Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek

Elementary 06M048

4360-78 Broadway
Manhattan
NY 10033

Principal: Tracy Walsh

Dates of Review:
February 27, 2018 - February 28, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Liza Zarifi

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. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek 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**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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	**Area of Focus**	**Proficient**

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**	**Proficient**

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**	**Well Developed**
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	**Additional Finding**	**Well Developed**
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	**Area of Celebration**	**Well Developed**
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**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

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

Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based collaborative grade level and content teams. Distributed leadership including grade level and content leads are embedded into school structures.

Impact

Teacher teams strengthen instructional capacity, promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (Common Core) and instructional shifts, resulting in schoolwide coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. There is effective teacher leadership and teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Horizontal and vertical team structures facilitate schoolwide instructional coherence and increased student achievement for all learners. Teachers collaborate to analyze student data and identify instructional next steps, sharing ideas and best practices. All teachers are a part of teacher teams, both grade level and content or professional learning community (PLC) teams. Vertical content teams include English as a New Language (ENL), dual language, and science. As a result of the focused and consistent work of teacher teams, student achievement has increased for all learners in the school. For example, in a group of third-grade English Language Learners (ELL) students, Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) reading levels increased between September and January for all fourteen students by at least one level, and by two levels for twelve of the students. In a second grade class, seventeen students in a class of twenty-five increased achievement on the mid-year math assessment as compared to the beginning-of-year assessment. In a dual language class of twenty-three students, English reading levels increased between October and January by at least one level for eleven students, and by two levels for ten of the students. Spanish reading levels increased by at least one level for five of the twelve students tested and measured.

- Embedded distributed leadership structures ensure teaches play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. Grade level and content leads meet with administration monthly to work on instructional focus areas and develop agendas for teacher team meetings. Teacher teams meet weekly for planning and inquiry work, looking at student work and data to inform instructional adjustments. Content leads for vertical teacher teams, including science, ENL, technology, and dual language, support teacher practice and curriculum development. The English Language Arts (ELA) and math instructional coaches serve on the instructional cabinet and support teacher practice by modeling lessons, observing and providing feedback, and co-planning.

- Curricular decisions are made through collaborative teams with the instructional cabinet and teachers. Teachers pilot lessons from curricular resources to inform changes to the curriculum map and the resources used for units of study. Last year, teachers piloted lessons from various resources for math that were then adapted into maps and units for the current school year. Science resources were piloted last year and adopted across classes and grades for the current school year. Teachers were able to visit schools using resources as well to see curriculum in action. Teachers reported that being able to try out resources helped to build investment and gave teachers an integral role in curricular decision making.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school curricula, including common grade wide rubrics for ELA and for math and unit assessments. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding including hand signals for participation, whiteboards to show problem-solving, and exit tickets, but there were some missed opportunities to include student self-assessment in a few classrooms.

Impact

Assessments and rubrics provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, however there were some missed opportunities to ensure that feedback is meaningful for all students across the vast majority of classrooms. There were some missed opportunities to make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and ensure students are aware of their next learning steps across the vast majority of classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students. Feedback gives the student a strength and an area for improvement. Many students were able to explain what feedback meant on a piece of work, including one student who shared a math extended response problem and explained that he lost points on the rubric because his explanation of the math strategy was incomplete, and that next time he had to explain how he solved the problem and why he chose that strategy. However, there were some missed opportunities to ensure feedback is meaningful for all students across the vast majority of classes. Some students reported being unclear on what rubric components meant, including a second-grade student who was unsure what some of the rubric components meant in terms of next steps. A third-grade student was unsure about how to use the recommended strategy given to her in her feedback.

- Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of checks for understanding. In a third-grade math lesson, students had access to individual clocks and a note-taking sheet so they could demonstrate their understanding of the lesson. In a kindergarten phonics lesson, students had access to their own letter boards so they could show their understanding. There were some missed opportunities to make effective adjustments across the vast majority of classrooms, including a fourth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math lesson where a small group of students working on the partner part, where the teacher circulates as students work in pairs, of the lesson were struggling to complete the tasks.

