Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 232 Lindenwood
K-8 27Q232
153-23 83 Street
Queens
NY 11414

Principal: Lisa Josephson

Dates of Review:
December 18, 2019 - December 19, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Sonja Webber-Bey
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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</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>Area of Celebration</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>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>
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### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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>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>Well Developed</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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>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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>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>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders and teachers can articulate how they ensure curricula are aligned to State standards and other content area standards, and are driven by purposeful connections across subjects. Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are embedded across grades.

Impact

Curricular coherence builds connections and coordination between learning objectives, standards, and rigorous instructional practices and tasks, ensuring that all students demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher-created curricula are strategically developed in alignment with New York State’s New Generation Standards and are influenced by a foundation in Core Knowledge. Guided reading across the grades is embedded as a cornerstone to college and career readiness. For example, guided reading lesson plans for a kindergarten small group focused on a leveled reader and questioning that would support students in identifying key ideas and details about a mill, thus promoting an increase of their overall reading level achievement. Meanwhile, in a sixth-grade social studies class, a unit map describes how small groups of students will collaborate on locating details for specific key ideas about Ancient Egypt, as the class poster project overview organizes a timeline, thus promoting an increase of their overall reading level goal. Both these examples are representative of the coherence across subjects and grades towards improving student reading achievement. All curriculum maps are maintained by monthly thematic units and reviewed by vertical teacher teams to ensure cohesion amongst subject standards as well.

- The standards-based science program focuses on inquiry and discovery and integrates with interdisciplinary themes which include hands-on science experiences for all students grades two through eight. In an eighth-grade science lesson plan for an Advanced Regents Placement (ARP) class, a lab procedure allows students to explore the effect of and compute Doppler shifts on the motion of celestial objects, their velocity, and distance from the earth. A seventh-grade lesson plan integrates science, math, and reading. Having read chapters of The Omnivore’s Dilemma, the plan calls for small groups to engage in a supermarket investigation to analyze food labels on product containers, identify references, research additional information, participate in a talk-pad discussion protocol, and also use an online interactive device to respond to central ideas about persuasive techniques, thus involving a range of known interdisciplinary skills. Additionally, a lower-grade lesson plan describes how students who have been writing non-fiction booklets on a topic of choice will share their drafts with peers who will make suggestions, such as including more details and highlighting certain text features, including pictures, drawings, and maps. Together, these kinds of curriculum plans represent the promotion of college and career readiness skill development for a variety of learners.

- School leaders and teachers have embedded rigorous habits throughout classrooms related to students’ word reading skills. It begins with an early grade phonics program for grades kindergarten through second, shifts to advanced vocabulary instruction for students in grades three through five, and culminates with a program focused on academic discourse and thought-provoking writing as students move into the middle school grades. For example, the teachers have developed a debate team curriculum wherein students put their word knowledge to use through publication of argumentative essays that are presented to school leaders for consideration. So far this year, topics included loss of the chocolate milk choice at lunch, sharing timed use of the basketball court with younger grades, and establishment of buddy benches in the playground to encourage peer outreach, therefore demonstrating their thinking.
Findings

Structures and expectations of staff ensure consistent relationships with students are maintained and personalized. Staff development opportunities are strategically aligned with family outreach to coordinate student learning experiences and supports.

Impact

Valuable social-emotional supports and partnership with families result in students’ attaining various combinations of effective academic and personal behaviors; however, in some cases, transfer students do not yet consistently benefit from supports in place.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have established Good News Friday where examples of integrity noticed among the student body are highlighted. There is a monthly Core Knowledge virtue campaign with signs, announcements, and classroom activities. Upper-grade students are trained to teach social-emotional lessons to students in lower grades. These interactions prompt student-led discussions about experiences involving character traits. During Character Day, students are immersed in the words that define character in lessons in all curriculum areas. One student recalled that after the class talked with their teacher about the upcoming shift to middle school, some students asked that she bring in someone to talk to the class. Another student shared that during a culture day, a student in his class presented a social studies immigration project. It followed the journey of this girl and her grandmother as they left their home in Honduras, traveled miles sometimes passing coyotes, and finally reached the United States safely. The student expressed how discussing their unique backgrounds in class gave him a deeper understanding of and respect for his classmates. Practices such as these positively impact development of academic and personal behaviors.

