Quality Review Report

2017-2018

I.S. 219 New Venture School

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 09X219

3630 Third Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Dominic Cipollone

Dates of Review:
May 31, 2018 - June 1, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwiec

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

I.S. 219 New Venture School 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		
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	**Area of Celebration**	**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**	**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	**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	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
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**

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

Findings

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through a staff handbook, ongoing feedback, and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher teams establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations for all students.

Impact

Ongoing professional development (PD) provided by school leadership and coaches supports teachers' understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Teacher teams ensure that instruction across classrooms supports small group learning and a new math program intended to increase students' independence, helping them become better prepared for their next levels.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and walkthroughs in order to provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations, as evidenced by *Advance* documents reviewed. The faculty handbook clearly articulates the "Ten Unified New Venture Community School Expectations" that range from "Using data to drive instruction" to "Holding ourselves accountable for student and whole-school success." In addition, the faculty handbook covers topics ranging from day-to-day professional responsibilities, the integral nature of student engagement, differentiated instruction, accountable talk, using leveled questions, and academic language to establishing a culture of learning embodied by high expectations.

- Teachers received the PD plan at the beginning of the year. Embedded within this plan are the connections between each topic and the different domains of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The beginning of the year PD set the stage for shared expectations and accountability measures to ensure that they were schoolwide and understood. Before students arrived, the school staff studied the results of several reports about the school, including the 2017 NYS English Language Arts (ELA) and math results, Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) report, attendance data, and the Student Needs Assessment survey. Each week's Monday PD session is aligned with a domain of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, such as a session in October that presented teacher rounds to the staff as a method for professional growth and development.

- School leaders have established a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations that help prepare students for high school and beyond. Beginning in the fall, the grade-eight guidance counselor works closely with students and families to support the transition to high school, including effective strategies for using the high school application processes to find the school that would best serve each students' needs. With a renewed focus on increasing rigor as a way to prepare students for their next steps, school leaders, coaches, and teachers work together to give students feedback to increase their quality of work, provide guidance in setting goals, and foster productive independence.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use and create assessments, rubrics, and checklists that are aligned to the school's curricula while consistently reflecting the use on ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment. However, these assessments are not used to create a clear portrait of student mastery.

Impact

Teachers use results from checks for understanding to make adjustments to instruction to meet all students' learning needs and provide students with actionable feedback. However, feedback is not meaningful for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics are aligned to the curricula and, along with checklists that have been modified for student use, are used across grades and content areas. Teachers post evidence of students' use of these tools on classroom walls and on hallway bulletin boards, often reported by the students themselves. In many class displays, student work has a rubric affixed to it, along with next steps written by the teacher on a post-it. In a grade-six social studies class, the teacher wrote to a student regarding a written study of Greek society and economy. The glow was, "You display a proficient understanding of the task. You were a leader in your group and explained your answers in great detail," while the grow stated, "Tie in ideas from videos or background knowledge." Another example of feedback was from a grade seven English class assignment to write a letter to Jacqueline Woodson, author of *Miracle's Boys*, which the class had read and analyzed. The teacher wrote, "I like the way you included personal experiences and how you related some parts to your life. Good job. Remember to proofread carefully. I'm glad you have respect for people being responsible. It's a strong character trait." Some students reported that teacher feedback guides their next projects and assignments and, according to one student, "Feedback helps us figure out what to improve on." However, other students stated that they do not necessarily use feedback for future products. Moreover, they note that often teachers do not follow-up with students to make sure suggested changes are made.

- While actionable feedback is present in more complex and project-based work, some types of work have very little feedback, such as in journals and some math worksheets. Expectations for feedback as stated by teachers are that feedback language is based on the rubrics, that there is a connection from task to rubric, and that the work shows evidence of understanding. Main components of feedback are the glows and grows and next steps. In addition, ELA and Teachers College writing (TCW) rubrics are kid-friendly. Math teachers modify the rubric by being specific and including checklists. Next steps provide opportunities to fix a problem or clarify a statement. As one math teacher stated, "There should be meaty word problems used to assess progress. We are setting expectations. If a student knows the process, then show me two different ways to solve the problem." Students reported that feedback occurs at least once a week in all subject areas.

