Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 041 Gun Hill Road
Elementary 11X041
3352 Olinville Avenue
Bronx
NY 10467

Principal: Michelle Moore

Dates of Review:
December 3, 2019 - December 4, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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. 041 Gun Hill Road serves students in grade K through grade 5. 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>
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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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## 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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<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>Area of Celebration</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to State standards</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

There is a theory of action which includes a rationale for the list of focused school-level goals and action plans apparent in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and other documents. School leaders successfully engage and communicate with the school community, including teachers and families.

Impact

School goals are tracked for progress and are thoughtfully adjusted to leverage changes that explicitly link to accelerated student learning and social-emotional growth. Parents and teachers ensure that school improvement and decision processes are understood and supported by the entire school community.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's theory of action emphasizes that teachers plan rigorous instruction with multiple entry points for all students, including Multilingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, monitor progress throughout the lessons, and provide specific, timely, direct feedback and support to extend learning. Current school-level instructional goals in the CEP are to increase the number of students performing at level 2 in English Language Arts (ELA) to 70 percent by June and to increase the number of students performing at a level 2 in math to 62 percent. The CEP's planning process is conducted via embedded structures for collaboration, such as the School Leadership Team (SLT), the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), and department teams. These structures allow all stakeholders to be highly involved in the design of overarching goals and action plans to support student progress and positive social-emotional growth.

- Each school year leaders and teachers analyze the results of the New York State standardized exams, Measures of Teacher Practice, the school survey, and other reports to set preliminary goals in line with the CEP. Based on the results of the NYS exams, the ILT found that students struggled with academic vocabulary, word meaning, fractions, and multistep word problems and that the MLLs sub-group are the bottom 10 percent of students. As a result, teachers, including English as a New Language teachers, collaborated to design individualized instruction to this sub-group incorporating language acquisition strategies such as building background language and schema and incorporating visuals and technology. As a result, achievement of MLLs in ELA increased in comparative benchmark assessments data 23 percent from September 2019 to November. In addition, school leaders monitor the goals using a data tracker system based on academic progress. The data tracker provides leaders and teachers with progress by grades, by achievement levels, and by sub-groups. In addition, a review of attendance reports led leaders and teachers to provide social services support to parents, incentives for best and most improved attendance, and the use of an online grading system to consistently communicate with families. As a result, year-to-date attendance is at 91 percent.

- The review of school team documents and meetings with leaders, teachers, and families revealed that all stakeholders are engaged in the design of the CEP goals. Teachers indicated that they design school goals that are discussed, revised, and refined with leaders. These goals are presented to the SLT for further revisions and refinements. Parents, members of the SLT, and non-members of the SLT articulated each of the goals and described their participation in SLT meetings discussing the CEP goals. For example, parents indicated that during the SLT meetings they look at assessment data and school surveys to help design goals. They also added that during parent association meetings, they have opportunities to provide feedback on goal setting as well as ideas to improve their participation in the school. All interviewed teachers shared that they participate in schoolwide goal setting in their grade level teams as well as in the ILT. One teacher shared that being part of goal setting has helped her to reflect on her practice and align her professional goals to the CEP goals. As a result of the ongoing collaborative approach among stakeholders and communication efforts between school leaders and the school community, there is a collective commitment from all school community members to improve student learning.
Findings
School leaders have established systems for evaluating curriculum and instruction to inform decisions based on data from assessment results to support the emerging needs of all students. School leaders also evaluate and modify the use of organizational resources, and the quality of teacher teamwork, teacher evaluation, and professional development practices.

Impact
While school leaders and staff are increasing the coherence of policies and practices across the school with attention to the State standards, schoolwide systems to monitor and measure the effectiveness of interventions at the classroom level, are not yet fully developed.

Supporting Evidence
- Leaders and teachers reviewed the data from 2019 NY standardized assessments, determining that the math, ELA and science curricula were not yielding the desired results. As a result, they adopted new curricula and a data-driven instructional model grounded in the instructional focus. Specifically, the goal is to increase professional learning around ELA and math to build content knowledge so that teachers will plan cognitively challenging activities that will increase student performance standardized assessments. During weekly common planning sessions, teachers focused on using multiple sources of data, designing differentiated lessons, increasing the variety of resources, and engaging students in highly cognitive learning experiences. The data-driven model promotes the use of multiple sources of data to evaluate practice and inform instructional and curricular adjustments. In addition, there are interventions built into the schedule, such as the 10:10:10 reading model, where students work independently towards meeting their reading goals. This approach gives students time to practice and gives teachers time to support groups of students and conduct individual reading conferences. School leaders are in the process of designing systems and structures to ensure consistency in monitoring interventions, policies, and practices at the schoolwide and classroom levels.

