Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 183 Robert L. Stevenson

Elementary 02M183

419 East 66 Street
Manhattan
NY 10065

Principal: Martin Woodard

Dates of Review:
May 9, 2019 - May 10, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Debra Tasioudis

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. 183 Robert L. Stevenson serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school...	**Area**	**Rating**
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	**Additional Finding**	**Proficient**
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	**Additional Finding**	**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**	**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	**Area of Celebration**	**Well Developed**

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	**Area of Focus**	**Developing**
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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide aligned professional learning. School leaders and staff effectively partner with families providing information regarding expectations for students.

Impact

Teacher's benefit from a culture of mutual accountability related to high expectations. Strong communication and invitations to visit the classroom empower families and support student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- This year, the school is bolstering literacy practices and small group instruction. Expectations connected to them are regularly communicated through the staff handbook, weekly notes and professional learning. School leaders, teachers, internal and external coaches provide ongoing professional learning sessions focused on embedding phonics and grammar instruction which the teachers identified as areas of need. Teachers work alongside literacy coaches to create shared resources to support small group instruction in reading and writing units, and better understand the implementation of reading strategies from professional texts. Together, teachers regularly review the school's common assessments for reading and writing and create student goals aligned to standards and strategies. Subsequently teachers work with the students to achieve these ELA goals. One teacher shared, "A big revelation for me was that you don't have to change the goal all the time, just the strategies that the student uses." Teachers are supported in expectations for math and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) partnerships through coaching cycles. The school's math coach provides guidance aimed at supporting the school's highest performing students, and an external coach provides supports for ICT teachers, ensuring that teachers are able to meet expectations that relate to planning lessons for a diversity of learners.

- In addition to holding one another accountable for revising the curricula and instructional practices, teachers hold one another accountable for shared expectations through the work of committees. The professional learning committee comprised of teachers and school leaders develop the school's professional learning for the staff. The equity and social-emotional learning committees, provide training for the whole staff in promoting equity and implementing the school's new social emotional learning approach. The committees also provide guidance and feedback to their peers on use of the book of the month, texts aimed at promoting understanding of characters from diverse backgrounds, implementation of classroom charters, and shared classroom expectations between teachers and students.

- Parents shared that communication between teachers, school leaders and the home is the greatest strength of the school. In person conversations, emails and weekly letters communicate clear expectations regarding curricula and student progress. Parents explained that children bring home reading folders that always have notes addressing areas they need to improve which helps parents partner with teachers in their children's learning at home. Parents appreciate that they receive the week's homework ahead of time, so they can always reach out to the teacher if there are any questions. Curriculum night, publishing parties where students share their writing, and parent-teacher conferences provide opportunities for families to get detailed guidance on how to support their children at home. As one parent shared, "At math night, you get a gage of where your children are and what they need to do. The math games are fun- we get so involved, and get a taste of learning in the classroom."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Developing

Findings

School leaders support the development of teachers with frequent cycles of observation. However, the feedback teachers receive is sometimes misaligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Feedback to teachers is beginning to support teacher development and elevate schoolwide instructional practices that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher observation records indicate most teachers were observed two or three times by the date of this review. However, the feedback that teachers receive is not consistently actionable. There is some misalignment to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, particularly in ratings provided to teachers where the highest rating for each component was assigned. An observation report for a teacher who received the highest rating for managing student behavior and engaging students in learning did not include evidence related to classroom management nor student ownership of the learning. Another report with an assigned "Effective" rating in the component addressing questioning and discussion techniques contained evidence that included only one question the teacher asked. Furthermore, the report indicates that the students answered the question individually rather than engaging in discussion before sharing an answer. The next step recommended that the teacher ask students follow up questions to create a discussion. Questioning that promotes discussion among students is a required factor for an "Effective" rating in this area. The practice observed by the administrator and referenced to in the observation report indicates a rating of "Developing." Inconsistencies, such as this, where the observation evidence, the rating, and the next steps do not align was evident across the observation reports reviewed.

- While observations captured teacher and student actions and discussions, the observation reports often lack an analysis of student work or data. In a meeting with teachers, some teachers shared that in their debrief conversations, sometimes there is a review of student work or data gathered during the lesson, other times this does not take place. While observations reflect a review of teaching practices, they do not often reflect an analysis of learning outcomes, thus preventing the full realization of schoolwide improvement of instructional practices.