- The most frequent type of check for understanding in classes is teachers circulating among student table groups and checking-in. In addition, exit slips are used to help guide the next day's lessons. Students' self-assessment practices include both peer- and self-assessment. Students assess other students' presentations and give them feedback, such as in a social studies grade-seven class example. While students presented issues dealing with domestic violence, the audience of students used rubrics to assess the presentation and give the presenters written feedback, and students rated their peers after questions were asked and answered.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades, subjects, and for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

A diversity of learners has access to the curricula, and tasks are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- Most reviewed lesson plans articulated rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills across grades and content areas, along with provisions made for ELLs and students with disabilities. In an integrated co-teaching (ICT) social studies lesson plan, all students are to work with primary sources, such as political cartoons, photographs from contemporaneous newspapers, video clips, and published articles. In small groups, students are to analyze the materials and use graphic organizers to develop their response to the question, "Should America have entered World War II?" Each student would then write a letter using at least three pieces of evidence responding to the question. Scaffolding is used at the beginning of the tasks, which includes two levels of support. Students in one group are tasked with making a claim based on prior knowledge as their first step while the other group of students would make a claim using at least one piece of supporting evidence from the sources.

- The school's newly adopted approach to planning math instruction supports student inquiry. Lesson plans describe the steps of this new math program that is based on a reverse order of the workshop model of instruction. Procedures follow a "You DO" (independent practice), "Together DO" (partner/group practice), "WE DO" (guided practice), and "I DO" (teacher-directed) format. Students first work through problems independently, next with a partner, and then in a small group. After observing and taking notes about student behavior and strategies, the teacher made a decision about what specifically the students needed to understand and presented the teaching point at the end of the lesson. In a grade-six math lesson plan, teachers group students heterogeneously while students with special needs are placed strategically in groups where more capable students can support and discuss the lesson with them during group-time practice.

- Teachers use data and student work to make adjustments to the curricula and academic tasks to ensure they include rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Grade-six ELA curriculum maps were refined to add a unit of study entitled "World Wonders" that address the needed rigor for students performing at the bottom third. The text adaptation, including embedded vocabulary supports, was made so students could access information by reading more challenging texts with the goal of conducting their own research on a "wonder" that they would like to save. In addition, in both grades six and seven, ELA units of study on Great Books were added as enrichment extensions for some students after the NYS ELA tests. Students targeted for added differentiation and revision were grouped as a result of analysis of *iReady* results, Code X reading results, and the latest writing samples.

- After analyzing the *iReady* math data, grade-six math teachers realigned the units of study and replaced the summative assessment that was a performance task with an Engage NY and Ready toolbox aligned series of lessons. This was done to support students' mathematical conceptual understanding and increase math practice time.

Quality Indicator:	**1.2 Pedagogy**	**Rating:**	**Proficient**

Findings

Teachers group students for instruction, increasing opportunities for rigorous student-to-student discussion and high levels of thinking and providing scaffolded multiple entry points for a variety of learners.

Impact

All students are engaged in challenging tasks and participate in discussions of their thinking and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies, such as a new workshop-based math program, and scaffolds consistently provide multiple entry points so that all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, engage in appropriately challenging work. In one geometry lesson, the teacher assigned students to explore the Pythagorean Theorem using a variety of support materials including rulers, calculators, chart paper, and markers. There was also a video that illustrated how to find the hypotenuse and the missing side. Partnerships were strategically assigned to ensure that, within a broader range of abilities, students of different skill levels worked together. Later in the lesson, the teacher gave students different levels of math problems to solve, depending on their skill levels, in three differentiated categories of questions, problems, and supports. The teacher stayed with struggling students, explaining betters ways to understand the steps needed to solve the problems. Students reported that they appreciated having both the support of their peers and the ability to help others in completing their work.

- Classes demonstrated real-world connections as a major focus area in instruction. In a class primarily programmed with students with disabilities, the essential questions guiding class inquiry were, "What simple steps can people take to make a difference for those in need?" and "Is it your responsibility to care for others in the community?" The class read, in some cases with assistance, two stories that formed the foundation for this unit of study, *The Land of Poverty*, and *One Click at a Time*. Some of the lesson focused on whole-group interaction while the rest featured small group or individual work. Materials had been differentiated for individual students, with everyone practicing close reading and writing responses. The final task was preparation in small groups for a debate to be held at a later date. While some students made claims for individuals helping others in need, the other students argued that the government should help others.

- Lessons are implemented to increase opportunities for students to engage in student-to-student discussion. In a bilingual grade-seven social studies class, students actively rehearsed their PowerPoint presentations in front of their team members. One group's presentation was focused on domestic violence and involved interviews, video clips, and written definitions that were in Spanish and translated into English. The team included turn and talks for the audience members to share and report back to the team's facilitator. At the end of the presentation, there were additional questions shared and discussed, including contact information for agencies that can help families or individuals who need this support. In a science class studying the reasons for temperature differences, students discussed question prompts with their table groups that were strategically assigned. Questions began with "What is energy for you?" and "What is the distinction between atoms and molecules?" The class then moved to larger group discussions, leading to kinetic theory of energy through a discussion of atoms and molecules that exhibit movement.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Effective written feedback captures teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps, including for those new to the profession, using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School Leadership is proactive in supporting teachers.