- School leaders design systems and structures aiming for improvement by promoting the work of teacher teams both horizontally and vertically. School leaders ensure teachers use protocols, rolling agendas, and upload the information in an online file sharing platform. Teacher teams have streamlined their planning and inquiry by routinely analyzing student work and using data to make curricular refinements and to adjust teaching strategies to address student need. School leaders leverage the structure of the ILT by having representatives on each grade that report back to their grade level teams to ensure recommendations across grades and subjects coherently integrate the State standards and best practices delineated in the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Also, school leaders participate in teacher team meetings and use an online file-sharing platform to review agendas and minutes. While the school uses several online instructional platforms for ELA and math to enhance student learning and they appear to yield successful results, as comparing September 2019 with November 2019 benchmark assessments. School leaders are currently determining effective ways to monitor the success of each program. School leaders agree that without a monitoring system, it is challenging to determine which online learning platforms have made the highest impact on learning outcomes.

- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to observe teaching practices. In addition, school leaders provide teachers with feedback based on teacher-generated goals, school goals, and the mastery of student learning. Most reviewed observations revealed that school leaders consistently align the evidence with the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric and feedback is timely and prioritized. Furthermore, school leaders and teachers engage learning walks to collect data about instructional practices and classroom environment. School leaders are in the process to aggregating data from Advance, learning walks, and curriculum to target individual teachers and to plan professional learning.
Findings

School leaders and faculty have adopted State standards-aligned curricula with a focus on academic vocabulary, analysis, and problem solving. Academic tasks coherently embed rigorous tasks and higher-order skills across grades and subjects.

Impact

As a result of coherent curricula and tasks that promote college and career readiness, all students, including MLLs and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking. Curricula offer a range of academic experiences that fosters critical thinking skills by engaging in challenging academic tasks connected to the real-world.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers shared that this year, the school adopted new core curricula for ELA, math, and science aligned to the State standards to meet the needs of the students and to build instructional coherence across grades and subjects. Instructional planning documents across all grades demonstrate alignment to the State standards with a focus on students analyzing text, using academic vocabulary, and solving multistep word problems. A grade two ELA unit reflects reading and writing State standards aligned to the essential question, “How do writers support an opinion?” As a culminating task students will select a good or service and write an opinion piece to support their belief that this good or service is important to their family. A fourth-grade math lesson plan requires students to solve multistep word problems and having whole-number answers using the four operations, including problems in which remainders must be interpreted and use different strategies for multistep problem-solving. As a result, students are receiving instruction that promotes college and career readiness.

- Reviewed instructional planning documents evidenced curricular coherence. For example, all lesson plans use “I can” statements, such as “I can identify the gist of Nasreen’s Secret School.” Another approach promoting curricular coherence across all grades and subject areas is the use of using the essay protocols such as restate the question, answer the question, add detail 1, and add detail 2 (RADD). The use of these strategies is evident in all literacy-based lessons which support student understanding and when answering a constructed response essay question. In math the circle the numbers, underline the question, box the keywords, evaluate, and solve (CUBES) approach is evident in all math lessons. Students reported that they use these supports constantly.

- Rigorous instruction is emphasized in instructional planning documents using a variety of questions across Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to promote higher-order thinking. In third-grade ELA, students are to define the word honesty and write about a time when they were honest. Students are expected to restate the question, answer the question, and include two or more details to support the answer. Tasks in science require students to engage in hands-on activities experimenting with sound using objects such as cups, rubber bands, tissue boxes, and a pencil box to better understand vibrations. Students will write about what they learned about sound in their lab reports. Teachers embed differentiated teaching strategies into unit plans to ensure all learners, including MLLs and students with disabilities, gain access to the content. Across grades and subjects, curricula incorporate activities for students to work together with their peers promoting collaborative thinking and team building. A third-grade math lesson plan creates opportunities for all students to engage in solving real-world two-step word problems using the four operations. Hence, with the school’s rigorous curriculum, students participate in challenging tasks that promote high-level thinking and engage students in authentic and relevant learning experiences.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points in a print-rich learning environment and promote higher-order thinking skills. Work products and discussions reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

