

Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 138

K-12 all grades 75M138

**144-176 East 128 Street
Manhattan
NY 10035**

Principal: Gregg Soulette

**Dates of Review:
January 9, 2018 - January 10, 2018**

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson

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. 138 serves students in grade K through grade 12. 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		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Well Developed
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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	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	Well Developed
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	Proficient
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
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Findings

Teachers engage in structured professional collaborations such as the verbal behavior, PBIS, and the transition teams. Embedded practices allow teachers to assume key leadership roles, such as coaches, unit teachers, and the related services coordinator.

Impact

Teachers play an integral role in decisions that affect student learning across the school and support school goals for communication, safety, and student post-graduation plans. Professional collaborations result in coherence, strengthened teacher capacity, and increased student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- An applied behavior analysis and verbal behavior team was observed engaging in the inquiry process. The topic of the meeting was the application of principles, procedures, intervention implementation, and effective teaching practices. Teachers talked about behavior that occurs immediately before problematic behavior. They emphasized collection of data on antecedent behaviors to determine strategies to reduce this behavior. A handout of examples of antecedent behavior and possible interventions to utilize was shared with the group. The meeting transitioned to a discussion of strategies to support parents in understanding the teaching practices used in the classroom. Teachers devised recommendations such as inviting parents to attend a mini-lesson or a workshop, or creating a video for the parents to understand the teaching strategies used. Lastly, teachers discussed feedback received from the previous meeting on handling student behavior. Described strategies used to support student problematic behavior included the mand and count, one-to-one guidance, and transitioning to the class. Teachers also recounted that the interventions used in the class has reduced problematic behaviors. For instance, one student had eight incidences prior to the intervention, which was reduced to one incident as a result of the interventions. Additional meeting notes for this team revealed teachers discussing and chronicling problematic behaviors and implementing teacher-recommended intervention strategies. As a result of the interventions, problematic behaviors have been reduced. Teachers stated that meeting regularly has supported them in their practice with non-verbal students.
- The Positive Behavior Intervention Team (PBIS) team created lesson plans to support the school's goal of ensuring a safe and inclusive culture through communication advocating respect and safety (CARS). The lesson plan adopted for a middle school English Language Arts (ELA) class shows alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the Career Development and Occupational Studies Standards (CDOS). The lesson provided a blueprint on how to exemplify the behavior mentioned in CARS while in the classroom. A review of meeting notes from the transition team showed the trajectories for the 2018 graduates. The transition team is responsible for developing the personal and academic behaviors for successful post-high school outcomes. The transition team noted that there are eighteen graduates projected for 2018, with five students slated for college and thirteen students with post-secondary employment opportunities.
- Teachers are essential in the decision-making process that affects student achievement across the school. Currently, a classroom teacher is a verbal behavior coach for teachers and streamlines the practices associated with verbal behaviors across the sites. The related services provider is responsible for creating the progress-monitoring framework that is used to support teachers in writing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). The unit teachers serve as district representatives in supporting teachers in writing better IEP goals. Each unit teacher works with teachers at a school site to dispatch the crisis team when a situation occurs.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers use rubrics to provide actionable feedback to students and also to check for understanding, with limited opportunities for students' peer and self-assessment.