- While some classrooms have strong student self-assessment practices, this has yet to take place across the vast majority of classrooms. In a fifth-grade literacy lesson, students self-assessed their level of understanding by referring back to the essential question of the lesson. In a fifth-grade math lesson, students could self-assess their own work on a task by referring back to an exemplar. These practices were not observed in the vast majority of classrooms. There was a missed opportunity in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lesson to have students self-assess their own understanding of testable versus non-testable experiment questions which was taught in a previous lesson, rather than review the material again with direct instruction.

Quality Indicator:	**1.1 Curriculum**	**Rating:**	**Proficient**

Findings

Leaders and teachers ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core and content standards and integrate the instructional shifts, including balancing informational and literary texts as well as using evidence to support claims. Lesson plans and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Impact

As a result of planning practices, faculty are building coherence across grades through curriculum mapping, pacing calendars, and identifying common resources that promotes college and career readiness for all students. Teacher refinement of tasks and lessons enables a diversity of learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to access the curricula and engage in content.

Supporting Evidence

- Leaders and teachers make purposeful decisions with curricular planning by adapting resources, identifying supplements, creating curriculum maps and pacing calendars that build coherence across grades and classrooms. Coaches and teachers use *ReadyGen* as an anchor ELA curriculum, and then utilize supplemental resources to ensure alignment to the standards, a balance of informational and literary texts, and that the needs of the school's population are met. A third-grade ELA unit on identifying central ideas in informational and literary texts is mapped out to incorporate aligned standards, vocabulary words, tailored unit assessments and writing prompts with informational texts. Similarly, a fifth-grade unit on character and conflict includes an integration of reading and writing standards, vocabulary words identified, and assessments of learning. As a result of collaborative curriculum planning, coaches and teachers build coherence across grades and promote college and career readiness for all students.

- Problem-solving and fluency are instructional foci in math. A first-grade math unit includes aligned standards, identified curricular resources for daily lessons and objectives, vocabulary, small group activities, and differentiation supports, including graphic organizers and leveled articles. Students are supported in working on conceptual problem-solving in math through open-ended aligned assessments. Coaches and teachers build coherence across grades through planning and promote college and career readiness for all students.

- Lessons are planned using student work and data. A fifth-grade literacy lesson indicates re-teaching for a targeted group of students. It also indicates an extension task for another group of high-performing students. A technology lesson involving fractions and algorithms broke students into data-based groups using a recent assessment. A fifth-grade math lesson planned targeted instruction for five groups of students and planned for rotations so that groups had opportunities to meet with the teacher as well as to work independently to access the objective of the lesson. As a result of teacher planning practices, a diversity of learners have access to the content of lessons and are cognitively engaged.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies, such as student groupings and scaffolds to access content, consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Students are engaged in thoughtful student work products and discussions.

Impact

As a result of varied teaching strategies, all learners are engaged in challenging work and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use scaffolds, including vocabulary definitions, sentence frames, and small group instruction to support ELLs and students with disabilities across classrooms. In a fourth-grade math lesson, there was a small teacher-led group in one corner, while the other teacher circulated throughout the remaining small groups to provide support. In a second-grade class, a small group of students worked with an ENL teacher to use sentence frames and vocabulary supports to work on their writing pieces, while another teacher pulled a small group to support with labeling using vocabulary words from the lesson. As a result of teacher supports, all learners are engaged in challenging tasks.

- Differentiated small group instruction enables all learners to access the curricula and engage in challenging tasks. In a fifth-grade math lesson, students worked in four groups on different tasks. Tasks were designed in response to student data and students were grouped by commonalities. The teacher led a small group re-teach of a concept while other groups worked either independently or in pairs. In a kindergarten phonics lesson, there were two teacher-led student groups using manipulatives to support instruction at different levels to meet student needs.

