

Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Baychester Middle School

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 11X532

**3750 Baychester Avenue
Bronx
NY 10466**

Principal: Shawn Mangar

**Dates of Review:
November 14, 2017 - November 15, 2017**

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline King-Robinson

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

Baychester Middle 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		
<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	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	Area of Focus	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	Additional Finding	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	Area of Celebration	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		
<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	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

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	1.4 Positive Learning Environment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	--	----------------	-------------------

Findings

There are school structures in place to ensure a safe learning environment. The School Culture Team conducts walkthroughs utilizing the Baychester Culture Rubric to assess the quality of the school's learning environment.

Impact

The school's structures, such as the advisory program, enables each student to be known to an adult, provides for a safe environment, welcomes student voice, and supports a respectful relationship between staff and students.

Supporting Evidence

- The School Culture Team, (SCT) that is comprised of the school leaders, deans, guidance counselor, parent coordinator and grade level team leaders conducts weekly walkthroughs to assess the quality of school culture. The SCT shares results of the walkthroughs with the staff. Teachers, during grade level team meetings, reflect on the results and plan next steps for individual classes and the grade as a whole. Next steps include adjustments to the advisory curriculum, planning incentives, and practicing teaching and management strategies.
- The school's advisory program ensures that there is a primary contact for the family of each student. Advisors teach community standards, conflict resolution, organizational strategies and communication skills. Advisors meet with students in the morning and afternoon, in order to monitor attendance and homework completion, review student progress and weekly goals. Advisors support their advisees by assisting them with preparing for student led conferences, (SLC), during which students share their progress with their families and the next steps they need to take to be prepared for the next level. Thus, the advisory structure effectively supports addressing students' learning and social emotional needs.
- The Montefiore School Health Program (MSHP) provides coordinated primary and preventative healthcare to all students. MSHP offers a range of healthcare services to meet the needs of students while they are in school. Teachers can refer students for mental health and/or medical health services. Additionally, the MSHP provides two social workers who are part of the eighth grade team. They attend grade level team meetings and support the team to develop strategies that will promote student success with meeting schoolwide expectations.
- There is a student government association, (SGA), that is comprised of students from the eighth grade. Students have shared ideas to initiate afterschool programs, plan celebrations, and contribute to changes in the school uniform. The school leader meets monthly with members of the SGA to discuss their ideas.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Across classrooms, differentiated tasks, graphic organizers and supports engage all learners in meaningful discussions. Most classrooms provide opportunities for students to share high-level thinking in work products and discussions.