- School leaders have collaborated with teachers and other staff to embed a variety of structures that support student success positioning them to graduate with a well-rounded education. The school has maintained a staff of two guidance counselors who deliver mandated counseling along with at-risk services, support for families in crisis, and present to classes and assemblies on a myriad of topics ranging from bullying to drug awareness to growth mindset. Middle school students turnkey their growth mindset training by planning activities for lower grade classes that they go into and engage the younger students in social-emotional learning. Such practices across the grades support the development of resilience and persistence.

- Professional development on culturally relevant education prompted ordering of new literature that better represents the student body. Consideration of families with two mothers or two fathers, thinking of literature with characters who want to straighten their hair, who come from other countries, and themes of inter-racial struggles guided teacher decisions. Parent outreach has included a mommy and son workout session and a daddy and daughter dance to acknowledge family similarities for students. The Instructional leadership Team (ILT) coordinates Professional Learning (PL), student experiences, and family outreach. For instance, once teachers were updated on current protocols for middle and high school applications, preparation sessions were held with student groups, followed by parent workshops, individual counseling sessions, and technology support that empowered parents to assist their children. In some cases, students transferring into middle grades do not yet benefit from yearly expansion of proactive assertiveness due to lack of individual support plans, thus limiting their ability to integrate into the school environment. However, for the majority of students, the strategic alignment of focus topics across constituents results in students’ adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors on their pathway to college and career readiness.
Additional Finding

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

Teacher practices across a vast majority of classes reflect and support schoolwide beliefs that a growth mindset is essential for student success and is reflected in staff discussions about alignment of curricula that is engaging and meets the needs of a variety of learners.

**Impact**

As a result of a coherent approach to teaching and learning, there are high levels of student thinking and participation, with students taking ownership towards producing meaningful work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and teachers shared that students learn best through a growth mindset, which is supported by social-emotional learning that nurtures all aspects of student development as they flourish in a safe environment. In an effort to address literacy achievement across all grades, non-negotiable guided reading has been established for every student, every day, including on field trip days. Homeroom teachers have the additional support of English as a New Language (ENL), Academic Intervention (AIS) teachers, and Response to Intervention (RTI) teachers to assure all students produce meaningful work products. Staff turnkey their training on growth mindset to their students, so outlook about mistakes is focused on learning to be done through perseverance.

- Flexible groupings, small group activities, and individualized learning scenarios were evident across the vast majority of classrooms. In a third-grade math class, students worked in tiered groupings to write math division stories. One group met with the teacher for a guided math session, another group set about to write real-world problems involving equal groups, while a third group challenged themselves to answer the question, “Why do you suppose some real-world problems that involve equal groups can be solved using division? Explain.” Some students paired themselves to solve each other’s problems. In a fourth and fifth-grade bridge class after a think-jot-pair-share, students worked in pairs to complete a collaborative chart about the behaviors and character traits of key characters read about in a shared text. Once students compared and contrasted the characters, they had to consider which character they would rather be and substantiate the choice with reasons and examples from the text. When reporting out to the whole class, students had to say both what they thought and what their partner thought. Seventh-grade student leaders, chosen based on performance on a previous quiz, led small groups during a math lesson. While creating a fake store with items all marked down by twenty percent, the group had to select three items to offer for sale with coupons worth additional percentages off. The final challenge was for the group to discuss how they could achieve the greatest amount of savings. All students observed participated, reflected high levels of thinking, showed ownership for their learning, and produced meaningful work products.

- In a kindergarten class, students proactively checked their center management chart for group assignments, then transitioned to each appropriate grouping without teacher direction. Across other classrooms, individual students were observed on technology devices attending to learner-driven digital programs supporting their practice of a variety of skills, such as in a kindergarten class where three students each logged onto a program that introduced phonemic awareness activities and in a third-grade class where each individual student referenced sources as they continued writing an opinion piece on a topic they had chosen. Their teacher exclaimed to her students, “If you don’t love it, abandon it for another choice!” In a math class, a teacher conducted a mid-lesson check for understanding. Students assessed themselves in response to her question, “Do you need teacher support right now? If so, go to the carpet.” Three students left their small group for teacher reinforcement. These examples are representative of the high levels of thinking, participation, and ownership coupled with growth mindset seen across classrooms.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rating:</strong> Well Developed</td>
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**Findings**

Teachers assess learning via a variety of assessment strategies that clearly reflect which students and sub-groups of students show mastery. Practices reflect consistent and varied checks for understanding.

