

# Quality Review Report

## 2017-2018

**Community Math & Science Prep**

**Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 06M328**

**401 West 164 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10032**

**Principal: Olga Quiles**

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

**Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen**

# 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

Community Math & Science Prep 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>.

## 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	Area of Focus	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	Additional Finding	Developing
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

<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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

### 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	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.3 Leveraging Resources</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The school leader uses resources that are aligned to schoolwide goals and instructional foci. Teacher time is purposefully structured to improve pedagogy.

### Impact

The alignment of resources to the work of teacher teams has resulted in improvements in instruction and increased entry points into lessons to engage students in higher level academic tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- The use of resources and other organizational decisions are aligned to support the school's prioritized goals and instructional foci. In its School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), the School Leadership Team (SLT) prioritizes access for all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), in engaging and challenging curricula by teacher team analysis of student work products and achievement data to make revisions to curriculum and instruction. Similarly, the SLT identified implementation data driven instruction in every class as a prioritized focus. As such, school leaders purchased the iReady program to provide benchmark data for teachers to use to make instructional and curricular decisions and aligned the budget to support ongoing professional development for faculty to meet the prioritized instructional goals. School leaders also purchased smartboards for each classroom to add additional entry points into lessons for ELLs and students with disabilities. Across classrooms, some students were observed in ability based groups based on data teachers had analyzed. Similarly, a review of lesson plans indicates that some teachers include multiple entry points into lessons and differentiated tasks in accordance with the school goal of implementing challenging tasks for all learners.
- To ensure accessibility and in support of its students with disabilities, ELLs and lower performing students, school leadership increased the number of Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes available and added opportunities for professional development for teachers in best practices for students with disabilities and ELLs. Likewise, teachers reported receiving training in support of the schoolwide goals such as the implementation of iReady, which is used by teacher teams to plan lessons and as a supplement to the EngageNY curricula in math and English Language Arts (ELA). Teachers report having increased their capacity to support students' diverse needs as a result of targeted professional learning and ongoing coaching around the use of iReady and use of the workshop model of instruction to increase writing across content areas.
- Teachers report that the opportunity to work collaboratively through purposeful scheduling of common preparatory time has allowed them to meet the school leaders' pedagogical expectations and has improved teacher practice. Teachers report using scheduled meeting time to analyze data and student work products to plan interventions for struggling students and supports for students with disabilities and ELLs. The school's instructional leaders and faculty noted that the alignment of professional learning opportunities and teacher collaboration meetings to the instructional foci have increased instructional capacity, as evidenced by the school's average Advance rating of 3.01 in Domain 3c, *Engaging Students in Learning*, of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, as compared to the Citywide average rating of 2.90.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty are in the process of integrating the instructional shifts across grades and content areas and planning rigorous academic tasks for all students.

### Impact

Curricula and academic tasks are not yet aligned to the Common Core learning standards across grades and disciplines. Teachers inconsistently plan rigorous tasks that provide entry points for a variety of learners.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty are in the process of aligning curricula to the Common Core learning standards and integrating the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. Teachers are implementing Expeditionary Learning's Common Core modules from *EngageNY* for English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Teachers use collaborative meeting time to make adjustments to curricula and academic tasks and have begun embedding the instructional shifts in social studies and science in curriculum maps, units of study and lesson plans. To implement the instructional shifts, school leaders require that unit and lesson plans include instructional outcomes that require students to think, problem solve, and engage in purposeful discussions and reflections on concepts and skills they are learning. The instructional shifts were evident in some of the unit and lesson plans reviewed. Across grades and content areas, some teachers plan tasks that require students to cite text-based evidence, make claims, and use accountable talk when participating in class discussions.
- Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the school's instructional leaders opted to supplement their ELA curricula by utilizing the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP) for writing across grades and content areas. Teachers use *EngageNY* as its core ELA curricula; however, the leadership team decided to supplement their writing curricula to increase opportunities for students to engage in writing tasks across disciplines using the workshop model for instruction. Similarly, the school leaders adopted iReady to provide assessments that can be analyzed to make informed curricular revisions and provide supplemental targeted intervention in ELA and math. Teachers began administering the program's assessments in the fall 2017 which they analyzed, leading to the adjustment of the curriculum and modification of their scope and sequence.
- To meet the needs of students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), the school leader has formed a Student Intervention Team (SIT) committee to ensure that academic tasks are planned and refined to provide multiple entry points into lessons for all students, including students with special needs, struggling students and ELLs. However, a review of curriculum documents and lesson plans reveals that curricula and academic tasks that emphasize rigorous habits and differentiated tasks and scaffolds for ELLs, students with disabilities, and lower and higher performing students are inconsistently planned and refined across grades and content areas.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Teaching practices are becoming aligned to the school's belief about how students learn best. Pedagogy is inconsistently differentiated and does not always utilize strategies such as inquiry, cooperative learning structures, questioning, and discussions to promote high levels of thinking and engagement for a diversity of learners.

