Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S./M.S. 029 Melrose School
K-8 07X029
758 Courtlandt Avenue
Bronx
NY 10451

Principal: Danielle Presto

Dates of Review:
December 4, 2019 - December 5, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
The Quality Review Report

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

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

Information about the School

P.S./M.S. 029 Melrose School serves students in grade PK 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by State standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>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

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

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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<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>
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<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>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

High expectations are communicated to the staff via *The Weekly Blast*, professional development, and instructional rounds. Families are apprised of their children's academic achievement through bi-weekly progress reports, and online grading platforms.

Impact

Teachers are held accountable for expectations via professional development, instructional rounds, and the observation process. Parent workshops and student-led parent teacher conferences support parents in progress towards meeting high expectations for students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently articulate high expectations for instruction to the faculty through the *Weekly Blast*. The communique includes a focus for the week's instructional rounds such as ensuring that students can articulate the purpose and rationale of what they are learning during class to support ownership of student learning. Additionally, staff members are lauded for their best instructional practices and the alignment to the school’s instructional focus of making students’ thinking visible, which is connected to the student engagement component of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Lastly, the bulletins spotlight key data points such as percentages of student proficiency on State exams, attendance data, and staff participation in professional development. High expectations for staff on professionalism were delineated through professional development. Using observation data and teacher survey data, differentiated professional learning sessions were provided to support the school’s instructional focus via planning for student success across the content areas and supporting teachers in analyzing their student data. Additionally, mentors for new teachers were provided professional learning to support novice teachers to ensure their success. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process.

- High expectations for staff are further communicated through frequent instructional rounds with a specific focus. Examples of focus areas for instructional rounds included: seeking evidence of students making their thinking visible, opportunities for students to engage in academic discourse, and the planning of culturally responsive lessons. Teachers are provided feedback in the moment to adjust their practices, which align with the school’s instructional focus. High expectations for professionalism are communicated via instructional coaches. Coaches use needs assessment data to provide targeted support for teachers in areas such as utilizing the restate, answer, cite, and evidence (RACE) strategy with fidelity during instruction, incorporating formative assessment during instruction, and strategies to facilitate questioning and discussion.

- Parent are kept abreast with their children’s academic progress through bi-weekly progress reports that explains students’ strengths and areas of improvement in reading, writing, and mathematics. Additionally, teachers update the online grading platforms and messaging apps to document student progress across subject areas. Weekly parent engagement meetings allow parents to learn about their children’s progress prior to the student-led parent-teacher conferences. Parents are invited to workshops that support the analysis of their children’s assessment data, homework completion support, strategies to support reading in the home, and the prevention of bullying. In addition to events that celebrate their children’s achievement and the culturally-responsive book clubs, parents are invited to workshops on resume writing, English as a Second Language classes, and budgeting.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers use Exemplar math rubrics and create assignment rubrics that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers check for understanding during lessons and in some cases, students self-assess to monitor student progress in the moment.

Impact
Teachers provide actionable feedback to students on their written work; however, students are not extending their use of this feedback across other content areas, thus the feedback is not meaningful and impedes students from their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has a system in place to support feedback provided to students by showcasing exemplar student work with feedback in all classrooms. Although there are models of exemplary work with actionable feedback, the feedback on student work is actionable, but not always meaningful. Feedback on a student’s English Language Arts (ELA) work on restate, answer, detail, detail (RADD) noted that the student needed to add quotation marks and capitalization in every sentence. Another feedback sample commended the student for use of inference and next steps referenced the need to explain the work with details to further support the inference. Another student was commended for using the RACE strategy, but needed to add punctuation and spelling, but was unable to read and articulate the word ‘punctuation’ in the feedback. An eighth-grade math performance included feedback that commended the student for solving the problem algebraically. The grow cited the student and teacher feedback that tasked the student to be neater and sequential in problem solving; however, this was not consistently observed in the student work samples viewed.

- A sample of a student’s ELA work showed a cycle of feedback to the student to support the development of their writing piece on climate change. The student was commended for including a topic sentence in the introduction and the next steps mentioned the need to work on the body paragraph. Subsequent feedback commended the student on their body paragraph and the inclusion of the RACE strategy with the need to add more details. Additional feedback showed the progression in the student writing, thus making the feedback actionable and meaningful. A sample of a student’s math task that was assessed using the Exemplar rubric showed feedback from the teacher as well as the student’s reflection. The teacher commended the student for understanding the multi-step problem and the next step required more work on adding, subtracting and regrouping. The student noted the need to show their steps to prove their work; however, these practices were not evidenced in all student work reviewed.

- Teachers check for understanding using strategies such as thumbs up or down and quick checks, as well as listening to students during turn-and-talks; however, making adjustments to the lesson in the moment was not always evidenced in addition to peer and self-assessment practices, thus impeding students from next learning steps. In a fourth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class, the teacher checked for understanding by asking groups questions such as, “What is your operation?” “How do you know what’s important?” The teacher made a minor adjustment by reconfiguring student groups. Students self-assessed their work using the read, underline, strategize, and hunt (RUSH) strategy. In a first-grade ELA class, the teacher checked for understanding by observing student work products. The teacher used a mid-lesson interruption to create a small group for targeted support. Students self-assessed their partners using a color-coded partner checker. Adjustments to additional lessons entailed convening a group for small-group instruction, but there were missed opportunities for students to peer- and self-assess, impeding them from their next learning steps.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Curricular documents showed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards, Next Generation Learning Standards, that were inclusive of the instructional shifts such as application for mathematics. Curricula and academic tasks demonstrated differentiation.

