Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 170
Early Childhood 09X170
1598 Townsend Avenue
Bronx
NY 10452

Principal: Sonia Acevedo Suarez

Dates of Review:
March 4, 2020 - March 5, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Buffie Whitfield
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. 170 serves students in grade PK through grade 2. 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

### Instructional Core

<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>1.1 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>
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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>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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### 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</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</table>

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

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

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

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

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
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to staff through instructional rounds, and successfully partner with families to communicate expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

High expectations support a culture of mutual accountability, collaboration, and buy-in on the part of teachers, leaders, and families, thus creating an atmosphere conducive to the developmental needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal provides focused and targeted leadership that clearly communicates expectations of elevated academic achievement for students, as well as models excellence, while providing supports and responsibility. A strong culture of high expectations is promoted by all staff to prepare students for a better future. This is evidenced by high levels of expectations for all staff throughout the community, via workshops, staff handbook, website, peer-visitations, progress reports, and orientations that emulate a culture where accountability is reciprocal between all stakeholders. Frequent cycles of observations, and teacher participation in instructional rounds support teachers, celebrate their growth, and strengthen practice. Staff members are held accountable for meeting expectations for pedagogical practice. Teachers advise and hold each other accountable through regularly scheduled team meetings and intervisitations, where teachers work together to refine pedagogical practices via co-planning opportunities.

- Staff and parents both expressed that they strive for the best in all that they do, and appreciate having a caring principal and nurturing faculty. Parent workshops provide information regarding the importance of dual language. The staff emphatically shares that they believe in their students. This belief was echoed by both students and parents. A parent stated, “The school leaders and staff are always available. Teachers have taught me how to better support my daughter with her reading.”

- Parents shared that the school sends frequent updates on the progress of their children toward expectations for learning. Additionally, school leadership sends newsletters that highlight monthly events and activities to support students in developing their literacy skills. Students each have a portfolio of their writing, accompanied by a rubric and a self-reflection tool that identifies their areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. A parent stated, “This school pushes my child to be excellent and pushes me to learn about standards so I can partner in her education.”
### Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>5.1 Monitoring and Revising Systems</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders have processes, including Instructional Leadership Team and teacher-team meetings, that regularly evaluate and adjust curricula, pedagogy, and assessment practices in response to student learning needs. School leaders and teachers also have a process in place to review the quality of professional development (PD) practices.

**Impact**

Although school leaders and staff have a protocol to monitor and adjust systems and practices related to the State standards, the building of alignment and coherence to assure student mastery are not fully in place.

**Supporting Evidence**

- During instructional cabinet meetings, curricular documents and assessment tools are revised to ensure that they provide access to all students. Conversations are held regarding how well teachers across grades are using standards and reflecting on how well lessons are taught. The school leader reviews teacher feedback to students to ensure that all students are cognizant of and are progressing as a result of the feedback. Grade leaders share information that enables other staff to make strategic decisions related to elements of the instructional core. Currently, there is no formalized system in place to ensure that all members of the school community are involved in these conversations, and in the monitoring and revision process.

- School leaders have effectively refined their capacity for improvement by supporting the work of vertically organized collaborative teacher teams. These teams have streamlined their planning and inquiry by routinely analyzing student work using research-based protocols and utilizing the results to make curricular and instructional adjustments in response to student learning needs. During cabinet meetings, school leaders review the agendas, minutes, and recommendations of teacher teams in an effort to coherently integrate the learning standards. However, while the principal speaks to processes to evaluate instructional and organizational practices of the school, some of the interactions of teacher teams have not been consistently memorialized or recorded. As a result, there are missed opportunities to effect more timely revisions to the curriculum and teacher practice.

- Decisions within the instructional cabinet assure that the use of resources, including programs, instructional materials, technology, PD, and other decisions align to the school community’s goals and overall mission. Most systems and structures for improvement are helping increase coherence of the use of resources, professional development work, and the efficacy of teacher teams across the school, so that more students demonstrate mastery of the State standards.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula across grades and content areas are aligned to the State standards, and are planned and refined using student work and assessment data.