Impact

Differentiated tasks and accountable talk strategies promote high levels of student thinking and participation across most classrooms. Students are willing to share their thinking and question the reasoning of their peers. However, at times, teachers' whole group instruction limited student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Across content areas and grades students were asked to cite textual evidence to support their claims. Specifically, in an English class students' had annotated the text and referred back to their annotations to cite evidence. This was observed during student literature circles. Additionally, leveled texts and texts in students' native language were provided to students, thus promoting high levels of student thinking and participation.
- Across classrooms, teaching practices that were aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* reflected the school's belief that students are more willing to take risks when they know exactly what is expected. Students were provided with success criteria aligned to the curriculum for all tasks. Students knew what they needed to do and could explain what success would look like at the end of each lesson. Clarity of expectations using rubrics, checklists, and sample work products was evidenced in all classrooms observed.
- In five out of the nine classes visited students were engaged in student-to-student discourse that demonstrated higher order thinking skills. In a seventh grade English Language Arts (ELA) class a student asked the question "Can I use a different piece of evidence?" The teacher asked the class "should a student use additional evidence" turn and talk with a partner to share your thoughts. After speaking with their partner one student` stated "Yes, because it might make my work better or clearer to the reader." Another student wanted an alternative for "for example", his peer gave him an example of how he could use furthermore instead. However, in some of the classes observed, students used pre-determined talk stems to respond to the teacher's question, which limited students' ownership of their discussions.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty have aligned the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and integrated the instructional shifts. The curriculum and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Teachers build coherency of the curriculum across grades and content areas. Diverse learners have access to the curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging and, promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional shifts are present throughout the curricular documents. Across the content areas, units ask students to read and annotate nonfiction texts in order to make a claim and to cite textual evidence to support their claims. Academic content vocabulary is embedded at the beginning of each unit. There is an instructional focus on writing across the curricula and grade levels. A seventh grade science unit included middle school science lab report format, as well as a middle school science lab report format rubric.
- Teachers submit their units of study and summative assessments to administration two weeks before the beginning of the unit in order to receive feedback in regards to alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers receive informal feedback from school leaders about the alignment of their assessments and units of study to the Common Core Learning Standards and to grade-level rigor of tasks.
- A review of history curricula documents revealed that the literacy shifts and Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts have been integrated throughout the units. Strategies to promote the use of academic content vocabulary have been included in all planning documents.
- A humanities lesson plan included student groupings that were based on the results of an exit ticket that students completed the previous day. Students who were able to fully answer the exit ticket were to work independently with little or no support from the teacher. Students who struggled to respond to the prompt were to be placed in one of two groups that were to be led by a teacher. An eighth grade ELA lesson plan included a translated version of the task based on students' English language proficiency. The lesson plan also included leveled graphic organizers for use by diverse groups of students and color-coded texts for those students that needed some additional support. As a result, all students had access to the task and were cognitively engaged.
- A seventh grade ELA lesson plan included student groupings for a writing lesson that were based on students' first drafts. Students were identified to receive additional support from the teacher during the independent practice portion of the lesson. Students who struggled to complete the task were to be provided with a detailed outline of the essay and be given a context to start their essay.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings

Teachers develop rubrics and assessments that are aligned to the school's curriculum. Staff members administer common assessments that are developed during their data cycles using Mastery Connect.

Impact

Teachers use the results from assessments to adjust the tasks and curriculum. Students are provided with actionable feedback and are aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Supporting Evidence

- In the eighth grade team meeting that was observed teachers were analyzing data from a Mastery Connect ELA assessment to adjust the curriculum. Teachers completed a lesson plan template for re-teaching based on the data they reviewed. The template asked teachers to identify a priority area, compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the texts' structure contributed to its meaning and style. Teachers created a timeline for re-teaching the skills. Additionally, they brainstormed how they will informally assess mastery. Teachers stated that their next data cycle would occur in December.
- Teachers use a standards mastery tracker to monitor student progress across grades and subject areas. The tracker includes the standards that were assessed, type of question, correct response, and the students' response. The data is then used to adjust the curriculum and instruction, as well as create student groupings. This was evidenced in the teacher question and answer session and classroom visits. A seventh grade science teacher provided me with a completed standard mastery tracker that identified what standards individual students had mastered. The data was used to design questions for a Jeopardy style test review.
- Rubrics were used in all classrooms. Students stated that the rubrics helped them to understand what they needed to do. Teachers provide actionable feedback that is aligned to the rubric. For example feedback to an eighth grade student relative to an essay noted that "The structure had all components of an argumentative essay! Push yourself to find the best evidence". It went on to direct the student to make sure to use the good, better, best checklist, and noted that if you find the best evidence it will be easy to explain. All posted student work was assessed using rubrics.
- A humanities homework assignment included a rubric for student use for completing the assignment. Students were provided with a student self-assessment that was aligned to the rubric. The checklist asked students to identify something they did well and also a struggle they experienced according to the rubric. Additionally, there is a middle school science lab report format rubric that is aligned to the science curriculum. Students utilize the rubric when they complete science lab reports. The rubric is used to provide students with written feedback to improve their work.

Additional Finding

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

Findings

The principal consistently communicates high expectations to the entire staff that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and has implemented a system of accountability for those expectations. School leaders and staff provide families with clear expectations and ongoing feedback that is connected to a path to college and career readiness for their children.