Impact

Though teachers provide actionable feedback to students, at times students were unable to make meaning of the feedback. Teachers check for understanding, but there are limited opportunities for on-the-spot adjustments to the lesson, thus impeding students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers monitored student understanding during the lessons, which led to some on-the-spot adjustments. Additionally, students had some opportunities to self-assess. In a 12:1:1 kindergarten and first grade class, students were engaged in a lesson that required them to add numbers with sums up to twenty. The teacher checked for understanding by asking the student to, "Give me the number sentence" as they rolled a pair of dice. A student rolled a three, one, four and five ($3+1+4+5 = 13$). The student stated that the number sentence was twelve but the teacher reminded the student what he rolled and allowed the student to re-answer the question correctly. In a verbal behavior classroom, the teacher used a checklist to monitor student understanding while recalling the sounds of words. During the activity, a student lost focus and the teacher allowed the student self-regulate his behavior by sitting properly and placing his hands flat on the desk. In a high school 12:1:1 class, students determined the sugar content in various drinks. The teacher had a checklist and checked for understanding by asking the group questions, such as, "How much do you have to divide by?" and "Do we need to add sugar?" Although the teacher checked for understanding through questioning, maintained conference notes, and provided the students with an exit ticket as a self-assessment, there were no on-the-spot adjustments to the lesson to ensure all students were aware of their next learning steps.
- In a high school 12:1:1 class, the lesson centered on identifying good workplace habits, with the teacher posing questions about good work habits. As a check for understanding, the teacher showed the students the attributes they identified as good or bad work habits and, using cue cards, students showed the "yes" or "no" card to confirm. The teacher adjusted the pace of the lesson by asking students to "look up" when they completed a portion of the activity. In a 6:1:1 high school class, students defined terms associated with writing narratives. As a check for understanding, the teacher posed the question, "What is a narrative, show me?" Students went up to the interactive whiteboard and selected the graphic of a narrative. The teacher adjusted the lesson if students answered incorrectly by providing multiple opportunities to answer. In both lessons above, opportunities to peer and self-assess were limited, thus impeding students' understanding of their next learning steps.
- Teachers assessed student-learning outcomes through teacher-created rubrics that provided actionable feedback in the form of comments and next steps aligned to the school's instructional focus of communication and independence. Samples of student work revealed a student being commended for originality, working independently, and using details. The next steps recommended that the student try to edit the work for the final draft. Similarly, a student was commended for staying on task, with a recommendation that the student use his communication device to answer the questions from a read aloud. Although this feedback was actionable, during all student group meetings, students were queried on the meaning of the feedback on their work. Students were unable to articulate what the feedback said and were unable to make meaning of the feedback.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The faculty ensures the strategic integration of ELA shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards in speaking and listening as well as mathematical shifts in modeling and using appropriate tools across the grades. Teachers use formal and informal assessment data to plan and adjust curricula for all students.

