Quality Review Report

2019-2020

M.S. 594
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 09X594
1000 Teller Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Lyne James Turnbull

Dates of Review:
January 14, 2020 - January 15, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella
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

M.S. 594 serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at [http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm](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>
</tr>
</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>Well Developed</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>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>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>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>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The school’s theory of action aligned to their core values supports the faculty in creating an environment of discipline, safety, and emotional support. Structures such as advisories, the advancement via individual determination (AVID) program, student support team (SST), and partnerships with organizations, ensure that each student is known well and receives individualized support.

Impact

The effective implementation of the school’s theory of action, social-emotional supports for students, and the aligned efforts of all stakeholders has resulted in a significant reduction of disciplinary infractions, attendance improvements, and a school culture of positive interactions where students have a voice in decision-making for school improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and staff created a theory of action which is grounded in developing internationally-minded scholars with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for one another, and the courage to act in the school core values of perseverance, accountability, thoughtfulness, and honesty (PATH). These are also the basis for the school Positive Behavior Interventions Systems (PBIS) program. The school’s AVID program focuses on college-ready skills to build conceptual understanding through the scholars’ experiences and town halls are used as an opportunity for the whole school to come together two periods a week and share updates, progress towards common goals, and shout outs. Parents, teachers, and students shared that the school has a culture of mutual respect where all feel safe, valued, and respected. During classroom visits and transitions between periods, students conducted themselves quietly to their next assignment. Parents shared that the principal and teachers promote and ensure a safe school environment where students are respected and free from bullying. The Online Occurrence Reporting System data shows a 24 percent reduction of year-to-date disciplinary infractions in January 2020 when compared to January 2019.

- The student council has regular meetings with their teacher advisor and with the principal to lead school improvement efforts. Students discussed that attendance was a severe issue in their school which was affecting their learning process. Students proposed to the principal to start and incentive for students and classes with perfect attendance called “Summer Wednesday Out” where those students who met the criteria were able to go to the schoolyard for twenty minutes during their lunchtime. Students also initiated the implementation of the film club. Students shared that they engage in a culturally responsive curriculum, where they have opportunities to read books from authors from different backgrounds as well as pieces of work written by former students such as the speech written by the valedictorian for the 2019 graduating class. Consequently, the school culture meaningfully involves student’s voice resulting in a productive learning environment.

- There are three advisory periods a week dedicated to reading, writing, and discussion focused on promoting meaningful relationships, personal accountability, college and career readiness, and responsible citizenship. Students shared that they can go to more than one adult if they have an issue, and parents corroborated that statement. Guidance counselors offer social-emotional support to students in groups or one-on-one sessions. If students need special assistance or more specialized supports, students are referred to partner community-based organizations. The SST meets weekly and use an attendance report “heat map” that desegregates attendance data and allows the SST to identify and discuss students with at-risk attendance patterns. Then, the SST design different approached to address the attendance needs of each student such as assigning mentors to the chronically absent. As a result, all these efforts have resulted in decreased chronic absenteeism from 32 percent to 26 percent comparing September 2019 with January 2020 attendance reports.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use State standards-aligned rubrics and teachers provide feedback to students using the glows and grows format. However, the feedback does not consistently communicate the next steps for improvement. Teacher checks for understanding are inconsistent across classrooms and students have limited opportunities to self-assess their work.

Impact
Students receive limited feedback and not all feedback is actionable. Across classrooms, the inconsistent implementations of checks for understanding limits effective adjustments across classes and hinders teachers’ ability to ensure that students’ learning needs are met.

Supporting Evidence
- The principal, teachers, and students shared that across most grades and subjects, students use State standards-aligned rubrics and checklists. A seventh-grade rubric for social studies allowed teachers and students to assess work by looking at categories such as research to build present knowledge; text types and purposes; production and distribution of writing; and historical concepts and information. During the meeting with students, only a few articulated that they use rubrics across content areas as a guide to complete their assignments and some students were not able to explain how their work was graded or the next steps to improve their work. Work products provided for some subjects did not have rubrics attached. Consequently, the uneven use of rubrics limits students’ opportunities to have a better understanding of their progress towards learning targets and academic achievement.