Impact

Consistent communication and clear expectations help families understand how to support their children's progress and prepare them for their next steps in learning. School leaders' use of an effective system holds staff accountable for schoolwide instructional expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the year staff is provided with a staff playbook that includes clear instructional and cultural expectations, as well as deadlines for submission of all requested artifacts. Staff is required to sign to acknowledge receipt of the playbook. Furthermore, the SCT conducts walkthroughs and utilizes Baychester Culture rubric to monitor students and staff adherence to the schoolwide expectations relative to the school's culture.
- The school leader uses a system of trust, try, train, and thanks to support the staff in meeting expectations. The school leader expects that teachers will utilize checks for understanding, (CFU), during lessons and use the information to make adjustments to instruction. Staff was provided with three professional development sessions to support them with implementing CFU. School leaders conduct frequent cycles of informal and formal observations, as well as walkthroughs to assess the implementation of CFU.
- Parents attend a parent orientation meeting prior to the start of the school year. The meeting is designed to establish clear expectations for students and their families. Parents are provided with the instructional focus for the year, uniform guidelines, arrival and dismissal procedures, expected parent responsibilities, and dates for future parent meetings. Parents are also provided with the dates and times for upcoming high school fairs. During the parent meeting parents stated that the school goes over high school articulation from the beginning of the year. Parents all agreed that they receive support with articulation and the counselors help them to identify schools that will support their children's learning and social emotional needs. In addition there is a parent teacher association meeting regarding how to select a high school that is facilitated by the guidance counselor.
- School leaders and teachers conduct grade-level advisory nights for families. They share the school's system of trust, try, train, and thanks and what it means. Families are made aware of the school's mission and goals. There is an overview of the school's advisory program and invitation to attend the student-led conferences. Advisors also provide families with their phone numbers and email addresses in case they need to contact them. One parent stated that the orientation served as a way for students to bond with one another. Additionally, parents have access to Pupil Path so that they can monitor their children's progress. Weekly progress reports are provided to students and families so that they can monitor assignment submission, assessment grades, and progress toward individual student goals.

Additional Finding

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

Findings

Distributed leadership structures are in place. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Teachers have built leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school, typically resulting in improved teacher practice. Teacher teams that meet on a regular basis analyze student performance data and work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers serve as grade team leaders. In that role, teacher leaders are working with their teams to identify common areas of struggle for students in their grade. Teams identify goals for their grade level, monitor progress towards meeting goals, and identify incentives for their students when goals are met. In addition, grade level team members contribute to and manage all grade level events and activities. Presently, grade level teams are in the process of establishing criteria for students to attend the turkey bowl celebration.
- There is a data driven instruction (DDI) team that establishes goals for teachers' use of data and monitors progress towards meeting the goals. The team uses unit plan and lesson plan feedback, *Advance* ratings, and assessment results compiled on Mastery Connect to measure student progress towards goals. As shared during the leadership meeting and during the teacher question and answer meeting, previously teachers had been designing their own interim assessments, however as teachers and administrators did not believe that they were rigorous enough, and teachers provided feedback to school leader about the lack of rigor in the interim assessment system. This resulted in a change to Mastery Connect. The DDI team meets to plan for full implementation of Mastery Connect, as well as planning and implementing professional development to support teachers in utilizing the tools that Mastery Connect provides.
- The school has a School Culture Committee that is comprised of administration, deans, parent coordinator, guidance counselor, grade team leaders, and the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) chapter leader. The SCT establishes goals for the school's culture, provides support in helping teachers and students meet those expectations, and developed a structured way to monitor progress. There is a school culture rubric that used by the team to conduct three formal walkthroughs. Additionally, there are informal culture walkthroughs that are conducted two times per week. Teachers are provided with support to improve culture on an as needed basis.
- Teachers meet two times per week with an instructional focus. In the eighth grade team meeting that was observed teachers were analyzing data from a Mastery Connect assessment to adjust the curriculum. The teachers identified Common Core State Learning standards as an area of weakness. They unpacked the standard and created several daily objectives that they would utilize when teaching to this standard. Teachers utilize a standards-based mastery tracker to measure student progress towards mastery of skills needed for each standard. The data from the tracker is used to create student groupings, adjust curriculum, and provide scaffolds for students who need them.