- A review of six observation reports evidenced that teacher strengths were highlighted but the feedback did not provide clear next steps for improvement. In one report, the school leader praised the teacher's assessment practice of having students set their own goals, and included some wonderings about how the teacher might carry this practice into the next unit. However, an actionable next step was not in evidence. In a meeting with school leaders, they shared that they do not always provide next steps for teachers with "Highly Effective" ratings. In a meeting with teachers, when asked about receiving feedback without next steps, one teacher shared, "If I do not get a next step, I turn to colleagues and mentors in the grade and ask them about how to move forward." Thus, the absence of consistent recommendations diminishes the support needed to improve their classroom practices.

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

Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core and focus on opportunities for students to write from both fiction and non-fiction sources, and apply mathematical knowledge in problem solving in math. Curricula are refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula are coherent, promote college readiness and is accessible for a diversity of learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans align to the Common Core or New York State (NYS) standards, with each lesson plan including multiple standards connected to the lesson objectives. For example, a lower-grade writing lesson had two objectives; students would understand how words can help to create visualization in texts, and how to add tiny, realistic details to their own stories. The lesson aligned to focus on conventions, vocabulary use and acquisition. In the lesson activity, students revise writing pieces by adding realistic details. A math plan centered on students playing a math game that required students to compose and decompose numbers, write equivalent expressions, and problem solve. A science lesson plan aligned to three NYS science standards to support a lesson objective focusing on students applying their understanding of animal and plant defenses to create a model. Lesson plans reviewed give evidence to alignment to the Common Core, and teachers' purposeful decisions to engage students in writing and problem solving.

- Teachers plan for small groups of students, often students identified as struggling with the topic or standard in a separate strategy group. A math lesson plan included refinement for groups of students based on student work from earlier in the week resulting in differentiated tasks and groups working with smaller or larger numbers. Similarly, a writing plan included a small group identified to receive additional support based on data from their most recent reading assessment. Another plan included differentiated small groups as well as a separate planning sheet for ELLs and access to online translation support. Additional plans reviewed included heterogeneous grouping and one-to-one supports for students with disabilities. In one lesson, an extension activity planned for one group required students to make their thinking visible. However, planning extensions for the highest-achieving students was not included in the majority of lesson plans reviewed. By grade level, teachers use reading assessment data from predictive exams to create small groups to address areas of need. Teachers select focus skills, such as breaking the text into smaller chunks and figuring out what the question is asking to assist teachers in planning and refining instruction. In most lesson plans similar small group planning was included.

- Curricular overviews and pacing calendars demonstrate purposeful decisions to build coherence in student skills. There is alignment of unit topics in writing narratives, informational writing, literary essays and test prep across the grades. A social studies curriculum overview shows students in grades kindergarten through two engaged in studies of their school, parks and birds respectively for their last unit, and the NYC Scope and Sequence was shared to demonstrate decisions to build coherence across the grades. However, there is not as yet demonstrated strategic integration of standards and instructional shifts evident in the planning documents.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Teaching strategies such as questioning, the use of models, student choice and graphic organizers consistently allow students access to challenging tasks and class discussions.

Impact

Students, including students with disabilities and ELLs demonstrate higher-order thinking and high levels of participation in the classroom.

Supporting Evidence

- Common across classrooms is the use of scaffolds, models for students, student choice, and the use of graphic organizers. These support students in completing tasks such as digging into complex ideas in a familiar text. In a lower-grade writing lesson where students were adding details to their own non-fiction writing, the teacher modeled drawing, labeling and writing for students in her writing about the New York Botanical Garden, The teacher prompted students to do some pre-writing on a post-it and share it with a peer before having them add more details to their own writing. In another writing class, students were asked to add descriptive language to their writing, and were provided examples of "juicy" sentences to serve as models. Students were able to choose their own topic creating another entry point for all learners to demonstrate higher-order thinking. While not yet present in the vast majority of classes, student choice and the clarity of the task allowed students to take ownership of their learning as they wrote about a topic of their choosing and advanced through the writing process at their own pace.

- In a math class, students played a math game to explore the concept of parts of a whole. Students worked with differentiated game boards, had manipulatives at their tables and for some, guidance from an adult to push their thinking. Some high level questions were presented to serve as an extension to guide student thinking. Students engaged in high-level discussions, explaining their math models and whether or not they were equivalent expressions. One student, new to the school and an emerging English Language Learner, was given a task that looked similar to the other students, but was tailored to help him build math and English language skills, thus affording him the opportunity to be engaged in high-level thinking and learning, not seen across most classes.