- The principal and teachers shared that the expectation for teachers’ feedback to students is actionable and in the form of glows and grows, though student work products revealed inconsistent examples. For example, some student work was posted on bulletin boards showing written feedback and next steps such as “Well done for creating an example of a table which is both a function and linear” and “Next time use the rubric to guide you. Your second example had to be a function and a nonlinear.” However, student folders in classrooms evidenced that student feedback is offered inconsistently. Student work presented during the meeting with students reflected inconsistent practices where some work has glows and grows while other work products had only grades, highlighted rubrics, or checkmarks. The inconsistent approach to providing effective feedback to students lessens their opportunities to improve work products and meet standards.

- Across most classrooms, checks for understanding is yet to be implemented effectively. In a sixth-grade English as a New Language (ENL) social studies class, while students engaged in pair talk, the teachers circulated about the room listening to students’ conversations and taking notes on her formative assessment tool. The teacher then asked students to stop, shared her noticings, and reminded students to start focusing on the final part of the assignment where they have to formulate their own questions. This guided students to collaborate on formulating their questions. This level of implementing checks for understanding to make on-the-spot adjustments and meet student learning needs is not fully implemented across all classrooms. In some lessons, teacher-led approach limited student opportunities in sharing their thinking, preventing teachers from gauging if students understood the concepts, strategies, or skills being taught. Teachers also used exit tickets as part of their formative assessment approach. However, in several classes, the period ended, and students rushed to complete their exit ticket. Although the principal, students, and teachers reported that students engage in self-assessment activities, this practice was observed only in a math class, where students were using a checklist protocol to check on their work.
Findings
The principal and teachers ensure that all curricula are strategically aligned to the State standards. Academic tasks coherently embed real-world tasks across grades and subjects for all students, including Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact
As a result of using strategies, such as the Cornell note-taking system, across grades and subjects, college and career readiness is promoted coherently within curricula for all students. Across classrooms, rigorous tasks and higher-order thinking are embedded in all instructional planning documents and all students have opportunities to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional planning documents revealed alignment to the State standards and evidence that plans integrate higher-order thinking skills by engaging students in academic tasks and requiring them to engage in solving real-world problems. To build coherence, instructional planning documents across content areas include strategies such as writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading (WICOR) as well as the use of Cornell note taking strategies. The strategy used in English Language Arts (ELA) lessons is restate, answer the question, cite evidence, and explain evidence (RACE). The strategy used in math lessons is circling the numbers, underline the question, box the keywords, evaluate, and solve (CUBES). In a seventh-grade science lesson plan, students will explain why places on Earth experience day and nighttime differently and they will then work in groups to determine the time in different geographical locations. In a seventh-grade math lesson plan, students will be using CUBES as a strategy to solve their math problems. As a result of a rigorous and coherent approach to curricula through real-world applications and the consistent use of strategies, teachers prepare all students for a path to college and career opportunities.

- Lessons and academic tasks are planned to provide scaffolds and language supports to meet the needs of individual students. Lessons provide multiple points of entry that allows all students to achieve at comparable levels. In an eighth-grade ELA summative poem project, students will draw on their articles of the week as background research on their refugee’s country and reason for fleeing. Students use their poem scaffolding packet, which includes questions to brainstorm about the research collected through their articles of the week and the pieces of the universal refugee experience. Students with disabilities and MLLs/ELLs will have access to translations, graphic organizers, anchor charts, vocabulary lists, sentence starters, visuals, modified texts, one-on-one support, and small-group guided instruction. Advanced ELLs will use fewer supports and work in non-guided groups. As a result, all students participate in challenging tasks connected to current events and real-life experiences that promote high-level thinking.

- Teachers incorporate academic tasks in units that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for all students, including MLL/ELLS and students with disabilities. Units include questions and tasks aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). In an eighth-grade science unit, the performance task will be a lab where students will have to plan, investigate, and provide evidence that living things are made out of unicellular or multicellular cells. Students will participate in discussion questions such as “How do cells work together to perform a series of tasks?” Then, they will develop a model that shows the functions of the cell and how the different parts of the cell help the cell function supported with a short writing piece and drawn model. In the grade seventh-grade social studies unit, students will write a travel article for National Geographic about a country in the eastern hemisphere using the five themes of geography as a focus. In their article, students will pretend that they have traveled through the country they selected. Students will write about their journey, focusing on a key event, experience, or moment in their journey. They will be describing and including relevant geographic details gained from their research.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. While teachers engage students in small group activities, discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact**

