Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 069 Journey Prep School
Elementary 08X069
560 Thieriot Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473

Principal: Sheila Durant

Dates of Review:
March 11, 2020 - March 12, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use ongoing 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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### School Culture

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<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>Additional Finding</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools 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>
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<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>
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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>
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</tbody>
</table>
Findings
School leaders and the faculty strategically align the curricula to the State standards by using an agreed upon schoolwide lesson plan template. Curricula and academic tasks are refined on an ongoing basis using student work and data.

Impact
Alignment of tasks to the State standards result in curriculum coherence across disciplines and promotion of college and career readiness skills. All students have access to cognitively engaging curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- By using a schoolwide template that includes the learning objective, standards, essential questions, high leverage vocabulary, and differentiation, teachers plan coherent lesson plans that show thoughtful and meaningful tasks aligned to the State standards. For example, in a fifth-grade math lesson plan, the standards are recognizing volume as an attribute of solid figures and applying the formula to solve real-world problems. In a third-grade literacy lesson plan, students are tasked with conducting a Socratic seminar on students’ interpretation of different texts about their unit of study on how young people can make a difference in their community. In the standard for this lesson, students must report on a topic using appropriate facts, descriptive details, and speaking clearly at an understandable pace. In a kindergarten science lesson plan, students use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals need to survive. Students are required to work in groups to examine a pussy willow stick to determine whether it is a living or non-living thing.

- In an integrated third-grade English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies lesson, the State standards for both literacy and social studies are listed. Students are tasked with working in groups to interpret different illustrations of Egyptian art to demonstrate an understanding of the characters’ perspectives and points of view. Similarly, curriculum maps for literacy evidenced interdisciplinary units for each grade level. For instance, in a kindergarten, interdisciplinary curriculum map, concepts, and metacognitive strategies are promoted, such as emphasizing reader and writer workshop routines and skills for students to become good readers. Likewise, in a third-grade interdisciplinary literacy curriculum map, students learn about building reading stamina and understanding character attributes by learning about the scientific aspect of traits while studying inheritance and culture. As a result, curriculum maps, lesson plans, and units of study incorporate and promote college and career readiness skills such as investigation, real-world applications, reading complex texts, and utilizing writer’s workshop strategies.

- Teachers use data to adjust lesson plans and units according to students’ needs. For instance, in a grade four reading lesson plan, the teacher used data from the benchmark assessment to adjust in planning lessons about topic sentences after students scored below proficiency level for this skill. Lesson plans across grades and subjects evidence the use of student work, exit slips, and assessments to form groups. For example, in a grade five math lesson plan, the teacher used a post-assessment and quiz to create ability-based groups. Students for each group are listed as independent, some support needed, and require more assistance and include differentiated materials and specific scaffolds and extensions for students. In a grade three ELA Socratic seminar lesson plan, the teacher used students’ self-assessments rubric results from a previous seminar and deduced from their feedback that some students needed more opportunities to participate while some students had a hard time staying on topic. Based on this data, students were provided with conversational prompts, copies of articles, and previewing questions so that all students, including Multi-lingual Learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, could participate in the subsequent seminar. As a result, all students have access to engaging cognitive tasks through the provision of supports and extensions.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when engaged in their learning through exploration, discovery, and inquiry. Teaching strategies incorporate multiple entry points such as the use of technology, graphic organizers, and small-group instruction to promote student participation in teacher led discussions.

Impact

Across classrooms, there are high levels of student participation and thinking. Alignment to the set of beliefs of how students learn best were not seen in the vast majority of classrooms thus hindering student ownership, exploration and student engagement with high levels of support.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade five math lesson, students worked in groups to create and exchange problems involving using the formula to find the volume of solid figures. One group created volume problems, another group exchanged problems they had solved, and another group worked with manipulatives to solve problems. Some students used laptops to create problems. Teachers conferred with students and provided feedback and guidance in support of their work, such as, Reading of the problems and asking them to review it and provide information for the reader to be able to solve it. In a second-grade class, the lesson had students using magnifying glasses to examine the inside of a lima bean. Each student had a lima bean diagram with labels of each part students were observed using academic vocabulary such as embryo, seed coat, and food storage. Though students were engaged in dissecting the lima bean and used the diagram to name the different parts, there were missed opportunities for students to synthesize their observations to form a hypothesis. While both classes evidenced alignment to the belief of promoting high levels of engagement through exploration, there were missed opportunities such as the use of a protocol to share their work and demonstrate their thinking.