Impact

Curricula are planned for individual students using IEP goals and content standards/objectives to ensure all students have access and are cognitively engaged. Curricular documents show strategic integration of instructional shifts that promote coherence and college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Formative assessment and student work product data are used to differentiate lessons. Curricula include scaffolds and differentiated strategies to engage students, advance them through the content, and assess their understanding as evidenced by their work products. Lesson plans for 6:1:1 classes showed differentiated work stations that targeted specific skills such as pairing and manding, a STEM center, and handwriting support. Each workstation had a “look fors” for success criteria based on the Common Core. Non-verbal students were assessed using the Assessment of Basic Language and Listening Skills (ABLLS-R) tool. Lesson plans also showed differentiation in grouping individual students based on IEP goals. A mathematics lesson plan required students to sequence numbers from one to ten, with student groupings based on the degree of solvability of math problems. An ELA lesson plan requiring students to discern the difference between hot and cold temperatures showed specific student groupings, the gradation of demonstrated skills in each group, and the paraprofessional assigned to each group. As a result of using student data to differentiate lesson, students are engaged in cognitively challenging tasks.
- Instructional shifts are integrated by making purposeful connections between the shifts and the topics in each subject, both within a grade and as students advance through the grades, to promote college and career readiness. Lesson plans revealed an integration of the Common Core for speaking and listening, specifically the standard that addressed “follow agreed upon rules for discussion” and “initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.” This was evidenced in curricular documents across grades and content areas. In mathematics, the standards of focus across grades were “model with mathematics” and “use appropriate tools strategically.” These standards are in alignment with the school’s goal of promoting student-to-student discussions in class, thus exemplifying coherence and promoting college readiness. Curricular documents also incorporated Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standard 3a that calls for students to “demonstrate mastery of the foundational skills and competencies essential for success in the work place,” thus showing a focus on career readiness.
- Teachers analyze formal assessment data such as New York State Alternate Assessments, SANDI Fast data, and informal assessments to support differentiation of curriculum and progress monitoring toward IEP goals. Curricular documents across content areas showed strategic groupings of students based on IEP goals as well as the objectives of the lessons. A mathematics lesson showed strategic grouping of students based on their ability to count money and use money in exchange for goods and services. Lesson plans for an adaptive training class delineate project activities, such as one for designing adaptive lunch trays, which designated student groups responsible for labeling components of the tray to make it easier for assembly, indicated students responsible for showing members where to assemble the pieces of the tray, and noted a group for quality control of the tray, thus ensuring that students are cognitively engaged.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers used scaffolds, pairing and mand (non-verbal communication), and student discussions to provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Multiple entry points into the curricula and high levels of student discussions provide opportunities to make student thinking visible.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use manipulatives and other teaching practices to create a variety of ways for students to access the content or tasks. In a 12:1:1 class, students were required to use counting to add numbers with sums up to twenty. At different tables, students were engaged in various activities such as rolling dice and using the numbers on each die for students to create an addition number sentence. At another desk, students used bear figurines to create an addition number sentence while working with an adult for support. Students were asked questions, such as, “Tell me how many blue, red, and green bears you have all together?” The student counted and stated, “twenty.” At another desk, students were presented with a math sentence such as, “ $4 + 2$ ” and retrieved figurines to show the total. In 6:1:1 verbal behavior class, students moved through learning stations, performing various activities such as reviewing the text *Rubble to the Rescue* with a classmate and answering the question, “Where is the train stuck?” The student replied and showed the teacher the image, “A tunnel.” At another station, a student matched images such as a cup with the word “cup.” At yet another station, the adult showed the student a flash card of the letter “A” and asked the student, “What letter?” The student stated, “A.” All students had access to the content and/or task and demonstrated engagement.
- Teachers use strategies such as pairing and “mand,” an approach utilized for students who are non-verbal to make requests and reduce problematic behaviors. In a 6:1:1 verbal behavior class, students practiced functional and academic skills at individual workstations to increase independence and appropriate social behavior. At one station, a student used pairing and mand by pointing at a picture of blocks and placing blocks in his workstation. At other stations, a student matched a picture of a leaf to the sight word “leaf,” and a student sorted shapes, matching the similar cut-outs of the shape and placing them in a box. In a 12:1:4 class, students discerned the difference between temperatures, using a tactile approach with bowls of warm and cold water and communicating about the temperature verbally, through visual cards, or through adaptive devices. The teacher asked, “When you were in your groups, what did you explore?” A student replied, “Hot and cold water.” Lastly, the teacher displayed images on the interactive whiteboard such as a snowman and a student went to place the snowman under cold. The student then passed a wand for another student to sort items on the whiteboard.
- In a 6:1:1 class, students simulated a trip to the grocery store to buy food for a dinner for four. One group had to make informed decisions on the best food options while maintaining a budget, while another group identified items needed and simulated locating them in aisles of the store. Students were given a budget and were observed discussing with one another the items to purchase and whether they were within the budget. In a 12:1:1 class, students were engaged in a hands-on activity that determined the amount of sugar in various drinks by reading a food label and measuring the equivalent teaspoons of sugar. Students discerned that the more sugar a drink contained, the healthier the beverage. Students had different beverages at each station and in groups discussed the amount of sugar in each drink. In one group, a student said that you should drink water or seltzer water, for they contain zero sugar.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations for instruction are consistently communicated through written structures such as the *P138M Curriculum Framework for Alternate Assessment Classes* and the *Staff Weekly*. Staff communicate high expectations for learning to students through an Adaptive Design course and through regular progress monitoring of IEPs.

