Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 112 Bronxwood

Elementary 11X112

1925 Schieffelin Ave.
Bronx
NY 10466

Principal: Susan Barnes

Dates of Review:
May 11, 2017 - May 12, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Daisy Concepción

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. 112 Bronxwood serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school...	**Area**	**Rating**
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	**Additional Finding**	**Developing**
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	**Area of Focus**	**Underdeveloped**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Developing**

School Quality Ratings continued

School Culture

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	**Additional Finding**	**Developing**

Systems for Improvement

To what extent does the school...	Area	Rating
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection	**Area of Celebration**	**Proficient**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Additional Finding**	**Developing**
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 the CCLS	**Additional Finding**	**Developing**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders support the development of all teachers, including those new to the profession, with feedback from learning walks and formal observations. Teachers receive continuous feedback that accurately captures strengths and next steps aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

School leaders use frequent cycles of observations and the analysis of student work to provide teachers with effective feedback. Feedback supports teacher development by providing them with clearly defined expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive a wide range of feedback from all school leaders in the building that supports their practices. School leaders follow up on one another's recommendations from observation reports. A review of observation reports demonstrates that school leaders' recommendations are regularly implemented in the next observation, thus making the feedback both actionable and effective. In a teacher team meeting, two teachers who are new to teaching stated that they receive clear, detailed feedback and support that allows them to strengthen their instructional practice by adding new strategies to their instructional repertoire. One teacher stated that, in addition to school leaders' open door policy, she receives mentoring and feedback which is supported through intervisitation that allows her to clearly see the practices she needs to improve on in action.

- A review of the observation schedule shows that there are continual, focused, formative loops of observations. In one loop, teachers receive feedback from environmental learning walks that look for routines and structures across classrooms. In a second loop, teachers receive feedback from learning walks tied into the school's instructional focus. Another loop focuses on the use of scaffolds to foster improved student engagement. Finally, school leaders conduct formal observations using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, focusing on the implementation of feedback from prior formative observation loops such as environment and student engagement. School leaders also conduct data conversations where they engage teachers in discussions of findings from common assessments and analysis of student work. Teachers are accountable for developing action plans to address the data discussed and for identifying a recommendation tied to a previous observation that they will strengthen in order to support student achievement.

- A review of observations, both formal and informal, shows that teachers receive clear, explicit feedback that identifies the teachers' strengths, connecting to school expectations and often referencing previous meetings, professional development, and learning walks. In one round of observations focusing on lesson planning, teachers were reminded that lesson planning not only provides a school instructional focus but is an essential part of ensuring that teaching practices promote student engagement and support learning. Another of these observations focused feedback on planning questions more effectively to promote thinking, and a third outlined expectations for planning the use of materials, specifically including manipulatives so that students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the learning target. Most observations at the school follow this format as a school practice.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Underdeveloped

Findings

There are routines and expectations in classrooms for student conversations. However, the general lack of entry points into the curricula hinders student participation and thinking.

Impact

Limited, ineffective, and misaligned scaffolds lead to students being unable to demonstrate higher-order thinking in both discussions and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- While there were routines in the classrooms, such as an expectation for students to turn and talk and the use of basic accountable talk stems, these routines did not support the learning. School leaders expect explicit teacher modeling of a strategy or concept. Modeling was seen across some classrooms. However, it was not connected to the task, leading to confusion and an inability for students to engage in the task. For instance, a social studies class on land formation began with a discussion of different kinds of vegetables. Another social studies lesson on European explorers began with a review of text features followed by a discussion of Viking ambitions before students were sent off to answer questions about Christopher Columbus. Students sat before blank notebooks stating that they were confused because the answer had to be related to the Vikings since that is what the teacher had spoken about.

- The lack of clear instructional objectives resulted in a loss of instructional time and created off-task behaviors that led to general confusion in some classrooms. In a second grade class, a teacher gave direction to two students as twenty-three students waited or walked around the class aimlessly. In a third grade class, a teacher spent fifteen minutes asking the students to move from the rug to their desks only to send them back on the rug again.

- In one science class, students looked at beans at different stages of sprouting. While the beans had sprouted under different conditions and had germinated on different days, none of the materials was labeled. There was no attempt at having students develop a hypothesis or scientific notebook. The teacher moved the students away from the materials and observations to the rug to have them pretend they were seeds. When two students were asked what they had learned, one student replied that seeds have feelings and another child added that plants do not need sunshine or soil to grow because the beans had sprouted in a closet. Many classrooms demonstrated similar off-task attempts at entry points that did not support higher-order thinking.