Across some classrooms visited, teacher-led pedagogical practices hinder opportunities for students to effectively engage in tasks and classroom discussions that result in high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In most observed classrooms, teaching strategies were inconsistently implemented to meet the needs of all learners to produce meaningful work products. Although across classrooms, students were provided with graphic organizers, calculators, laptops, sentence starters, progress charts, visuals, and vocabulary, scaffolds are not yet consistently used effectively to support the learning process of all students, including MLLs/ELLs, students with disabilities and higher achievers. In an English as a New Language (ENL) seventh-grade science, the teacher used video clips to introduce the concept of Earth’s different time zones to students and also displayed visual representation of a map with different time zones. However, the video clip was only in English and the visual was not clear. Due to the limited front-loaded vocabulary activity, several students had difficulties engaging in the higher-order thinking process.

- There was limited evidence of teachers engaging students with appropriately challenging tasks across classrooms. In a seventh-grade ELA class, students worked in differentiated small groups analyzing text features, to determine important information within the text. Students were observed annotating, using graphic organizers, sentence starters, visuals, facilitating their own learning process, and using accountable talk stems. In a self-contained special education sixth-grade science class, students were engaged in a hands-on activity about electricity, conductors, and static charge using aluminum foils, rubber bands, and wood. Some students were able to articulate the conductivity of the materials they were using. The teacher posed low-level DOK questions such as “What material is this?” and “Is this a conductor?” Students responded with one-word answers and the teacher moved on. At the end of the lesson, most of the students were not able to articulate the concept of electricity. In several classrooms, teachers used the interactive whiteboard to introduce concepts. However, in a few classrooms, the information presented was not strategically organized to ensure students’ engagement in challenging tasks. In a few classes directions and the material presented on the board was not clearly presented. Students shared that they had difficulties following what was presented.

- Student work products and discussions are uneven across classrooms. In a sixth-grade ENL social studies class, students were working in groups to identify evidence to support a claim on the early evolution of man. Students made observations and inferences about the visual using the “I see, I think, I wonder” organizer. In their interactions, students used accountable talk stems, sentence starters, and graphic organizers to engage in productive discussions. All students were observed engaged in the activity producing high-quality work products. However, in several classes, while students were working in groups, the tasks were not differentiated; in some classes, several students completed their task and waited quietly for others to finish. In a seventh-grade class, students were given seven minutes to do a quick write. Several students finished the assignment in about two-minutes and did not have extensions to move forward with their learning. Several lessons were teacher-led with limited opportunities for students to engage in rigorous discussion. Some questions either failed to promote student engagement in productive discussions or only allowed for one-word and choir responses and did not promote higher levels of student thinking or engagement, as only a limited number of students responded. As a result of inconsistent teaching practices, opportunities for students to engage in productive discussions and produce high-quality work-products are limited.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and provide professional development that is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The principal and staff consistently communicate expectations that are aligned to college and career readiness and provide ongoing feedback to families using multiple ways of communication, including an online grading system.

Impact
Structures that support the school’s high expectations have created a culture of shared accountability and ownership of increased student achievement. Families receive ongoing feedback and guidance used by school staff, resulting in support for families to help them better understand their child’s progress towards college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are consistently emphasized to the faculty through weekly meetings, the faculty handbook, and one-on-one conversations with teachers. High expectations are clearly delineated in the faculty handbook and cover topics such as the grading policy; the use of schoolwide rubric; assessment calendars and expectations for grading; protocols for participation in professional development; and expectations to adhere to the PATH values. Teachers stated that the principal has high expectations for their instructional practices, and these expectations are communicated via emails and weekly newsletters with information that outlines the expectations for instruction as well as classroom environment expectations. These communications clearly articulate schoolwide instructional goals aligned with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. This year the expectation is for all teachers to use data-driven instruction which aligns to using assessment in instruction. These expectations are supported through a collaboration in the design of teachers’ professional goals where areas of strengths and growth are determined along with supports for teachers. Thus, school leaders and staff hold themselves accountable to meet those expectations.

