Quality Review Report
2019-2020

Community School for Social Justice
High school 07X427
350 Gerard Avenue
Bronx
NY 10451

Principal: Jaime Guzman

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

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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to State standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Area of Focus</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>
</tr>
</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>Area of Celebration</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<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>Proficient</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

Through the school’s theory of action aligned to their core values, school leaders and teachers create an environment of discipline, safety, and emotional support. Structures, such as Family Group, ensure that each student is known well and receives personalized support.

Impact

There is a safe environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward yearly goals and meaningfully involves student voice. All students are known well by more than one adult who helps to personalize attendance supports and coordinate social-emotional learning, child development, and guidance supports.

Supporting Evidence

- The schools’ theory of action is based on a dynamic and supportive environment where faculty, staff and students effectively promote a community that ensures the academic and behavioral achievement for all learners, resulting in a safe and welcoming tone, evidenced by students’ behavior and mutual respect toward each other as well as the adults. During the meeting, students shared that school leaders and teachers have created a personalized setting that allows them to build relationships. Students stated that the teachers know everything about them and they appreciate the close-knit family environment. Students appreciate the extra time and commitment staff provides to ensure each of their successes. A student stated, “I can go to any staff member and they listen to me.” Another student shared, “This school has my back and teachers are there for me.” Another student shared, “This sentiment is echoed by many students. As a result, the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) report data shows a reduction of suspensions, comparing data from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years, and continuing in the present school year’s data.

- Family group provides a forum for student voices to be heard and for them to influence school practices. Students’ needs, concerns, and planning school-wide activities are discussed to help improve the learning environment of the school. Students via the Family Group participated planning instructional trips in collaboration with teachers. Additionally Social Justice TV is a video news channel that allows students to report what they deem as news worthy events such as award ceremonies, community service trips, announcements, sports, college announcements and after-school promotions. Students share that they feel comfortable and can talk with any staff member.

- To ensure strong relationships and trust, students remain with the same family group advisors for all four years. The staff supports students through multiple measures: checking grades and referring students to tutoring, helping students to build stronger relationships with teachers, coordinating attendance and behavior. Students stated they have at least two or three adults to whom they can go to if needed. Family groups also supports a consistent college and career readiness through college trips, building student engagement and motivation. Students shared that they have seen the change in their own maturity every year being part of this community. A student shared, “I love coming to school and rarely miss a day.” This sentiment was echoed by other students, and demonstrated in the school’s average attendance rate of 81 percent. Other students echoed that this school nestled in the South Bronx is a home away from home, demonstrating a culture of trust and positive attitudes that support student learning.
Findings

While most tasks are designed to help students consider multiple meanings and interpretations, and take or support positions, these rigorous habits are not yet embedded in the curricula across grades and subjects. Student work and data from performance tasks help to inform and revise the curricula.

Impact

As a result, academic tasks allow most students access to the curricula and provide opportunities for cognitive engagement. However, there were missed opportunities to utilize assessment data to plan extensions for higher-achieving students.

Supporting Evidence

- Tasks across most grades and subjects challenge students to think critically to demonstrate their thinking in the work products they produce. For example, in a global history lesson plan, the task required students to view images, charts, graphs and quotes, and to annotate with their own interpretations. Tasks were written so that students had to explain their mathematical thinking. In sample math tasks seen, students must provide alternative answers, discuss strategies that they used and write an explanation of their mathematical thinking. This was evident across most tasks and activities. In math, tasks were written so that students had to show their work and explain their mathematical thinking. There were missed opportunities to embed academic tasks in a coherent manner across subjects to push students with disabilities to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. In a math lesson plan, there were generic modifications for students with disabilities, such as the use of extended time and the teacher will check-in during classwork.

- After reviewing math Performance Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs), teachers noticed that students were struggling with problem solving. The task was then revised to emphasize students providing an explanation and using mathematical proofs to support their answer. Most tasks afford students experiences incorporate strategies to show their work.