**Impact**

There is actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, resulting in purposeful adjustments to instruction. Students are aware of their next learning steps.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the school, students use checklists and rubrics as tools to standardize expectations of achievement. Students interviewed showed understanding of the four levels of mastery. Students review rubrics with teachers as academic tasks are introduced, then use aligned checklists while producing work products, then received highlighted areas of accomplishment on rubrics once teachers have evaluated final outcomes. For example, a writing rubric for students who participate in reading discussion groups had elements measuring ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. A math rubric for grade three had elements measuring conceptual understanding of task, solution, computation, and explanation. One student interviewed recalled that early in the year he didn’t pay much attention to the assignment checklists provided to students, but after several ‘next steps’ written comments from the teacher to do this, he now goes step-by-step over the checklist to review his work before submitting to the teacher. Conferences teachers have with individual students are also guided by the language of rubrics as teachers suggest next steps for ongoing improvement, thus positively impacting student achievement.

- Other rubrics cover vertical expectations across grades, such as one writing rubric reviewed that contained columns for third grade through sixth grade and measure elements of introduction, transitions, conclusion, organization and elaboration. This type of rubric allows teachers a greater range of evaluation of skills often suitable for students with disabilities and those in bridge classes. A student-friendly checklist in first grade for a writing booklet presentation supports students in meeting the expectations of the more formally written rubric in areas like give an example, make a comparison, use size-shape-color words, use a picture to add more information, and use a speech bubble. Across classes students have opportunities to look at their peer’s writing and offer suggestions for improvement. Use of these curricula-aligned rubrics enable students to self-assess and peer-assess. Teachers also use rubrics to continually analyze information on student learning outcomes. This year the writer’s workshop rubrics were revisited with program authors to ensure alignment across the grades, thus ensuring applicable, actionable, and meaningful feedback to each grade standard.

- Across the school, teachers consistently use a variety of checks for understanding. During a discussion about fractions, students held up fingers to signify numerals for a numerator or a denominator. This allowed the teacher to assess levels of understanding and address misconceptions of individual students. A second-grade teacher shared that she can catch a trend when listening to individual students read. Recently, she realized students were not attending to quotations found in their reading texts. The learning objective for the next lesson was adjusted so she could explicitly explain the purpose of quotes and then model changes in tone and inflection when reading a passage aloud. Students across classes write academic goals which are revisited periodically. For example, one third-grade student shared he wanted to get better at math, saying, “I need to get better at multiplication.” A seventh-grade student acknowledged she needed to improve her math understanding. She shared that she goes upstairs with the teacher twice each week to review and get a better understanding of the week’s lessons.
Findings

School leaders create an elevated level of clear expectations for all staff. There is a culture for learning that systematically conveys a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

School leaders and teachers have established a culture of professionalism empowered by mutual accountability for expectations, fostering focused, effective feedback, and supports for all students who own their experience and are prepared for their next learning level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders begin the year by distributing a staff and curriculum handbook which contains communication, instructional, and professional expectations, some of which are non-negotiables. Data analysis is shared across grades and adjustments were identified, such as changes in the curriculum maps, a renewed focus on vocabulary, use of more primary sources, new text titles, and the inclusion of mood meters throughout classrooms. As the school year continues, staff receive updates through a digital app. Ongoing communication regarding high expectations is consistently shared by coaches, lead teachers, during grade team meetings, and relayed during cabinet meetings, as well as during School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings. As staff attend professional development outside the school, they return and turnkey their training to others. A math teacher shared that at the beginning of the year, lead teachers met with grade teachers to review data, updates to curriculum, and alignment to NYS Next Generation Standards so that all stakeholders could participate with tools to better meet the needs of learners, resulting in a culture of mutual accountability in support of achieving established expectations.