- Across classes teachers provide the necessary scaffolds, such as providing different tasks with supports for all students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in their work products. In a third-grade integrated ELA and social studies classroom, the teacher provided different books about Egypt with illustrations of Egyptian characters such as pharaohs, mummies, and sphynx. The teacher provided a graphic organizer and directed different groups to analyze images from the books to identify character traits and point of view of the Egyptian figures based on their analysis. One group analyzed three, another two, and another one image. Supports for MLLs consisted of having a partner that could translate and verbal teacher translation. In a second-grade writer's workshop lesson, the students had to write an opinion piece on whether they thought zoos are good or bad by using a fact to justify their opinion. All students had the same task, graphic organizer, and a word bank with visuals. As a result, some students had written sentences, while others were still processing their thoughts and required more time to complete their sentences.

- In a grade three ELA class, students participated in a Socratic seminar after studying a unit on young people who can make a change. The class was divided into an inner circle and an outer circle. Students in the inner circle took turns asking each other questions about ideas of how they can change the world or make a change to help others. The two teachers in the room took notes. The outer group was responsible to keep a tally of how many times the speaker had good eye contact, spoke clearly, and rated the level of participation. While the lesson provided an opportunity for students to express their own ideas and student facilitators completed a self-assessment with next steps, there was no evidence of students driving their own learning. Across the vast majority of classes visited, high quality supports and extensions, and student ownership that result in meaningful work products was not prevalent.
**Additional Finding**

**Quality Indicator:** 2.2 Assessment

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**Findings**

Across classrooms, student work products evidence the use of rubrics, checklists, and a grading policy align to the school's curricula. Common assessments drive decisions about instructional practices to achieve grade-level goals.

**Impact**

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students using rubrics, checklists, verbal conferencing, and written comments on student work. The use of common assessments such as adaptive computer assessments and pre- and post-assessments have resulted in adjustments to curricula and instruction.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teachers use checklists aligned to the writer’s workshop model along with written comments. For instance, a review of student work products reveals the consistent use of grade-level checklists for writing. Teachers use an opinion writing checklist to grade student work using student-friendly language, such as “Did I do it like a second grader?” The teachers also graded students on having a strong beginning and ending to their paper, in addition to transitions, organization, elaboration, and craft. The teacher checked off either, not yet, starting to, or yes, for each category. In a grade three opinion writing rubric, there was a column for grades one, two, three, and four. The student was graded according to the criteria met: at, below, or above grade level. Students also receive written actionable feedback such as, “you demonstrated comprehension by using text evidence and included more transition words and high-leverage content vocabulary.” Using a third grade, four-point rubric for reading comprehension and critical thinking questions, students were graded on interpretation, detail, use of information, clarity, and mechanics on their writing. Written feedback included areas of strength and next steps, such as a student writing with a lot of emotion but needing to add more details to match her emotions and to separate the writing into paragraphs.

- Across classrooms, teachers and students use math rubrics to assess students’ ability to solve problems. For instance, in a fifth-grade classroom, students used a two-point rubric to identify the criterion they needed to include when solving problems about volume. Students justified their grade, followed by peer feedback, and finally, the teacher’s feedback. In another math class, the teacher used a rubric to provide feedback to students using the Study the problem, Organize the facts, Line up a plan, Verify your plan with action and Examine the results (SOLVE) strategy. The teacher wrote that overall the student made great use of the SOLVE strategy; however, she needed to provide a strategy for rounding. In an integrated writing and social studies task, students received feedback on a post-it note such as, “a great beginning; however, use the teacher’s exemplar to write a hook sentence to grab the reader’s attention.” Additionally, teachers meet regularly with individual students to provide verbal feedback on student writing using conference notes and a graphic organizer when they meet with individual students. The feedback along with next steps are documented. For example, if a student is working on writing a strong lead or beginning, the teacher writes her observations and suggests the next steps, such as adding a visual to convince the reader to agree with the student.