- After analyzing the results from PBATs, teachers decided to make changes to their individual lesson plans by incorporating learning targets to support student learning. Most written documents reflect changes made based on students’ reading levels, performance levels, and teacher observation of student learning. Furthermore, an analysis of assessment data from PBATs and classwork revealed that students needed additional exposure and practice with complexity, and curricular documents shared include revisions that emphasize the use reasoning to support answers. While these refinements demonstrate revisions to support students with disabilities and English Language Learners, there was little evidence in shared curricula and tasks of refinement to support the school’s highest-achieving.
Additional Finding

<table>
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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**

Across classrooms provide appropriately challenging and rigorous learning opportunities. Small and whole group discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation in most classes.

**Impact**

Across classrooms, multiple entry points support student engagement and students were engaged in discussions.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Most students in classes have opportunities to engage in whole class or small group discussions. For example, in an English classroom, students work in preassigned groups while they read text. Students identified juicy quotes in the text, highlighted key words, and chunked information to build background information, and understand ways the text connects to guided questions. As students worked, they discussed provided questions and the text, and deconstructed the activity together, demonstrating high levels of thinking and participation. In other classes, students also worked together in small groups, demonstrating high levels of student thinking in their work products and discussions. There were however some missed opportunities for students to take the lead, ask questions, and take ownership of the conversation in a few classes as the teacher posed questions and selected students to share their thinking.

- In Social Action class, students participated in a simulated Congressional legislative session, and had conversations with peers about obstacles they faced as a Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Lobbyist, or as Speaker of the House. Students used provided notes, highlighted texts, and excerpts from texts at various levels to support their ideas, demonstrating high levels of student thinking. In an Algebra class, the teacher reviewed previously taught concepts to build upon students’ prior knowledge in understanding patterns. As an additional form of differentiation, heterogeneous ability-based groups worked collaboratively to understand representing patterns. However, in few classrooms, teaching strategies and scaffolds led to student responses that only reflected the use of recall or basic inferences, unlike the skills demonstrated in the math class.

- In most classes, student work typically reflects high levels of thinking and analysis. In Geometry, the teacher facilitated the lesson asking the students about their investigations. Students used reasoning and proofs to find the perimeters and areas of rectangles. Most students participated in the discussion.
# Additional Finding

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

The school utilizes the results from PBAT assessments to determine student progress towards goals. Teachers consistently check for student understanding by asking questions of students.

## Impact

Teachers use the results from PBATs to adjust pacing calendars, revise lesson plans and curricula maps across the grades and subjects. Checks for understanding during lessons lead to adjustments that meet student learning needs.

## Supporting Evidence

- Most teachers review the results from PBATs and teacher created common assessments individually and in their teams to see how students are progressing towards goals. This analysis helps teachers track student progress using varied standards-based assessments and helps most teachers make instructional decisions. In addition to PBATs, students sit for the English Language Arts (ELA) Regents Exam. Data from mock Regents taken indicate that instructional next steps included focusing on reading comprehension and organization. Formative assessment data from a math skills tracker showed that most students were challenged by analysis. As a result of the work teachers are doing to revise the curricula, some students are making progress. For example, the average student score on the NYS ELA Regents exam increased by seven points last year from an average score of 61 to 68.

- Teachers utilize the results from regular checks from understanding collected during lessons to make decisions about future lessons and determine group arrangements. Teachers ask questions to solicit student understanding and participation. Most teachers often jot notes on a clipboard on what students shared and how students are working. Teachers utilize this information to make some on the spot adjustments. In a separate meeting, students shared that teacher conferencing helps them to better understand their work is common across classes.

- A teacher in a math class used questioning to consistently check for understanding during instruction, with a focus on student voice. When assessing student understanding of whether a graph represented a function, she asked the class, “What do you think?” A student responded and she asked if someone could add on to what was said or explain what was meant. As students answered, the teacher asked why, and if others could repeat or rephrase what was said.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders strategically communicate high standards of expectations for teachers. Teachers and school leaders communicate real-time information with families on the progress of their children as related to college and career readiness.