- The principal also communicates high expectations by ensuring that teachers have received professional development (PD) on planning and preparation, implementing data-driven instruction, conferencing one-on-one with students, and behavior management. Teachers shared that the principal offers different formats to approach teacher development. For example, they work one-on-one or in small groups with consultants, co-teach, perform intervisitations, visit teachers from other schools, and participate in district PD sessions. The principal holds the staff accountable for these expectations by conducting frequent cycles of observations and providing actionable feedback. Teachers reported that they receive feedback within 24 hours of the observation. An example of feedback stated, “Listen to students during social collaboration and as a form of assessment, reinforce the use of accountable talk stems in students’ conversations during whole class and in-group activities.” Also, the principal and members of the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) conduct walkthroughs and provide feedback to hold teachers accountable for implementing classroom expectations such as the use of the schoolwide strategies and maintaining a classroom environment that supports teaching and learning.

- The principal and staff consistently communicate high expectations to families via written notices, telephone calls, workshops, monthly calendars, weekly activities, report cards, student progress reports, and meetings with teachers. Families have access to the online grading system, which keeps them informed of their children’s progress and school events. These multiple opportunities to communicate with parents are fostering productive conversations with teachers and result in opportunities to identify and respond to at-risk students with collaborative plans to support the student at school and home. Parents shared that they participate in a curriculum night where they meet with teachers and receive detailed information about the curriculum as well as the different resources and supports offered by the school. As a result, families are informed about their children’s progress and understand how to support their children to the path to college and career readiness.
Findings
The principal ensures that all teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote school goals. There are distributive leadership structures in place that provide teachers opportunities to take on leadership roles and give them a voice in a schoolwide decision-making process, allowing them to implement schoolwide programs.

Impact
Professional collaborations promote the implementation of school goals and ensure that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect students, resulting in improved teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence
- All teachers have common planning time for professional collaborations to support the school goals and strengthen the implementation of the State standards. Teachers use an inquiry approach during weekly teacher team meetings to analyze assessment data. Based on their findings, teachers strategize on how to design instruction to support student's mastery of the identified challenges and elevate student outcomes. The inquiry cycle starts with targeted instruction over a six-week period and ends with a periodic assessment that is analyzed to determine the next steps for instructional adjustments. The teacher team of agendas and minutes revealed that the cycles are ongoing at the grade level and across all contents. Teachers shared that their engagement in inquiry cycles has translated into improving their design of units and lesson plans. One teacher said that working in teams allows them to collectively have a better understanding of students' needs and reflect on their own learning to improve their teaching practice. As part of teacher collaboration, they engage in intervisitations to identify and share best practices, strengthen their pedagogy with the goal of improving student outcomes.

- During the ELA team meeting, teachers used a protocol for looking at student work and reviewed three pieces of work around the inquiry question “How does understanding word parts help me make meaning of words?” Teachers analyzed student work and determined that the use of transition words supported students in explaining their thinking and that some students were able to use prefixes to identify word meaning and were also able to cite evidence. The identified trend was that most students struggled with explaining their thinking and some were lacking understanding of prefixes and suffixes. Teachers decided to add metacognitive questions to reinforce vocabulary development strategies in lessons, as well as one-on-one conferencing with struggling students. Teachers reported that engaging in professional collaborations is an excellent opportunity to share best practices that result in increasing their capacity to design and deliver lessons. As a result of teacher team collaboration in reviewing student work products and analyzing data has led to produce effective instructional planning documents across grades and subject areas.

- Distributive leadership is evident through teacher leaders who are empowered to make instructional decisions. Teachers disclosed that they have a voice in decision making in the school by participating in several teams such as the Equity team, the ILT, the AVID and the hiring committees, and other teams specific to departments, grades, special education, and events. In these capacities, teachers provide coaching, facilitate workshops, and serve as mentors for new teachers. Teachers stated that they play an active role in the hiring committee, where they participate in the recruitment, interview, and demo lessons. One of the teachers is implementing a pilot for “PATH Rotations,” where students focus on using academic language across subjects. From Tuesday through Friday, students are engaged in a daily station rotation that focuses on math, vocabulary skills, guided reading strategies and independent reading goals and skills. Teachers develop the WICOR strategies which are used across grades and content areas. This strategy in addition to the instructional component integrate collaboration and organization skills promoting effective and academic behaviors. The results of the 2019 school survey show that 95 percent of teachers say that teachers take responsibility for improving the school.