Impact

Thoughtful, rubric-aligned observations and feedback systems support professional growth and provide clear expectations to elevate pedagogy and foster teacher reflection on their practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers, including those new to the school or teaching, are supported by leaders through frequent cycles of observation and review of student progress to elevate their instructional practice. School leaders conduct six cycles of formal and informal observations. Newer teachers receive extra support through the ELA and math coaches and district-based support providers. Teachers receive feedback through several methods including classroom-observation reports and verbal feedback from peers through teacher rounds and intervisitation sessions. *Advance* observation reports revealed that several teachers received direct feedback and next steps about improving their use of assessment in instruction. Feedback included, "In order to demonstrate improvement in [assessment], provide exemplars that exemplify the criteria and the performance standards required of the students." The *Advance* report reviewed showed an improvement in using assessment in instruction from last year's end-of-year report.

- The Instructional Leadership Team provides feedback to the staff based on evidence observed during walkthroughs in the form of memos. A review of these revealed that some of the memos include glows and grows, with next steps. For instance, one glow stated that "students were working in groups/partners," while the grow stated, "There needs to be an increase of student-student interaction." However, the next steps section does not include any specific suggestions about how to support more student interaction. The feedback from math walkthroughs is directed to specific teachers that were visited that day. The notes indicate a series of observed steps taken by teachers and recorded by the observer. Next steps follow, with new teachers receiving more explicit guidance. An example of how the math concept is developed in various classes is noted by the differences observed by the math coach. In a class where a more traditional math approach was observed, the notes read, "Objective of the lesson is 'Use the knowledge of whole numbers to multiply…' using the traditional algorithm." In other classrooms, using more recent math teaching protocols, the observer wrote, "The struggle during the 3 Reads effectively dictates which direction to take during the WE DO and I DO…" The coaching logs evidenced teacher reflection on mathematical reasoning portion of the lesson.

- School leadership shared examples of feedback used in supporting teachers. A new-to-the-school teacher became a strong proponent of the newly-adopted math program. This teacher received a great deal of support in classroom management during the beginning of the school year through a community-based support agency. In order to further develop this teacher's interest in the new program, the math coach provided much support and feedback to the new teacher. As a result, the teacher's practices in both classroom management and math instruction grew and, in turn, became a valuable resource to the other math teachers.

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

Findings

The majority of teachers meet in teams regularly as professional collaborators, where they consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

Teacher teams focus on achieving school goals, improving their instructional capacity, and facilitating progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures that support teacher inquiry teamwork in the school are teacher rounds and math inquiry-based exploration of *5 Practices*, a new math program. School leadership cited teacher rounds, in its first year of implementation, as having an impact on teachers' instructional capacity. The process involves teachers agreeing to become hosts and having their lessons videotaped and shared with the other volunteer teachers. Peers then then discuss a problem of practice that the host teacher identifies. Taking turns as hosts, teachers view each other's instruction and provide feedback on what they noticed and the questions that arose from those observations. Teachers also agree to try out a new strategy or method to resolve a related problem of practice as a commitment to one another, with results shared at the next meeting. The *5 Practices* program exploration also involve teachers meeting together to improve the implementation of this math program. Similarly, teachers share student work and instructional insights to increase their ability to address concerns in improving their math instruction. Teachers reported that the support was very helpful, and the collegiality further increased their understanding of teaching practices.

- The school uses the notice-and-wonder protocol when analyzing student data and work as a team. In a grade-eight team meeting, one in a series that involved writing product analysis, a teacher presented one student's writing. The team first shared their noticings, including that the student had established a claim. However, teachers also noticed that the student had too many text details without elaborating on how those details supported his claim. The teachers wondered if students, when conducting research, find it difficult to use the details that they locate. Instructional suggestions included teaching how to use an online thesaurus and how to use a graphic organizer to narrow the focus of the topic, as well as supporting students who are having a hard time transitioning from fiction writing to non-fiction writing using specific details to support a claim.

- In an observed teacher team meeting, one in a series of meetings focused on student work in math, the team used the ATLAS protocol, analyzing student work products with two examples from each teacher. Each teacher followed the protocol answering questions after studying each student piece for three minutes at a time. They recorded their own responses about what each student did well, what each student was working on, and the implications of those findings on teaching and assessment. Teachers compared students' work involved in answering the same word problem focused on understanding and working with the mathematical concepts of mean, median, percent, and using five-digit numbers in various operations. The team methodically analyzed each student's work, looking for trends, patterns, common misconceptions, and strategies. The resulting analysis and implication for instruction focused on a range of instructional possibilities, including increasing the amount of space on the page that students had to work on their problem solving, clarifying mathematical vocabulary, helping students organize the actual presentation of work on the page, and checking for computational errors.