management, monitoring and follow-up to teacher evaluation. The requirement for teachers to set professional goals results in administrators, coaches and mentors’ ability to provide targeted professional development and peer and coach support. Additionally, teachers new to the profession, and those not meeting pedagogical expectations are mentored. Growth of instructional practice for all teachers is measured over time and monitored to ensure alignment to the school’s instructional goals towards advanced literacy strategies, actively engaging all students and assessing understanding. Teachers expressed having grown professionally, improving classroom strategies as a result of the collaborative support and feedback from peers. A teacher shared that feedback from peers has also helped teachers reflect on their teaching practices, “Last year, one finding was ‘you didn’t cold-call a wide range of students.’” As a result, the collaborative feedback has helped to modify instruction and broaden checks for understanding to better support students.

- A detailed professional development calendar highlights the ways the faculty has focused on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and schoolwide instructional goals to assess, support, improve teacher practice, and address students’ academic needs. To drive this work, mentors, coaches and teacher leaders are identified by school leaders based on leadership qualities and attributes reflecting best practices in instruction. This instructional team ensures that teachers use strategies to impact pedagogical practices. As a result, according to the NYC School Survey, 87 percent of teachers state that “their professional development experiences this year have been sustained and coherent”. A review of student achievement indicates high instructional impact and high student performance with course pass rates ranging from 97 to 99 percent schoolwide.
## Additional Finding

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

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based cycles, organized by grade level and content, in alignment to units of study and benchmark assessment data. Distributed leadership structures are embedded within the support structure of the school through the roles of mentor, coach and teacher leader.

### Impact

Teacher team inquiry cycles strengthen teacher instructional capacity, schoolwide instructional coherence and increase student achievement for all learners. Effective teacher leadership structures and the collaborative nature of teacher teams play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams use student work data and intervisitations to analyze lessons, and co-plan instruction. Teachers stated the collaboration results in improvements to their instructional practices. The science team focuses on adjusting lesson resources to increase supporting texts and phenomena to broaden students’ range of experience and lack of prior knowledge, resulting in coherence across science lesson plans. All teachers agreed peer feedback has created a culture of collegiality leading to a common vision across teams. A teacher noted that everyone has a role within a structured protocol, “It gives us a shared language and a solid way of thinking about and talking about the work.” Team minutes and agendas reflect the use of the protocol to review student work and assessment data, make curricula adjustments, and track student progress. Math team teachers analyze mid-unit assessment results and goals to modify lessons or reteach topics to address misconceptions and ensure that students understand all material prior to the post-assessment. The average math proficiency data on the state exam shows a six percent increase from 2018 to 2019, and students’ 2019-2020 benchmark data reflects up to 28 percent growth.

- Teacher teams collaboratively plan and refine curriculum ensuring alignment to State standards, and support for MLLs and students with disabilities. Teams revise curricula by looking at student work and expectations, and spiral skills from grades six through nine. For example, teachers reviewed texts to ensure there was a broader diversity of voices represented in what students read across all grades and content areas in response to end of year survey data collected from students in response to the question, “Do you feel that your culture was represented in the school curriculum?” As noted, all ELA unit plans were adjusted to incorporate culturally responsive, universal themes and understandings to allow entry points for all students. In observation of a grade eight ELA teacher team, teachers’ review of student work resulted in projected implications for instruction, next step strategies, and modifications. Based on student data for the current unit, the team decided to maintain MLL supports such as context clue strategies and partner challenges and adjust academic language support for students with disabilities by incorporating a word bank to offer choice and opportunity to vary language. Grade eight writing benchmark data reveals a 27.27 percent increase for all learners from September 2019 to February 2020.

- Teachers play an integral role in key decisions. The school deans shared that they had received feedback from teachers on the clarity of homeroom policies. As a result, they created a classroom management and school policy packet and presented it to the faculty to reinforce schoolwide procedures ensuring student safety and daily attendance. One teacher discussed support from administration in leading the initiative to develop a programming club for girls to address the lack of participation from girls in the school’s hackathon competition. Teachers unanimously shared that school leaders actively seek their feedback and that teachers play an active role in making decisions that impact the school community.