

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

J.H.S. 216 George J. Ryan

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 26Q216

**64-20 175 Street
Queens
NY 11365**

Principal: Reginald Landeau

**Dates of review: February 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Lucius Young**

The School Context

J.H.S. 216 George J. Ryan is a/an Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School with 1364 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 7% Black, 10% Hispanic, 13% White, and 71% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 97%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	Area of:	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.	Celebration	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Well Developed
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 Findings	Well Developed

School Culture

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations.	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Systems for Improvement

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning.	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the CCLS and/or content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

As a result, school leaders and staff has created a coherent curriculum that promotes college and career readiness, providing access for all students to be cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson Plans and unit plan demonstrate alignment to CCLS. For example, the social studies unit plan demonstrates a balance of nonfiction and fiction texts including historical fiction and persuasive articles for debates. The use of annotation of text complexity and strategic alignment to the instructional shifts plan for student-to-student discussions and leads to an improvement in student writing.
- Lesson plans demonstrate using data and student work to refine tasks. In a 6th grade mathematics lesson, students were grouped in three levels that included support; strategic; and enrichment. The support group met with the teacher and was provided with reteach strategies that included naming the rule for the function and inserting data into the tables. The strategic group was given the function rule and completing the tables on their own. The enrichment group was to determine the function rule on their own and then graph the functions. Each group was provided with a series of tasks that ranged in difficulty and after the completion of the tasks were then to share responses with the whole group.
- All lesson plans have a designed focus question. Teachers design higher order level questions for each lesson and adjust the questions to include multiple entry points for their classroom students. Questions are used to enhance student to student discussions. In one social studies classroom, students were asked to reflect on whether the documents provided served as a reliable source and in another social studies class in a different grade, students were asked to consider to what degree should a nation be involved in the affairs of other nations.
- In an eighth grade mathematics class, students were grouped according to skill set and interest levels; students worked in partnerships to demonstrate understanding of parabolic motion. Students in this lesson plan were asked to discuss, demonstrate, analyze, and present quadratics in sports and to respond to questions from classmates. Students would demonstrate the sport and the projectile of a racquetball in a fishbowl configuration and explain how functions and quadratics apply. Students would then be provided with a white board that would be used as a means to organize their thoughts and pose questions.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best as informed by the Danielson Framework for teaching. Teaching strategies strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions.

Impact

There is discussion at the team and school levels on deepening the instructional practices focusing on the instructional shifts. English language learners and Special Education students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, students use “accountable talk” in student-to-student discussion. For example, in a 7th grade Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class with English language learners, the students were divided into groups. Students in the English language learners group had a different rubric organizer to guide their feedback. The students circulated and provided written feedback on charts created by students. From the review of the notes on charts, the students had a large discussion as a whole group facilitated by the teacher with higher order questions. Students shared responses and used site based evidence to support, justify and defend their response.
- Administration stated that strategic grouping was an area of focus. A vast majority of classes used strategic grouping as a means to engage all learners. For example, in a seventh grade English Language Arts (ELA) class, students were divided into triads to work on an assignment of citing textual evidence to support arguments and to draw inferences from the text. Each partner was provided with a different organizer based on ability and completed their task and then was responsible for sharing their part of the assignment to their group, thus demonstrating engagement in appropriate and challenging tasks.
- The schools beliefs about how students learn are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders believe that children learn best through the focus on higher order questioning and discussion (3b) and student engagement (3c). School leaders have prioritized feedback in observations and conferences and planning support in these areas. As a result of strategically prioritizing these components, school leaders have seen an increase in teacher practice and effectiveness in these two components.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use and create assessments and rubrics that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessments.