### Impact

Across grades and contents areas, teaching practices do not consistently leverage the schoolwide identified best practices, resulting in missed opportunities to provide all students with challenging learning tasks that require them to use critical thinking, analysis, and problem solving. Tasks inconsistently hold students accountable for inquiry, collaboration, and ownership of their collaborative work.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels and content areas, teaching practices are inconsistently aligned with the school's articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best in the school's School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). Although the school's leadership team prioritizes differentiated instruction to ensure that the pedagogy addresses students' individualized learning styles, needs and modalities, this practice was not observed in most classrooms visited. In some classrooms, students were provided with manipulatives, graphic organizers and visuals. However, this was not prevalent across most of the classes. In most of the classes, instruction was not differentiated to allow multiple entry points into the lesson, nor were there scaffolds or specialized instructional strategies or language objectives identified in teacher lesson plans for students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELLs).
- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, teachers differentiated their instruction by providing directions and resources in English and Spanish and placing students in groups based on their iReady assessment data. Further, students were provided leveled articles to read along with guided questions and sentence stems. Prior to having students work in partners on their academic task, the teachers explicitly modeled how good readers use strategies to create high level questions about the texts they read. However, these practices were not prevalent across most classrooms visited. In a seventh-grade math class, students' expected outcomes were identical and all students were provided with the same set of materials. Similarly, in an eighth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, all students were provided with the same text and *Reading Workshop Checklist* and the learning objective was the same for all students. Although there were ELLs in the class, there were no specific language supports neither provided nor identified in the lesson plan.
- The level of structured group work that holds students individually accountable and the work of their team for participating at high levels varied across classrooms. In a math lesson in which students were required to work in groups of three or four to use distributive property to solve equations, not all of the pairs of students engaged in discourse with one another and were not redirected by the teacher. One student stated that she does most of the work when directed to work collaboratively by the teacher and her peers agreed. In another group, a student was observed doing the work for his peers rather than working cooperatively to solve the equations. During a social studies lesson in which students had to think-pair-share, some students did not engage in conversation with their partner, while other students were overheard discussing topics unrelated to the task.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Feedback to students does not consistently align to rubrics or provide specific, actionable next steps for improvement. Teacher monitoring of student understanding during lessons is not always visibly active and continuous, nor does it consistently result in an effective change in instruction.

### Impact

Limited actionable feedback results in limited opportunities for students to improve the quality of their work products. The uneven ongoing checks for understandings result in partial adjustments to instruction.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels and subject areas, teachers use rubrics to assess student work. However, the level of actionable feedback for improvement provided to students varied from class to class. A review of student work samples indicated that students tended to receive feedback mainly on their writing tasks in their English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies coursework. Moreover, feedback and scoring was not consistent across grades or classes and did not always align to the rubric criterion itself. Consequently, students that had received scores of level two or level three on the corresponding ELA writing rubrics could not articulate the next steps required to improve to a level three or level four.
- Across grades and subject areas, next steps for students to improve their work was not consistent, as evidenced by the feedback provided by teachers. Some students received specific, actionable feedback statements such as, “Next time, try using transition words like, ‘In addition,’ to bring your thoughts together,” while other students received a checkmark on their writing task with no comments or reference to a rubric score or grade. Some students had received rubrics attached to their work with the scores for each criterion area circled, highlighted or checked off with no rationale for the scores and were therefore unable to explain next steps for improvement using the language of the rubric that had been circled or highlighted. Most students stated that the use of writing checklists have been helpful in framing their thoughts prior to starting the writing process; however, they were primarily used in ELA and social studies.
- Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently used ongoing checks for understanding to adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students. In an eighth grade math class, students were required to take out their homework from the previous day to review as a whole group. The teacher called on volunteer students to explain how they solved their homework problem while she acted as a scribe. However, some students did not take out their homework to review with the class. When students were asked to “give a thumbs up if you got it right,” several students did not provide an answer but the teacher moved on to the next activity anyway. Similarly, in a Spanish class, the teacher asked students working in groups to give a thumbs up if they understood the group task and their next steps. However, the teacher quickly glanced around the room and did not address students that had indicated that they were confused by not providing a thumbs up. Later in the lesson when students were asked to share their answers with the class, only students that volunteered were called upon and neither group at the back of the classroom were asked to share. Thus, it was not possible to discern whether all students could demonstrate an understanding of the teaching point of the lesson.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff have established systems to communicate high expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career and provide assistance to families to monitor students' progress toward those expectations.