Impact

Transitioning to Next Generation Learning Standards and the infusion of the hallmarks of Advanced Literacy ensures coherence and promotes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps and lesson plans showed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards that included all of the instructional shifts for ELA and a focus on application in mathematics. Curricular documents showed progressions and crosswalks between the Common Core Learning Standards and the Next Generation Learning Standards as part of the transitioning process for standard adoption. Across the grades and content areas the Advanced Literacy hallmarks are embedded in the curriculum maps, specifically hallmarks 2, 3, and 4 that support academic vocabulary acquisition, student discourse, and using vocabulary words to build students’ depth of knowledge. For example, a fifth-grade reading curriculum map referenced academic vocabulary, language objectives, sentence starters, potential strategy lessons to support the unit, and classroom supports such as anchor charts and scaffolds, with activities such as fishbowl shares, turn-and-talks, Socratic seminars and think-pair-shares to support student discussions.

- A review of lesson and unit plans revealed references to State and/or content standards across the subject areas. A fourth-grade math lesson plan showed alignment to the standards of mathematical practices such as preserving through problems, constructing viable arguments, modeling with mathematics, and reasoning quantitatively. Students were required to use place value and sharing to divide. Plans showed students assigned to a real-world problem that asked the students to solve how many cars a ferry transported each hour over a period of five hours, if 685 cars were transported in total. Students groups were differentiated by ability levels, the type of problem assigned to each group, and by the supports needed, such as labeling portions of the algorithm to support the English Language Learners (ELLs). A third/fourth-grade dual language math class required third-grade students to divide objects into equal parts and write a division statement, while the fourth-grade students used models and the Distributive Property to multiply. Students at their respective grade levels were assigned word problems that required them to use the ‘three read protocol’ to deconstruct word problems by getting the gist of the problem, annotating the problem, and discerning what is required to solve the problem. Support in the plans mentioned manipulatives or illustrating how to solve the problem.

- A sixth-grade social studies lesson plan on the characteristics of early river valley civilizations cited social studies practices which include gathering and interpreting evidence, comparing and contrasting regions and multiple events in history, and identifying the relationships among geography, economics, and history to provide context for a specific region. During the discovery process, differentiation was provided by supplying different groups of students with appropriate tools such as a laptop, textbook, graphic organizers, and translated scaffolds.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices exemplified the articulated belief that students learn best when they engage in academic discourse that fosters student ownership of learning, thus reflected in student discussions.

Impact

Student discussions reflected high levels of thinking and participation through RUSH, RADD literacy strategies, as evidenced in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulated that students learn best when teaching practices allow for the gradual release portion of the workshop model of instruction, fostering student-to-student discourse, and ownership of student learning. In a fourth-grade Integrated Co-teaching math class, the learning target required students to use the standard algorithm to divide while using the RUSH strategy. Students were observed working in collaborative groups engaging in the read and strategize portion of RUSH while discussing their work. Subsequently, a student went to the interactive white board to demonstrate the strategize portion of RUSH. Similarly, in an eighth-grade math class, students created a function to determine water loss while brushing their teeth. Students were observed solving a real-world problem by posing questions such as the effect of water pressure on running water while brushing their teeth and setting up an equation to measure how much water is coming out of the pipe per unit of time, which a student implied finding the slope. Students were engaged in student-to-student discourse while making their thinking visible through their work products.

- In a sixth-grade ICT ELA class, students looked for evidence in their essays that connected to their thesis and organized their essays based on their independent books. Citing evidence from the text *Tiana’s Scar*, students engaged in differentiated tasks that were designated as mild, spicy, and hot which is synonymous with the level of difficulty of the task. In A/B partner discussions, students relayed to one another that the character’s scar was external and cited textual evidence to support the claim. Students used the RADD strategy to cite evidence from the text while using a scaffold to organize their evidence. In a kindergarten reading class, student capacity building in reading required them to utilize the charts in the room to support their reading. During a turn-and-talk, students responded to the prompt, “How does a chart in the classroom help you learn?” Students in one of their groups stated, that the charts help them with their sight words; thus students made their thinking visible through discussions.

- In a first-grade ELA class, students brainstormed and created a list of topics they know a lot about to support a future writing piece. Students used a scaffold to capture their topics such as music, art, and math. Two small groups convened to complete their lists with assistance from a para-professional. Similarly, in a second-grade ELA class, student read words with the “ed” suffix and recognized the sound of the suffix. The teacher recited words such as blinked and hunted and students stated that the suffix made the “id” sound but was not corrected. During a turn-and-talk, the teacher asked, “What sound do you hear in the word swelled?” A student tapped out the word and stated the “d” sound was heard. Although students made their thinking visible through discussion and work products, this was not evidenced across the vast majority of classrooms.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teachers receive feedback on their teaching practices that articulates their strengths and next steps. Teacher observation data is used to inform differentiated professional development.