- Student work and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. Students utilized whiteboards to demonstrate their thinking and engage in discussions in a third-grade math dual language class. In a STEM class, students developed questions based on observing and discussing a landfill experiment, and captured them to share in a whole group discussion. In a fifth-grade literacy lesson, student work products demonstrated high levels of student thinking by identifying conflict in a challenging text, using a graphic organizer to take notes. Students then participated in a whole-group discussion.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders communicate high expectations for instruction and professionalism to the entire staff through staff meetings, handbook, and guideline documents. Teacher teams and staff establish a positive culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Leaders provide training for high expectations and have a system of accountability including observations and grade level lead meetings. Teachers and staff offer ongoing feedback and guidance support that prepares students for the next level, including the transition to middle school and preparation for upper grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Leaders consistently communicate expectations to staff through rolling out the handbook and guidance documents at the beginning of the year, which are made available to all staff on the Google Drive and revisited throughout the year in staff meetings. The staff handbook includes expectations around procedures, mentorship programs for students, school culture routines, and also includes the instructional focus and goals for the year, which are presented to staff at the beginning of the school year. Expectations for teacher teams are also presented and included in the handbook. Grade leaders are provided training to facilitate team meetings. Guideline documents for the assessment program are presented to staff and include detailed information on the types of assessments used by the school and related expectations for teacher administration and use.

- Teachers and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students through structures including personal binders and portfolios and departmentalization in grades four and five. Each student has a binder and a portfolio that organizes their work and gives them opportunities to reflect on learning and goals. The binders are used on a daily basis and support students to take structured notes and to have examples to refer back to. Students reported that using their binders helps keep them organized and they can use their notes if they forget something or need a review. Departmentalization supports students for the next level through having different teachers for ELA and math, and through keeping organized systems to manage their work. Students reported feeling prepared for the next grade and knowing what is expected of them during lessons.

- Staff offer ongoing guidance and advisement supports to prepare students for the next level. A guidance counselor supports the fifth-grade transition to middle school. Fifth-grade students reported meeting the guidance counselor and having opportunities to learn about middle school options, and that they felt supported by the school. The guidance counselor planned school visits and facilitated workshops for families to complete applications and identify additional schools to include on their lists.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers with effective feedback and next steps from the strategic use of frequent cycles of observation and analysis of student work and data, and opportunities for inter-visitations. Observation feedback captures teacher strengths, challenges, and next steps aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Teacher growth and reflection is supported by leaders and teacher peers. Feedback articulates clear expectations for practice and development, promoting the professional growth of teachers and elevating schoolwide instructional practices and strategies to support school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are supported by their administrative team through regular cycles of observation and feedback. The administrative team strategically divides their support so that one assistant principal is focused on kindergarten through second grade, and the other is focused on grades three through five. The principal focuses on first year teachers, teachers up for tenure, and teachers in need of additional support beyond what has been provided by other team members. Additionally, there is an assistant principal who provides support to the building by working with the cluster teachers. Observations happen in cycles, and teachers have an in-person debrief within 48 hours of the observation. At the debrief, teachers bring student work and data in order to reflect on the impact of the lesson on student achievement. Teachers reported their professional growth was well-supported by the administrative team, and that structures in place felt fair and gave them opportunities to reflect on their teaching practices and impact on students.

- Teachers are supported by teacher peers, including instructional coaches and teacher leaders. Grade-level leaders conduct weekly meetings and support the team with analysis of student work, instructional planning, and facilitating agendas created in collaboration with the administrative team. Instructional coaches provide support, including professional development, observation and feedback, co-planning, modeling lessons, and pushing to provide targeted student support. Teachers reported that coaches have been integral to their professional growth, particularly in making progress to school goals on student engagement. Teachers reported receiving focused support from coaches on engagement through setting up small group instruction and ensuring tight pacing of lessons, as well as opportunities for intervisitations to see practices in action.

- Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports development through trusting relationships and structures to support reflection and collaborative support. Observations supported the school focus on Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component 3c, student engagement, including a teacher who moved from developing to effective in 3c from 2016 to December of 2017. Feedback for the teacher was grounded in observed evidence of the classroom and student work, and offered next steps including specific strategies to have students explain their thinking and utilize their notebooks to improve engagement. The math coach was also provided as a support to help plan high-quality math activities to foster engagement. Another teacher moved from developing to effective in Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component 3b, questioning and discussion, between November 2016 to December of 2017. The teacher was supported through intervisitations and a mentor to implement strategies such as differentiated lesson planning and questions to support independent practice.