### Impact

School leaders and faculty have established a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to students and their families that is leading to students being prepared for college and career.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff members have implemented structures for effectively communicating high expectations to students and their families to ensure that all students are challenged to meet or exceed those expectations. The principal hosts monthly "Coffee and Conversations" sessions with parents to engage them in discussions about curricula, pedagogy and the adoption of effective personal behaviors that lead to college and career readiness. Students and parents reported that they are aware of the school's expectations to prepare all students for high school and college and that they receive regular updates on their progress through traditional report cards. However, the majority of students and parents stated that they regularly use the school's on-line grade reporting system to monitor academic progress. Parents expressed appreciation that they can access information about upcoming events and workshops via a variety of means including written notices, voice mails, emails, online platforms, and School Messenger.
- A review of correspondence from the school indicates that parents are regularly invited to learn how to support their students' writing and math progress during workshops hosted by faculty members. Parents reported that they were provided with information about the Common Core math curriculum and how to assist their children at home along with materials to support them. There is an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at the school that meets regularly with school leadership; however, although parents noted that family involvement is improving, they also reported frustration that greater parent participation in the PTA is required to successfully partner with the school. They noted that fun or entertaining family events are better attended than workshops focused on school improvement initiatives or student learning.
- The school's leadership team and faculty are committed to communicating high expectations to students and providing the ongoing support that is required to meet those expectations and promote ownership of student academic work. All students reported that they are aware of the expectations the school leaders and teachers have set and feel that they are being adequately prepared for the next level. An English as a New Language (ENL) student reported that the school has been very supportive of her acquiring the English language and that she was very pleased with her progress. Students and parents reported that if a student is struggling in a class, they are immediately offered additional academic support. They further reported frequently using the school's online grade reporting system to monitor their progress on a weekly basis.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school prioritized instructional foci.

### Impact

Increased professional collaboration among teachers is resulting in the integration of the instructional shifts across grades and subjects and the promotion of the schoolwide goal of improving teacher capacity and student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have created dedicated structured time during the school day for teachers to meet in grade level or departmentalized teams and to meet once a week with the school's instructional cabinet. A review of agendas and meeting minutes indicate that teachers use this time to analyze trends in student achievement data and student work products to inform changes to curricula and pedagogy. Teacher teams identify a problem of practice and work collaboratively to address issues on concerning curriculum, instruction or assessment that may be hindering improvements in student achievement. Similarly, common planning time is often used as an opportunity to provide professional learning sessions to teachers in support of their work to implement the instructional shifts, the newly adopted iReady program and the Teacher's College Writing Program.
- Teachers and school leaders reported that collaborative teacher teams have formal meetings weekly and also meet informally during lunch or common planning time. Teachers further reported that weekly collaborative meetings are often used to co-plan lessons, revise curriculum modules and create materials and instructional resources that support students' content knowledge and skill development such as scaffolds that include graphic organizers, writing prompts, sentence frames and visual aids. To assist teacher teams, school leaders have provided professional development through consultation with outside educational experts and on-site coaching in effectively analyzing student iReady assessment data and implementation of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program's workshop model approach to teaching writing. Meeting minutes, agendas, and all materials and documents created by teacher teams are posted on the school's shared drive to provide access to all faculty members so that they can be utilized across grade levels and disciplines.
- Teacher teams meet consistently to analyze assessment data to identify patterns and trends in student achievement schoolwide. School leaders and teachers reported that the decision was made to adopt the Teacher's College Writing Program after an analysis of English Language Arts (ELA) assessment results and student writing samples revealed that students were struggling with the conventions of writing and a limited number were able to develop high quality argumentative essays. Similarly, a decision was made to adopt iReady to supplement the ELA and math curricula to better adapt lessons to meet a wider variety of students' learning needs and provide targeted intervention for students that are at-risk of not meeting benchmark on the ELA and math assessments.