Impact

Curricula across grades and content areas are coherent, cognitively engaging, integrate the instructional shifts, and promote college and career readiness for all learners. All students access and engage in rigorous curricula and tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school community embraces a balanced literacy approach, using the workshop model. Curriculum maps reflect grade-level curricula, rubrics, checklists, standards indicators, essential questions, performance tasks, and challenging academic vocabulary. In addition, the maps include end of unit assessments, menus of complex texts with phonics and recognition skills, and content knowledge. Students are tasked in their writing assessment to complete multi-step activities. For example, grade-one students write a personal story about their family members for their narrative writing performance task. Students are tasked with including the elements that make a good story, draw pictures depicting what they did, label the pictures, and incorporate a “juicy” main event and two secondary events. Math curricular maps include fraction activities to increase mathematical fluency.

- The school curriculum includes a dual-language program as a choice from pre-kindergarten to second grade. Within the program, lessons are taught in both English and Spanish to provide students with instruction in each language. Hallmarks of the dual-language program are language acquisition, global connections, and content objectives for every lesson. These objectives support students learning a new language while continuing to develop their home language.

- Teacher teams review student work and assessment data to gain a better knowledge of their students’ abilities and challenges. Teachers revise performance tasks, create standard-aligned rubrics, and refine lessons to accommodate all learners. Teachers identified schoolwide key focus standards to incorporate, along with instructional shifts, in algebra, number sense, operations, and measurement. For example, in grade one, students contend with operations and algebraic thinking and explanation. Additionally, students struggle with number and operations in base 10, specifically, and how to use place value to model.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, and academic tasks foster higher-order thinking. There is a focus on providing multiple entry points into challenging tasks for all learners.

Impact

Most students demonstrate higher-order thinking, including the use of process charts and group work, that ensure entry points for all learners into the curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- Instruction and pedagogy are centered on providing students with opportunities to think deeply about their work and reflect on their progress, as they make their thinking visible through discussions. In many classrooms, there was evidence of process charts and visual supports for students to independently refer to and use. Some teachers used charts as interactive tools for observational data to develop purposeful student learning groups. Across classrooms, teachers used supports, such as chart paper and writing anchor charts. For example, one chart illustrated types of punctuation, and another reminded the students to ensure that each sentence started with a capital, was written neatly, had a space between each word, and included given punctuation at the end.

- Across classrooms, students were provided with opportunities to think independently and work in groups to create meaning. For example, in a literacy class, teachers conferred with students while the remainder of the class worked with a partner to retell their story, discuss cite words, and describe pictures from their book. In a reading class, teachers conferred with students while the remainder of the class worked in reading groups to retell their story, discuss sight words, and describe pictures from their book. In a writing class, students described how reasons can support an author’s point of view. In a reading class, the teacher used the random method to call on students and gave students time to respond to questions. When a student struggled, the teacher gave the student an option to call on a classmate for support. This practice of providing multiple entry points was present in most of the classes visited.

- In multiple classrooms, students worked diligently through guided reading and writing. Across classrooms, teachers employed brief turn and talks to support comprehension. In a second-grade class, the teacher asked students to cite textual evidence in their writing responses. Across classes, paraprofessionals worked in concert with teachers to impact student learning. Students worked one-on-one with paraprofessionals and the teacher, as the teacher rotated to each child. In most classrooms, teachers used group work to engage students in tasks, and in the Integrated Collaborative Team classes, they provided access via differentiated tasks for groups of students according to their needs. In most classes observed, teachers facilitated the learning process and enabled students to take ownership of their discussions and choose the strategies that worked best for them.
Additional Finding

<table>
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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

The use of rubrics and common assessments provides teachers and students with actionable feedback on student progress toward set goals.