- The school uses a variety of common assessments that are adaptive and provide reports of student performance by grade level and class. Teachers keep track of student progress on an online platform. Teachers also keep anecdotal notes and use these notes to confer with individual students or adjust instruction in the moment. Students shared that they have reading goals and track their progress when conferring with teachers. After analyzing math fifth-grade benchmark data, teachers decided to build fluency of multiplication facts by having a daily drill and provide time to go over procedural steps to build confidence with multiplication concepts.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations regarding professionalism, communication, and instruction, while teacher teams function as the body to communicate a unified set of common expectations for all students. The Danielson Framework for Teaching is front and center of instructional expectations.

Impact

Teachers hold school leaders mutually accountable to high expectations by ensuring open communication and ongoing support via training from coaches, school leaders, and other staff members. Students are provided with clear and effective guidance toward achieving benchmarks resulting in students owning their learning and being prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- Communication regarding having high expectations of the staff and faculty is ongoing and supported by effective professional development (PD). School leaders send memos and provide a handbook with expectations for designing lessons that are rigorous using the schoolwide template. Included in the Staff Handbook is the instructional focus, and the expectation of teachers to create Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timebound (SMART) grade-level goals based on student data. In addition, teachers are expected to monitor students’ progress toward mastery of the curricula. Additionally, the Handbook has a section with “Suggested ‘Highly Effective’ Elements for Lesson Planning” in which every component of using the schoolwide lesson plan template is explained. According to school leaders, lesson plans are reviewed and are expected to be designed to provide maximum learning opportunities for all students.

- In addition to lesson planning, teachers are expected to maintain records of students’ academic and attendance progress using a tiered system of support. These records are used to share with parents during parent-teacher conferences and at teacher team meetings. Teachers are also expected to complete timely progress reports that include students’ reading levels, math levels, results of high stakes simulation tests, and next steps and recommendations for parents to support their children at home. There are also expectations regarding the maintenance of student work products and student portfolios. Teachers report receiving effective support from school leaders to achieve expectations successfully. For example, meetings occur with each teacher and the principal to identify areas of support needed based on student data. These collegial conversations occur monthly and at the end of the year to inform subsequent PD related to Danielson Framework for Teaching, materials requests, and to promote teacher growth and voice. Teachers reported that the meetings are positive and believe that they are essential to ensure they have what they need and feel supported. Teachers further stated that they are encouraged to visit each other’s classrooms, are provided with coaching, and are open to help each other as needed, thus creating a culture of mutual accountability.

- Teacher teams establish a culture that communicates a unified set of high expectations. One grade level uses student data to provide tiered support for math for the entire grade and hold each other accountable to communicate with students the importance of using common strategies to help them solve problems. Also, all students are expected to achieve success with supports as needed, and to keep track of their progress. Students reported that they have high expectations to achieve their goals in math and reading. One student shared that her goal was to strengthen her reading stamina. Students shared that through frequent check-ins with teachers they know their reading levels and set their next reading level goal. Another student shared that he challenges himself to use high leverage vocabulary in his writing because it is a schoolwide goal.
Additional Finding

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<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 and teacher peers have a strategic and frequent cycle of observations to support teacher development, including new teachers. There is a strategic and transparent system for managing and providing PD, such as EdCamp, that is based on data and teacher input.

Impact
Observations, teacher designed PD, daily walkthroughs conducted by school leaders, coaches, consultants, and teacher peers result in professional growth as evident in meaningful student work products and an increase in Advance data.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders use the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and a strategic observation schedule to conduct formal and informal classroom observations. For example, school leaders utilize a color-coded schedule that lists the types of supports that teachers need. A teacher who is new or needs extra support may have more frequent visits by school leaders and coaches. They also receive differentiated PD and visits from consultants to model instructional strategies or to provide feedback. Additionally, analysis of student data occurs frequently through Data Clinics, and as needed by teacher teams. Teachers reported that they receive effective feedback from coaches, school leaders, and consultants that align to professional and schoolwide goals. For instance, teachers reported specific feedback in meeting the school’s belief that teachers should follow the 80/20 percent rule, in which students should be leading discussions 80 percent of the time, while teachers should only be doing 20 percent of the talking. As a result of a teacher’s 80/20 feedback, the teacher achieved a highly effective rating in questioning and discussion. The teacher shared her appreciation for the feedback and now incorporates more time for students to have meaningful discussions in her class as a result.