Impact

Teachers receive feedback from peers and administrators that is aligned to the school’s instructional focus and promotes professional growth and development.

Supporting Evidence

- Written feedback to teachers incorporates specific suggestions that align to the school’s instructional focus of student-led conversations with an emphasis on academic vocabulary and student perseverance during challenging tasks. A review of observation reports revealed feedback that commended a teacher for providing activities that students persevered with during use of a problem-solving strategy. The next steps recommended providing mathematical discussion prompts to facilitate student discussions while using academic language. Another observation report highlighted the teacher’s use of the A/B protocol to support student discussions. The next steps cited the need to use assessment during instruction with explicit steps such as displaying the success criteria for all students and providing opportunities for students to make their thinking visible through writing. Teachers noted that the feedback from administrators has made them more reflective about their teaching practices and their alignment to the school’s vision of making learning visible.

- A review of peer feedback revealed teacher commendations on the pacing of lessons to support student engagement, clear communication between the teacher and the paraprofessional during the instructional period, and a good rapport with students. The area of growth for the teacher suggested using questioning and discussion techniques that enable students to ask one another questions. Another observation report reviewed provided the teacher with next steps aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching components of planning lessons that provide structures for student-to-student academic discourse, crafting questions to deepen students’ understanding of concepts, and engaging students in learning by reducing interruptions during students’ independent work time. At the time of the visit based on the Measures of Teacher Practice, 57% of the teachers were rated Effective.

- School leaders utilize teacher observations, learning walks, and instructional round data to inform professional development. This practice has resulted in cycles of differentiated professional learning (PL) sessions on unpacking the research that undergirds making thinking visible in mathematics, literacy, and Fundations. Similarly, as a follow-up to unpacking the research on making thinking visible in distinct disciplines, another cycle of differentiated PL allowed teachers to discuss, reflect, and refine the practices in making thinking visible in mathematics, literacy, and Fundations. Additional PL opportunities included sessions that entailed a deep dive into components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching such as planning and designing coherent instruction, questioning and discussion techniques, student engagement, and classroom environment. Succession plans for future leaders include an Assistant Principal Advisory team to support future school administrators.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
Teachers meet weekly in grade teams during inquiry cycles to using the ATLAS Looking at Data protocol during professional collaborations. Roles such as the Literacy Coach and the Peer Collaborative Teacher exemplify distributed leadership practices at the school.

Impact
The work of grade teams has resulted in strengthening teachers’ instructional capacity via the sharing of best practices. Distributed leadership practices have resulted in flipped instruction and new math approaches being implemented, thus affecting student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade teams meet weekly and engage in cycles of inquiry to analyze student work using the ATLAS protocol. A fourth-grade team was observed during their second cycle of inquiry to analyze a range student’s constructive responses on a math assessment that ranged from low to high in student performance, in addition to student subgroups such as ELLs and students with disabilities. Teachers evaluated the students’ usage of the restate, answer, cite, cite, evidence (RACCE) strategy while solving math word problems to support student writing in math. In addition, the standard of focus was operations and algebraic thinking with an emphasis on multi-step problems. Teachers discussed their noticings of the student work such as students explaining their work, employing annotation strategies to deconstruct the problem, using vocabulary in written responses and using alternative strategies such as RUSH. Teachers noted practices to incorporate in their teaching such as using a words bank, graphic organizers, and supporting partner assessment during class. The work of this team is aligned with the school goal of fostering student academic discourse using different modalities. Teachers mentioned that their instructional capacity was strengthened by sharing best practices with one another such as during small group instruction and by forming purposeful groups in the classrooms.

- A review of teacher team notes revealed that a vertical team analyzed students’ math constructive responses and noticed student were struggling with two-step problems. Based on the analysis of the student work, groups of students in grades six through eight were referred for Response to Intervention Support (RtI) including students with disabilities. As a result of the support, students in grade six through eight showed 71.4 percent, 40 percent, and 55.5 percent gains in their math performance. Additional notes gleaned a sixth-grade team that analyzed student’s weekly checkpoint tasks that student were struggling with theme, which was the focus for the team. Teachers revised the lesson to include a multi-flow process map for students to identify theme while using guided questions. Similarly, the sixth-grade math teachers revised their lesson to focus on finding slope and y-intercept as a result of analyzing students’ weekly checkpoint tasks.

- Distributed leadership practices include the Literacy Coach, and Peer Collaborative Teacher (PCT). The Literacy Coach introduced all classroom teachers to an instructional program that supports the flipped model of instruction. As a result of teacher leader voice, the flipped model has led to students bringing their background knowledge across the content areas to support their learning. Similarly, the PCT has a voice in key decisions by modeling instructional practices, supporting teacher proficiency in analyzing their student data, and lead professional learning sessions. In addition, the PCT has transitioned the math teachers to using a new math program that is adopted across the school, thus supporting student learning across the school.