**Impact**

Across classrooms, the use of multiple entry points engages students in lessons that promote collaboration and participation so that all learners produce meaningful work products, and students have the opportunity to make their higher-order thinking skills visible.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers create supportive learning environments where all students are learning in print-rich classrooms using instructional tools equipped with scaffolds, visual aids, and technology. For example, most classrooms visited displayed techniques for raising the level of narrative writing, such as posters with a mentor text, vocabulary, and process charts. In each classroom, there were sentence starters and protocol charts for student-to-student discussion with prompts to promote meaningful conversations and to push students’ thinking. In a fourth-grade social studies class, students read the article “The National Zoo Prepares to Bid Farewell to Beloved Giant Panda Bei Bei” and worked in triads using textual evidence and a graphic organizer to answer questions. All students discussed Bei Bei’s journey from Washington DC to China and his new life as well as the importance of protecting vulnerable species. Students made connections with other animals such as polar bears and dolphins. In this real-world and current event activity, students demonstrated high levels of critical thinking and produced meaningful work products. MLLs have access to dictionaries and laptops with access to online learning platforms. Teachers also used language acquisition strategies such as total physical response or native language supports. Across classrooms, multiple entry points support students in producing meaningful work products.

- Across classrooms, teachers provide students with opportunities to build critical thinking and engage in rigorous tasks independently, in pairs, or small group activities. Student ownership of learning was evident in some classrooms, such as students producing work products via discussions where peers supported each other’s work. For example, in a third-grade integrated co-teaching ELA class, students were working in small groups discussing the essential details of a text. During their interactions, students used accountable talk stems while recording their findings in a graphic organizer. In a fourth-grade ELA class, students were in small groups discussing strategies to write about explanatory paragraphs using evidence from the Iroquois book. Students were observed annotating, using textual evidence to support their thinking, and using a 4-square organizer to plan their paragraphs. As a result of these pedagogical strategies, most students had opportunities to engage in their lessons and make their thinking fully visible.

- Students reported having opportunities in most lessons to collaborate to solve problems, determine different strategies, and find solutions. They also shared that during ELA lessons, they engage in discussions about texts. Classroom visits revealed that students engaged in productive conversations. In a fifth-grade math class, students participated in a group discussion about multistep problem solving involving four-digit dividends and two-digit divisors. Students used CUBES strategies to guide them in the process of finding the solution. Students said, “I like your approach, but I think we need to double-check the question.” Another student added, “Perhaps we need to multiply to verify our answer.” In a fifth-grade ELA class students were working in triads reading the book *Esperanza Rising*. Students engaged in a jigsaw activity where they divided the text, read the text to become expert in one section, and then heard oral summaries from their peers to gain an understanding of the material. Students then moved to other groups to discuss the same parts they read and exchange their findings. Students used textual evidence in discussions. As a result, all students were able to make their thinking visible, demonstrating high levels of thinking and participation.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. “I can” statements and formative assessments consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and students engage in self-assessment activities using exit tickets and rubrics.

Impact

Most students and teachers receive actionable feedback, based on rubric criteria, that informs the next steps regarding student achievement. Ongoing checks for understanding result in effective on-the-spot instructional adjustments.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers use rubrics that are aligned with State standards and checklists across grades and subjects. For example, in math rubrics for multistep problems include criteria of problem-solving reasoning and proof, communication, connections, as well as representation with the levels of achievement listed as novice, apprentice, practitioner, and expert. An expert in representation requires to meeting the following descriptor “I used another math representation to help solve the problem and explain my work in another way.” Students reported that they use rubrics in all subject areas to have guidance on the different requirements they should consider while completing their tasks. One student reported that for a math assignment, she has to make sure always to check and explain problem-solving work. School leaders presented a standard-based four-point grading policy, which informs students about their levels of achievement during the marking period.

- Student work products revealed that teachers use glows and grow to provide actionable feedback to students across content areas. For a written assignment, the glow was, “Great use of details and dialogue” and the grow was “Remember to correct your tense usage and develop your plot and solution more!” In a math assignment, the glow was “You have the right answer” and the grow was “Next time, make sure your work matches your answers.” As a result, students are informed of their next steps to improve their work and have a better understanding of what areas they must improve to meet academic achievement levels.

- Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices reflect the use several forms of checks for understanding, such as “I can” statements, thumbs up, hand signals, checklists, check-ins, conferencing, and exit tickets. In a fifth-grade ELA class, while students were working in groups, the teacher circulated throughout the room, checking students’ progress, and recording student’s responses. After her first round, the teacher stopped the class, explaining that some students were making hand signals to agree or disagree but were engaging in limited verbal participation. The teacher then encouraged them to deepen their discussions using their norms for triad talk which is posted in the classroom and in notebooks. As a result, the level of verbal interaction and participation increased. In a third-grade math class, while students in groups were solving word problems, the teacher conferred with students, capturing their responses in her formative assessment tool. She then created a small group of students and started working with them to address their needs.

- Students reported that they engage in self-assessment and peer-assessment activities using rubrics, checklists, and exit tickets to evaluate their work. Also, students have access to a peer assessment protocol, “Be Kind, Be Specific, Be Helpful, and Participate” with prompts for their interactions such as, “I like …. because…”, “Would you consider…”, “Thank you for your feedback.” As students engage in self-assessment activities, teachers conferenced with students to help them address some misconceptions. Also, teachers use exit slips to adjust lessons and to group students. In several math classes, students were observed using math rubrics and CUBES to self-assess their work. As a result of these assessment practices, students are aware of their academic needs and are prepared to improve their work for the next assignment.
**Additional Finding**

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

Teams of teachers meet regularly to systematically analyze instructional practices and develop strategies aligned to research-based practices for improving student achievement. Leadership structures facilitate teaching interaction with school leaders to make key decisions about teaching practices, curriculum, and schoolwide initiatives.

**Impact**

Teachers play an integral role in key decisions resulting in shared improvement in teacher practice that affects student learning and improves mastery of goals for groups of students across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During the observed ILT team meeting, teachers prepared to look at math work of two students focusing on their gaps and possible misconceptions using a gallery walk approach, posting what they noticed and what they wonder. Teachers determined that students used an open number line, explained their thinking, and were able to provide doubles facts. There were gaps in clarity, identifying odd and even numbers, use of strategies to break apart numbers as well as in adding and multiplication. Teachers agreed to modify their lessons to include more activities to promote the use of background knowledge, to make predictions, and to promote interdisciplinary connections. One teacher shared, “Participation in these sessions has helped me to be more reflective with my practice and more critical with my teaching.” As a result, groups of students are demonstrating increased mastery in math levels as evidenced in comparative benchmark assessments data. The September 2019 data shows an average of seven percent of third graders which increased in November 2019 to an average of 31 percent mastery.

- Instructional planning documents revealed that teachers consistently analyze data and look at student work. For example, after reviewing the results of the reading assessments, the third-grade team noticed that several MLLs struggled with fluency and character inference. To address the needs of this sub-group, teachers decided to use language acquisition strategies such as building background language and schema, developing strategies with visuals and exposure, as well as using visuals, pictorial vocabulary graphic organizers, and total physical response strategies. During classroom visits, teachers presented lessons using those scaffolds and students demonstrated mastery in their interactions while having conversations with their peers about the text they were reading. As a result, third-grade MLLs are demonstrating increased mastery in reading levels as evidenced in comparative benchmark assessments data showing an average increase of 23 percent in reading levels while comparing September 2019 with November 2019 assessments.

- School leaders promote leadership roles in the school, and ensure teachers have a voice in key decision making. For example, teachers, in addition to their regular grade level and ILT teams, also participate in the supportive environment team, school implementation team, equity team, attendance team, and a response to intervention/teacher support team. Each team discovers a problem of practice, discuss patterns and trends, and determine next steps. Teachers shared that they lead curriculum design and facilitate professional development, as well as support teaching initiatives. Teachers and school leaders shared that the hiring process engaged teachers as teachers participate in the recruitment, interview process, demo lessons, and make recommendations to school leaders. Teachers reported that they facilitated the middle school fair at the school, organized the festival of cultures, and designed and implemented a mentoring program for boys. As a result, the 2019 school survey reflects that 98 percent of teachers say that at their school, the principal, teachers, and staff collaborate to make the school run effectively, which is higher than the results of the City and the district.