- A new teacher reported that there was additional support provided for her to address the needs of MLLs. Coaches modeled strategies such as using visuals and helped design differentiated tasks which the new teacher used in subsequent lessons. Consequently, the teacher expressed having more confidence in having differentiated tasks for all students. A review of teacher Advance observation reports shows specific supports that a teacher received after being observed, in which she demonstrated having difficulty with designing coherent and differentiated tasks. The teacher frequently met with the instructional coach and was provided with supports on refining and designing instruction. For example, the coach provided specific support on using the schoolwide lesson plan template and how to use the workshop model for reading and writing. The teacher’s Advance ratings increased significantly in her second observation, which highlighted some of the recommendations from the coach.

- Data clinics are held frequently, which consists of teachers bringing all student performance data and student work to meet with school leaders to inform and prioritize PD topics. The school’s PD plan is shared with all teachers for the current school year and lists PD topics based on school and teacher goals and the school’s instructional foci. Data is used by teachers in teacher teams, when meeting with school leaders, coaches, and consultants. There is a teacher driven structure for PD called EdCamp. Teachers sign up for PD sessions designed by their peers that provide specific PD tailored to their own reflections and needs. Among some of the topics are using software to differentiate instruction and language acquisition. Teachers have access in electronic format to student data from all classes as well as curriculum maps. Teachers and school leaders reported that this level of transparency helps teachers support each other as they know the needs of all students and topics that are covered in all grades, resulting in meaningful and productive interdisciplinary student work products displayed around the school.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Well Developed |

**Findings**

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured collaborations using protocols. There are distributive leadership structures embedded into the school.

**Impact**

The work of the teacher teams has strengthened instruction as shared by teachers and as evident in teacher team minutes resulting in coherence of practices and increased student achievement. Teachers have played an integral role in making decisions that affect student learning such as the implementation of a math tiered approach in fifth grade.

**Supporting Evidence**

- An observation of a teacher team demonstrated the use of a protocol to analyze student work and identify a problem of practice. The fourth-grade team of teachers working on an informational unit in reading and writing analyzed three students’ writing pieces after conducting a pre-assessment. Students went through the writing process and the teacher presented their work and sought feedback on how to have students elaborate based on their knowledge, observations and stating multiple facts from resources. Students were provided with differentiated checklists to conduct their research. Students worked on notetaking, revising, and editing. After analyzing the work, the team determined that the students used captions, subtopics, and had some supporting details. After many ideas were provided and discussed by the team for students to elaborate more, the teacher decided to produce an anchor chart and explicitly model how to think out loud as she writes a fact and then elaborate in her own words. As next steps, the teacher will model how to elaborate, present an anchor chart for students to use, assign an independent piece, and bring it back to the team. The work of this team led to all fourth-grade teachers working on a problem of practice collaboratively leading to increased capacity and instructional coherence.

- A second-grade teacher-team’s minutes demonstrate that teachers collaborated on setting goals for the grade for reading, writing, and math. Across the school, teachers meet and plan together by grade level to come up with goals for the entire grade based on curriculum maps and data. A first-grade team met to analyze their math data and came up with ideas to help students perform better with multi-step word problems. The team decided to explicitly teach students how to visualize what the problem is asking and use repetition to build fluency. In the school hallways and in classrooms, there is evidence of coherence of instructional practices such as the workshop model for writing where each classroom has a dedicated bulletin board for displaying published writing from students. There are strategies used across classrooms such as SOLVE for math and add new sentences or missing words, remove unneeded words or sentences, move a sentence or word, and substitute words or sentences with stronger meaning (ARMS) for editing during writer’s workshop. In addition, each classroom has a high leverage vocabulary word wall for students to use in their writing. New York State Assessment Data shows a steady increase in student achievement in ELA for all students. Teachers attribute this steady increase to the work they conduct in their teacher teams steeped in analysis of data.

- Teachers have played an integral role in leading initiatives in the school. For instance, teachers came up with the idea of having EdCamp for PD in which they sign up for meaningful PD delivered by other teachers. In addition, the fifth-grade teachers decided to implement a tiered approach to teaching math based on student data. Each teacher has a class that may need a reteach of a math skill based on a common assessment. While another teacher may have students that have mastered the skill and are ready to move on. These teachers meet consistently to keep track of student progress using the Data Dive Protocol to regroup students. According to teachers, these decisions have resulted in improving teacher capacity and student learning.