- The instructional shifts were not present in eight out of nine classrooms. In these classes, teachers made general remarks about the topic that they were covering and asked students if they could make connections to what was discussed. The teachers' remarks were followed by basic recall questions aligned to Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* level one. Students were not asked to go back to the text to re-read, make annotations, or look for evidence to support their thinking. This practice precludes higher-order thinking and participation.

- The general lack of participation across the school has led to the schoolwide adoption of the student ambassador program in order to promote student engagement. Ambassadors are students who are expected to teach a lesson to their peers. This was seen in a fourth grade class of struggling students where one student led his class in a math mini-lesson as the teacher sat on the side and took notes of the students who participated.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings

The school's curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, but the instructional shifts are not thoughtfully integrated in the planning. There were limited samples of curricula available across grades and subjects; therefore, there was no evidence of consistency in how rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized.

Impact

Curricular documents do not consistently promote college and career readiness or clearly show how all learners are to demonstrate their thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- A grade one math lesson plan focused on telling time included thinking prompts that would have students discuss the importance of being able to measure time as well as the usefulness of time. Students would practice reading times from the written format, identifying which number represented the hour, and exploring different ways of expressing the same time. No instructional shift was identified in the section dedicated for that purpose. Another standards-aligned math lesson plan noted that the learning activities were aligned to math instructional shifts one through four. Though there were a number of questions in the plan that would potentially engage students in a deep understanding of multiplying a fraction by a whole number, there was no clear connection to the expectations associated with focus, coherence and fluency. A science lesson plan listed all six of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts, but nowhere in the plan were students required to reference text-based evidence or establish an argument as expected in shifts four and five.

- The ELA plan was aligned to the grade five Common Core reading standard involving a narrator's point of view. One of the tasks would have students engage the instructional shift of text-based answers as they would search for details in the text to characterize the relationship between humans and animals. There were no other artifacts provided to support whether such clear alignment is a common practice.

- Unit plans list content standards, instructional shifts, essential questions, learning objectives, and learning targets with no clear sense of what will actually be taught or prioritized. Additionally, it is unclear how teachers on the same grade decide on the tasks students will engage in or how these tasks align to the Common Core Learning Standards. Finally, as there are no tasks described, there is nothing in unit plans to suggest how rigorous habits and higher-order skills are developed across the school.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessments	Rating:	Developing

Findings

The school has common assessments, and they are developing the use of these assessments to measure progress towards goals across the grades and subjects. Assessment practices in the school include the use of grading policies that are loosely aligned to the school's curricula and the inconsistent use of checks for understanding.

Impact

Common assessments do not drive adjustments to curricula or instruction, students receive limited feedback, hindering progress towards mastery, and teachers do not make effective adjustments to meet student needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of common assessments including running records, an online assessment platform, end of chapter math assessments, and pre- and post-writing assessments. These are collected, but they are not used to develop goals for the grades across the school, to measure student progress, or to drive curriculum adjustments. For example, the school recognized that students struggled with multi-step problems in math and transitions in writing, yet despite an entire year of instruction, these problems persist as challenges with no improvement in closing the gap or revising the curriculum associated with these challenges. School leaders were unable to articulate a general picture of student progress or growth despite having a full complement of detailed data by student, content, and grade. Furthermore, they were unable to share how data informs instruction at the school with the exception of saying that students who did not progress were offered intervention services. When asked about the practice of providing students with a snap shot of their performance on common assessments, students indicated they do not understand the information or how to use it to develop goals and track progress. When asked, one student stated that since there is a high rate of student failure, the portfolios were developed to support a request for promotion at a hold-over appeal meeting.

- While the school-purchased curriculum includes rubrics, the use of these to provide feedback is limited and often not aligned to the curriculum. A review of student portfolios revealed a multipage writing progression scoring rubric that spans grades. This progression rubric is stapled to student work, and while criteria are highlighted, there is no written feedback of any kind. In a meeting with students, one student asked, "What does this mean? I see that I am in sixth grade on some things and in first grade on others. What do I need to do?" Some student products are accompanied by a slip of paper that tells students that they did a great job on their writing, although the rubric shows below grade performance and the next step focuses on spelling, punctuation, and penmanship.