Impact

There is a culture of mutual accountability for expectations for teaching and learning through the school and both teachers and leaders provide support for one another. Families successfully collaborate with the school to receive support with helping children.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared and staff agreed that there is almost constant daily communication about effective teaching practices made through both formal and informal conversations with staff. Given the small school design, administrators and teachers interact daily to discuss and share best practices that will support students. Teachers receive training and support from administrators and teacher leaders to support teachers develop learning targets and ensuring that they are clearly displayed in the classroom. Teachers shared that school leaders hold them accountable for meeting expectations through team activities, and intervisitation. School leaders also work with teams to implement protocols for effective use of scheduled team, which inform planning and professional learning across the school.

- Teachers, support staff, and administration help to provide real-time information and updates to families to help them play a purposeful role in their child’s education progress to help meet college and career readiness expectations. Parents shared the support they receive for college through workshops, fairs and tours, and the completion of the applications. Students shared during their meeting that the school helps to prepare them for college and career and looked forward for their child to attend a planned college visit to Albany State University. Parents stated that they receive progress reports. During the parent meeting, the majority parents commended teachers on their responsiveness for sharing information through PupilPath, including sending home assignments, texts, emails, and communication about how their children are performing daily. Parent stated that she expected to be a partner with the teachers and to work with them to determine what they will do for her child. When parents have concerns, they inform school staff, who respond expeditiously and closes the loop to ensure their children are successful. On the School Survey, 97 percent of families say that school staff regularly communicate with them about how families can help their child learn. Additionally, 96 percent of families say that they have communicated with their child’s teacher about their child’s performance.

- School leaders provide consistent messages to all staff regarding the expectations for students to achieve at high levels through the staff handbook and individualized feedback forms. The staff handbook outlines in detail the expectation that all teachers build strong relationships with colleagues, students, and parents. The handbook also outlines the responsibility that school leaders have to provide support and professional development that meets the needs of all teachers. Additionally, school leaders hold teachers accountable for meeting expectations through supervisory and formative classroom visits and observations. Feedback to another teacher suggested that the teacher should allow students to take more control of the discussion.
Findings

All teachers are organized in department teams to engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations using common protocols to review student work and assessment data on a regular basis. Teachers have opportunities to voice their ideas and take on leadership roles throughout the school.

Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen pedagogy and contribute to effective instructional practices in the classroom, and they provide opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles in curriculum planning and development.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have time built into their schedule to engage on a weekly basis in multiple team meetings, including grade and subject team meetings. There is evidence in teacher team notes and agendas across courses and grades of teacher teams looking at student data. Teachers have common planning time built into their schedules to meet, for collaborative work during the school day and to engage in professional learning, which strengthens instructional capacity and provides opportunities to exchange ideas. Teachers shared that they learn from each other through the team process. One teacher shared that students were struggling in analyzing and making a personal connection to the task. The teachers shared they give students the opportunity to show their work in math and to engage in annotation which they have seen improvement this quarter. This inquiry into planning and instructional practices is strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers across the school.

- School leaders develop and promote teacher leadership. For example, grade level leaders, department leads, and model teachers. This committee engages in planning professional development, and researching innovative ways to enhance the school’s social and academic culture. One schoolwide initiative proposed by these groups was teacher-led learning, to build teacher knowledge of learning targets. Teachers also actively participate in the hiring process. Constant school progress is taking place as a result of teachers actively taking part in developing instructional programs and systems in collaboration with school leaders.

- The principal supports distributive leadership initiatives by creating grade-level lead teachers to support colleague teachers by working with them to improve their instructional and planning practices. Teachers participate on various teams, cabinet, grade level, Restorative Justice, College Access for All, Summer School Bridge, Bronx 8 math, hiring committee, planning team, programming and school leadership team. During the teacher team interview, teachers shared that collaborative team meetings undergird professional development sessions that are spearheaded by teachers. For example, based on a fellow colleague sharing at a teacher team meeting, teachers engaged in honing their skills with the incorporation of gallery walks. Teachers reported that the collaborative planning meetings strengthen their instructional capacity, and one teacher shared that collaborating with peers has helped to improve with classroom management. On the 2018-2019 School Survey, 100 percent of teachers participate in weekly teacher team meetings and faculty meetings.