- In an upper-grade social studies class, students conducted research on topics on Westward Expansion using classroom resources that included text bundles. Students read independently. One student stated, "I am taking notes on details that are important to my topic." Across the class, students were engaged in high level thinking, exploring non-fiction texts, deciding what was significant and developing their own notes. Several students explained that they would probably do a project or poster for part of the task. In a math class, students worked in pairs or small groups to solve a complex word problem, choosing their own solution strategy and discussing how they arrived at their answers. Student discussions and notebooks demonstrated high levels of student thinking. However, some students were finished and were unsure what to do next, or how to check their work for accuracy.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Across classes, teachers use rubrics and common assessments such as leveled reading assessments and on demand tasks to provide students with feedback and help teachers to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

Students receive actionable feedback regarding their achievement verbally and in writing. The results of common assessments are used to adjust the curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across subject areas, teachers use rubrics to provide students with feedback and next steps. Often written to students on post-its, or shared with students through conferring, students receive actionable next steps, which teachers refer to as student goals. In a meeting with students, several explained that as they work through writing pieces, or get graded work back in math, their teacher will sit with them and give them a goal to work on to improve their writing or math. Another student shared, "I have a goal sheet in my folder. My teacher always asks me to look over my work and then she gives me feedback on what to do next." In the meeting, students shared actionable next steps, which they were provided addressing comparing and contrasting. Some of the suggestions included the idea of providing more reasons and examples, or adding more information from your research. Similarly, a student shared feedback from a math assessment, which clarified that he needed to provide another strategy as per the directions.

- Adjustments to instruction result from teachers use running records and on demand assessments to create spreadsheets highlighting areas of student need, and to determine student progress toward goals across the grades. Teachers use information gained from running records to create individual student goals and to form small groups, reading partnerships, and supplement the curricula with strategies from a professional resource targeting reading strategies. In math, where the focus is on supporting high achieving students, small group learning was evident in lesson plans. In these ways, teachers use common assessments to adjust the curricula and instruction to meet student-learning needs.

- In writing, teachers use common on-demand assessments to study writing habits of small groups of students, plan small group instruction based on their needs, and to create student goals for writing. Teachers use common curricula-aligned rubrics to assess student writing in narrative, information, and persuasive genres across the grades. In addition to using reading assessment data to plan for small groups, this data is also used to create intervention groups for a six-week after school program to meet the learning needs of students.

Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals, particularly, small group instruction. Opportunities for teacher leadership are in place through the many committees that exist within the school community.

Impact

Teamwork promotes the school goals and strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers. Committees build leadership capacity so that teachers have a voice in key decisions that positively affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- During the review, the first grade team was observed engaging in a structured, inquiry-based professional collaboration. They addressed the instructional focus, which is improving student writing and small group instruction in literacy. During the meeting, teachers looked at student work to reflect on current small group instructional practices and student achievement to determine next steps for teachers and goals for students. Near the end of the meeting, teachers shared ways they are working together on the team strengthened their instructional capacity. As one teacher said, "As a new teacher to the grade, it has been helpful to be a part of a collaborative team. We share everything." Another teacher explained that through their work together teachers have built tools to support them in small group instruction and improved their repertoire for assessing small groups. This was also demonstrated in the team's online drive that included a wide variety of tools for assessing both individual and small group learning. Team meeting notes evidenced that weekly meetings are often a time when teachers study the rubrics used to grade student work, the Common Core standards, and student work itself, helping to improve teachers' instructional practices.

- Teachers regularly serve as the facilitator during meetings. The teacher who facilitated the meeting observed regularly serves as the group's facilitator, coaches other teachers across the grade and works alongside the school's other literacy coach to shape professional learning for teachers. The work of the team led the school to adopt two new curricula this year specifically aimed at providing students with instruction in phonics and grammar. These were key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

- Teachers and staff have additional opportunities to provide input through their participation on committees. The school's committees are numerous and include the school leadership team that creates the school's goals. There are committees that lead the work of hiring, safety, promoting sustainability, social-emotional learning and equity. Through these committees, teachers are able to work alongside school leaders to set policy for professional learning, delivery of special education, English language support services, shape intervention groups, and the curricula used to support learners. Teachers shared that the work of the professional learning committee led to the revision of school assessment practices in reading, writing and math. The work of the social-emotional learning team led the school to adopt a new curriculum across the school that focuses on students and staff recognizing emotions. This curriculum also focuses on developing a common language for supporting student behavior, another key decision affecting students and staff across the school.