- Checks for understanding, such as thumbs up or down, were seen in only three of the nine classrooms. In one classroom, this gesture was used to indicate readiness. In a class led by a student, thumbs up or down was used to indicate agreement with the answer on the interactive white board. In a second grade class where the majority of students were unable to restate the task, the teacher told students to use this to compare and contrast "things." None of these checks led to effective adjustments by identifying the breakdown of comprehension or surfacing misconceptions in order to effectively meet the needs of all learners. Moreover, the majority of teachers do not consistently track checks for understanding in order to adjust tasks, lessons, or groupings.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Developing

Findings

School leaders and staff are developing expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness for students and families. However, the school has yet to establish a culture for learning that includes high expectations for all students.

Impact

Families are not yet clear as to how student progress aligns to the school expectations. Students do not always receive guidance advisement that helps students prepare for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- In a meeting with parents, pre-kindergarten parents were able to speak with clarity about their children's developmental growth, such as being able to hold a pencil or speak in sentences. However, they were unable to speak about academic expectations. When third grade parents were asked about standard setting work or the common core, they were only able to share that the school had an online grade book and that they had received a laminated card listing the math standards. Parents spoke about how supportive the school was yet they were unable to speak about high academic expectations or grading policies aligned to the school honor roll system.

- In a meeting with students, they were unable to speak about academic expectations for their grade or their next grade. When asked about career and college readiness, students stated that the school held an annual career day where students dressed up as professionals. When asked how they were going to achieve their professional goals, students stated that their teachers had told them that they needed to work hard, do their best, behave, and pay attention, reflecting a lack of clarity needed for them to understand how their work at the school is connected to college or career readiness.

- Fifth grade students shared that when they received their middle school applications, they did not know how to make selections or fill in the applications. All students stated the school did not provide them with any information on middle school expectations or give them any information that distinguished one choice from another. Students revealed that family members had made the selections for them and in one case, the student was still unaware of the school he would be attending in just a few months. When asked about the expectations for middle school or how they were preparing for middle school, students stated that their teachers had told them that they needed to "step up their game," "focus more," and "not get suspended." Students were unaware of the transitions that lay ahead.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Developing

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations which include book studies. Teacher teams analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

Teacher team work across the school is ineffectively connected to the school's goals, including the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Teacher team work does not typically result in improved teacher practice or progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- In a grade four teacher meeting, teachers participated in a book talk led by the assistant principal to lay the ground work for data practice. This was followed by a conversation about how teachers were addressing their class data. Although the teachers at this meeting were all in the same grade and held accountable to the same assessments, they never shared any trends or described either the tasks or data. Teachers shared general trends such as students struggling with comprehension or multi-step problems. Teachers stated that in addressing these challenges they would continue to use the schoolwide math strategy involving circling the numbers, underlining the question, boxing the key words, evaluating, and solving (CUBES). At no time did the teachers speak with specificity connected to the school goal of using data information to develop the kinds of scaffolds needed to insure student progress. There was no conversation about the Common Core standards or the instructional shifts.

- While teachers meet to look at school data, it has not led to improved teacher practice. School leaders have identified a need for teachers to differentiate for diverse learning and to increase student engagement. Yet, despite this schoolwide goal, there is little evidence that teachers have improved their practice in designing scaffolds to meet student needs. Furthermore, there is no clear trend of student improvement. A review of class tracking sheets shows that student progress is incremental with most students two years below target. For instance, a typical student might have a pre-assessment score of zero and a post assessment final score of 11 percent.

- In the fall, teachers examined the spring State exam results and developed a hypothesis that the lack of student progress in both math and reading was due to a reading comprehension problem and a lack of academic vocabulary. Yet there is no evidence in practice or planning that teachers have made adjustments to address this hypothesis or that they are tracking student performance related to these trends. In a team meeting, teachers stated that they had identified a new set of trends but failed to share the data they collected and analyzed to form this new hypothesis. Teachers stated that the inability to solve multi-step problems stemmed from students not knowing their times tables. One teacher then proposed that the grade beneath them be held accountable for having students memorize the times tables, but did not outline how he would address this problem in his class. A conversation ensued about incentivizing student performance by using the school token system or by having classes compete with each other. Consequently, looking at data has not served as a catalyst for instructional or curricular changes and has not led to teachers strengthening their instructional capacity.