- Expectations are systematically communicated to all students through assemblies, programs, and incentive initiatives. The virtues of being a Core Knowledge school are reflected schoolwide via monthly signage and phrasing. For example, Good News Fridays highlight integrity. School leaders announce examples of identified behaviors during the week, along with acknowledgement notes to individuals. Students of the Month are honored and anti-bullying programs reinforce positive attitudes. Past training has resulted in the creation of the school’s student-led social-emotional series of lessons whereby upper-grade students conduct activities about emotional well-being in lower-grade classes. Two guidance counselors conduct student interviews, oversee peer advisements, greet transfer students, and are available to respond to teacher noticings of students who may be feeling challenged to meet the high expectations put in place, thus providing clear focused and effective feedback and support. Furthermore, students develop skills of motivation, note-taking, work habits, and collaboration furthered by training in a growth mindset that empowers them to own their educational experience.

- Academic expectations are exhibited in a myriad of ways and communicated through a unified set of demonstrations. There are varying honor rolls, writing contests, a twenty-five-book reading challenge, and buddy classes where students with disabilities share projects with general education classes. Students interviewed all were cognizant of the expectations rubrics communicate for their assignments. They described yellow folders, observed by this reviewer, that are centered on all classroom tables, which contain a bevy of support materials, including a variety of rubrics, checklists, vocabulary charts, sentence prompts, and discussion protocols. Students can access assignments, classwork grades, and teacher communications through their use of a digital platform, thus providing all learner subgroups and individuals with clear and focused feedback as they strive to achieve known expectations and are aware of next steps of preparation.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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**

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work and practice and have embedded leadership structures distributed throughout the grades and subjects.

**Impact**

Improved teacher practice informs decisions which result in mastery of strategic goals for groups of students. Across the school, teacher leaders play a vital role in key decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams systematically analyze elements of teacher work. A wide variety of data is reviewed, starting with work products of students they share or on whom they are focused. A grade-three teacher team focused their meeting on student writing from a pre-assessment. Samples were organized into groups of struggling writers, independent writers, and high-achieving writers. Teachers then collaborated on implications for their teaching and practices that focused on improved student learning. All students had writing checklists available, so teachers decided to utilize competent writers to conduct peer assessments. One teacher remarked, “They tend to listen to each other.” To continue motivating the high-achievers, teachers planned to highlight differences in writing based on intended audiences and to use TED talks and exemplars to inspire blooming authors. The plan for independent writers was to establish topics that they had a passion for for persuasive essays. The teachers would continue to collaborate to establish increasingly complex writing expectations for students. Furthermore, for struggling writers, teachers determined that chunking text and assignments would alleviate students feeling overwhelmed, and they decided to incorporate visuals as part of assignments to deepen understanding. Finally, they developed a system of color-coded sentence strips that could be numbered or reconstructed to attend to the elements of writing necessary to construct extended responses, such as topic sentences, detail sentences, descriptive sentences, text-based references, and concluding sentences. On-demand writing tasks follow each unit and current data has identified a majority of students currently mastering grade-level standards. Data also shows the majority of students taking Regents courses doing above-standard work. Plans made by the teachers represent the teamwork across the grades and subjects, which has resulted in shared improvements in teacher practice and the resultant mastery of goals set for groups of students.

- School leaders have distributed leadership structures that are embedded across the school. Teachers have been given the decision-making ability to determine materials and instructional approaches that they feel will foster a love for learning while improving student outcomes. A teacher who changed grades this year, from fourth to second, commented that she would have been swamped; however, the support of her colleagues has focused her on the needs of her second graders. Special education teachers and ENL teachers play a vital role in championing the needs of all learners, as they are represented in all teacher team meetings. Teacher teams by grade and vertically by subject collaborate during ILT meetings on making key decisions. School leaders become part of the professional working community as they transverse the school going in and out of classrooms and meetings, informally promoting the integral role the teachers play.

- The ILT, which includes school leaders, coaches, and teachers meets regularly. This group determined a plan for PL this year, wherein two of the monthly sessions would give teacher teams time to discuss students and their many variable learning and social-emotional needs. The other two or three Mondays are mandated PL from a menu, where teachers reconfigure groupings based on need or interest. Through discussion and analysis of assessment data, the leadership community determines the effectiveness of the key decisions they have made that affect student learning across the school.