Impact

Students and teachers get actionable feedback that provides them with an understanding of academic achievement. Data analysis leads to adjustments in curricula, and development of multiple strategies toward improving student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use various assessments, such as conference notes, checklists, behavioral data, and rubrics. Teachers administer running records to assess student reading fluency and comprehension of fiction. This data is used to determine strategic groups, refine whole class instruction, and determine student need for additional instructional support. Students are provided with glows and grows feedback from their teachers, both verbally and in writing. Students are invited to check their work using checklists that incorporate a rating scale. Additionally, teacher-created rubrics have been developed in writing. Teachers continuously refine rubrics to strengthen connections to standards, content, and communication of next steps.

- At the beginning of the school year, each teacher received a copy of the assessment calendar for the year, which listed the assessments to be administered by grade. Students in kindergarten to grade two are assessed in reading using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment to monitor their progress toward the established benchmark levels. The analysis of assessment results supports the development of instructional goals for teaching, and reinforcement of skills across all subject areas. Teachers gather data, using formative assessments, rubrics, and student work, to ascertain levels of student learning. The use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is consistent across classrooms, and classroom checks for understanding lead to instructional adjustments that support all learners.

- All teachers utilize item analysis and disaggregated data to identify learning gaps, trends, and patterns. The analysis of test scores of specific student subgroups has enabled teachers to pinpoint which standards have been mastered, and which group of students require re-teaching, remediation, or enrichment. Progress is monitored by teachers on an ongoing basis through guided practice and one-on-one student conferences in reading, writing, and math.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: Proficient |

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, professional collaborations and regularly analyze student work through an inquiry approach. Teachers benefit from a variety of distributed leadership opportunities to research effective instructional techniques, and they play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

Impact

Teacher-team collaboration builds leadership skills and strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect school-wide instructional coherence and increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School leadership provides opportunities for all teachers to meet daily to build their instructional capacity and support teacher teams in data-driven inquiry work. Teachers plan in grade-level teams, utilizing a focused agenda, capturing next steps, and outlining a timeline for the work to be completed. The grade teams also analyze curricula and student work, engage in shared reflection, and develop action plans to address next steps. For example, teachers have developed an inquiry protocol in which they rate students’ work. Teachers use the outcomes to collaboratively support improvements in instructional capacity. Agendas and minutes of all instructional meetings are shared, ensuring coherence and shared accountability for school-wide improved instructional practice. For example, during a kindergarten teacher team meeting, the agenda was to collaboratively discuss and share the process of norming student end-of-unit on-demand writing. Teachers shared samples of student work on the task, and discussed how the rubric correlated with the learning standards. They normed the on-demand writing samples and shared how to use the data to group students, and to identify areas of strength and weaknesses in student writing. Teachers stated that they were able to identify teaching points for a future writing unit based on student needs and the goals of the unit.

- Teacher teams meet with English as a New Language (ENL) teachers on how best to provide ENL strategies in the classroom. ENL strategies, including the use of visuals, total physical response, explaining partner conversations after turn and talk with a partner, and engagement in meaningful conversation, were seen across the majority of classrooms. The PD team, comprised of teacher leaders, meets weekly to discuss professional learning (PL) opportunities for staff. PL topics include the Danielson Framework for Teaching, questioning strategies, Webb’s Depth of Knowledge, and the use of teacher-team protocols for all teachers. Teachers are provided with additional opportunities to inter-visit each other both formally and informally each month.

- A distributive leadership structure is embedded as an integral part of the school’s culture. Teacher-leaders facilitate grade-level meetings, where they assume a leadership role in supporting colleagues in instructional decisions that impact student programming and curriculum development. Teachers meet through grade-level teams, a dual-language team, or a PD committee to discuss and analyze data, and recommend changes to curricula and instruction. Teachers affirmed that they have significant voice in key instructional decisions, and stated that their perceptions and findings are taken into consideration. For example, grade teams meet each summer to co-plan and collaboratively revise curricula across grade levels and content areas.