Impact

School leaders hold teachers accountable for expectations through the observation process, and teachers hold themselves accountable via the intervisitation process. Teacher teams provide feedback to students, keeping them aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders convey high expectations to the staff through the *P138M Curriculum Framework for Alternate Assessment Classes*, which defines instructional expectations. To streamline lesson and unit planning across the different sites, this document discloses essential elements for ELA and mathematics and science grade level expectations aligned to the New York State Learning Standards as well as the Career Development and Occupational Studies Standards (CDOS). In addition, the document provides a suggested template for lesson and unit planning, key standards of focus across content areas, and the progression of grade specific anchor standards for reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The *Staff Weekly* conveys the school leaders' expectations for instruction, assessment, and family engagement, aligning to the school's instructional focus of nurturing independence for engaged learning. Expectations for student engagement and questioning/discussion "looks fors" in a lesson include students' formulating their own questions, using precise language, and justifying their reasoning in class discussions. Family engagement communication to staff ensures that communication notebooks, homework folders, and communication devices are sent home daily with the students. Teachers are held accountable for these expectations through the observation process.
- Professional development is provided for all staff members aligned to the school's focus of a unified vision of progress monitoring of Individual Educational Plans (IEP), setting high expectations for all students. In a professional development workshop entitled "Progress Monitoring Making Data-based Decisions," teachers were apprised of the rudiments of progress monitoring of IEPs through writing measurable goals and learning about systems for collecting data and monitoring student progress. Professional development also provides opportunities for updates and mandates on behavioral intervention plans, workshop offerings on dynamic learning maps and essential elements aligned to Common Core, and support on Sandi/FAST assessments. Teachers engage in conducting curriculum inventories and in intervisitation, chronicling their visits using a template. A review of intervisitation notes revealed teachers observing differentiation strategies and committing to add the strategies to their own instructional repertoires, thus ensuring teachers are mutually accountable for expectations.
- Staff members have established a culture for learning that provides all students with feedback through courses such as Adaptive Design. Students work collaboratively on projects aimed at simplifying everyday tasks, designing items such as an adaptive lunch trays for students to safely carry their lunch to their tables and a mobility chair to stabilize students suffering from epileptic seizures. A mailroom organized and managed by students has streamlined the mail delivery system. Through regular IEP meetings with all stakeholders, families are aware of their children's attainment of goals. Data show students from all sites moving to the least restrictive environments. 2018 graduates are slated to receive local, Regents, and Advanced Regents diplomas, attaining college acceptances to public and private universities and being paired with agencies to engage in work programs.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Feedback to teachers captures strengths, challenges, and next steps while aligned to the school's instructional areas of focus. Teacher evaluation data is used to inform intervisitation support for teachers.

Impact

Feedback to teachers from observation reports articulates clear expectations and promotes teacher growth and development.

Supporting Evidence

- Observation reports chronicle teachers strengths, challenges, and next steps. Feedback to teachers is aligned the school's instructional areas of focus, such as questioning, discussion, engagement, and assessment. A review of observation reports revealed one which commended a teacher for lesson planning, classroom environment, and engaging students. The challenge for the pedagogue was in the area of using questioning and discussion techniques. Next steps recommended for the teacher to move the highly effective component cited the need to have students initiate their own higher-order thinking questions to extend discussion. Subsequent observations showed the teacher improving in questioning and discussion. Similarly, another observation report cited the teacher's strengths, such as lesson planning, classroom environment, engaging students, and questioning/discussion techniques. Assessment posed a challenge to the teacher. Next steps cited having students assist in establishing assessment criteria and providing opportunities for students to monitor their own learning. Feedback in both instances was aligned to the school's instructional focus of nurturing independence and communication for engaged learning. The feedback provided to the teachers supported teacher practice and showed improvement in the components of focus.
- Feedback on observation reports is aligned to the school's instructional focus and supports the school's mantra for a safe, inclusive environment, as represented by CARS (communicate, advocate, respect, safety). Feedback to a teacher cited the need to include assessment in instruction by taking a pulse of the class through checking for understanding to monitor student learning. Another teacher's feedback recommended that the teacher align lessons to CARS to foster more student-to-student interaction. As a result of the feedback, teachers have either improved in the component of assessment or are vacillating between effective and developing for this component.
- The instructional cabinet meets monthly to analyze teacher evaluation data for trends and patterns. Analysis of the data revealed the need to focus on questioning, discussion, engagement, and assessment. Teachers that demonstrate strong pedagogical practices in one or more of these areas are identified and support other staff members through intervisitation. Teachers also visit other school sites to observe best practices, based on needs determined through analysis of observation data. Teachers new to the profession are paired with a mentor to support their pedagogical practice.