Impact

As a result of the assessments, teachers provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students regarding student achievement and teacher adjustments are made to the curricula to meet the needs of all learners; students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses baseline data obtained from the New York State exams that include the item skills analysis to identify the strengths and concerns of each student. These data sets are color coded and then used to track the progress and adjust the instructional plans for students. Teachers are then given this data and identify a target group of students that will be their at-risk students for the year. From this analysis, students will be identified to participate in additional support programs and/or be provided with strategic lessons that are embedded in their classroom. For example, a group of identified at-risk students participate in the afterschool mathematics program with adjusted lessons that target their learning needs. Additionally, a group of targeted English language learners students receive language support using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol model posted on the board.
- Teachers conference with students on an ongoing basis. Information from these conferences are captured via notes or checklists and used to support students in identifying next steps and creating student goals. In mathematics, students use growth contracts as a means to develop mathematics goals and set steps to achieve them. The initial step of the growth contract in mathematics is the goal-setting phase which takes place after the student has taken the pre-test. Following the pre-test, students then identify a series of steps that includes resources to help achieve the stated goals. Along each step, the teacher provides feedback and guidance to support students. In the final phase of the process, students complete a self-reflection in collaboration with his/her parent to see how well the goal was accomplished.
- Students are familiar with and use rubrics as a guide for their self-understanding and expectations of the task. Rubrics are presented to students at the beginning of each task and are used throughout the task as a guide for peer and self-assessment. One student in the interview stated that through the use of the rubric he was now able to get a higher grade because he needed to elaborate more on his writing and to support the arguments he had with specific evidence.

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations around professionalism, instruction, and communication to the entire staff and provide feedback to set meaningful partnerships with families around supporting students towards expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

The school has set structures that ensure a culture of mutual accountability. Parents are fully aware and work in collaboration with the school in supporting their children. Professional learning opportunities enable students to exceed expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders meet with teachers at the beginning of the year to set goals. During this time goals are created mutually and an on-going system is implemented to provide feedback for teachers. One teacher stated that the administration provided feedback on her lesson and the recommendation was for her to chunk portions of the lesson in order to maximize the relevance to students and keep them engaged. She took the feedback and did the lesson immediately using the recommended strategy and found immediate success. As a result, the feedback for teachers is welcomed and used as a means to support one another in their growth.
- The school has teachers that are a part of the Teacher Leader Program hosted by the NYCDOE. Teachers would participate in professional learning outside of their school and use this opportunity of learning to apply back with their fellow colleagues either in classrooms, teacher teams, or school wide professional development. The school leaders create a system that provides opportunities for teachers to visit one another and work collaboratively to gain additional expertise in their pedagogical practices. One teacher stated that after attending a training session on the use of protocols she then used this knowledge and applied it back with her teacher team at the school level. As a result, the team was now able to use another lens to analyze student work and identify next steps in support of students. Another teacher stated that she needed support on designing work for small group instruction. She visited another teacher and then had the opportunity to plan her lessons with support focusing on small group instruction. As a result, the inter-visitation structure provided the teachers with a supportive environment that fosters professional growth.
- Family workshops, newsletters along with a weekly phone call by the Principal to inform parents of school events and progress and support of the CCLS have provided multiple means of feedback and awareness of school expectations to parents. Parents stated that the Pupil Path system to inform parents of the child's progress are very helpful and provide valuable information they can use to support their child. One parent stated that after attending a school workshop on the Pupil Path system and then attending the same workshop hosted by the Chinese American Association at the school (in Mandarin) helped support her and clarified her understanding of this system and thus, provided her with the necessary tools to support her child at home. As a result, parents play an active role in sharing ideas on future agendas that lead to supporting their children at home toward mastery of learning standards.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations and distributed leadership structures are embedded.

Impact

The work of teacher teams results in the strengthening of teacher instructional capacity and promotes the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (including the instructional shifts). Teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning and achievement across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers engage in teacher team/inquiry based structured professional learning. This includes the instructional grade teams, interdisciplinary team, model teacher team, professional development team, Response to Intervention team, and the learning partner program. Teams meet at a minimum two times per week. Practices include agendas and notes, student work, data sets, team facilitator, protocols, collection binder, and next steps. Administration monitors the work of the teams and provides feedback that leads to support student learning and achievement.
- During the eighth grade mathematics team meeting, teachers brought student work to the meeting to discuss teaching implications. Copies of student work were distributed by the team leader and each team member had equal time in sharing the strengths and challenges/misconceptions found in the work. As a group, the team discussed common threads and shared their findings. At the end of the meeting, teachers discussed the implications found in the analysis of the student work will have on teaching and learning. Each member discussed the implications for teaching and learning in supporting instructional outcomes and supporting student learning. In previous meetings, teachers shared that the (STWPS) stop, think, write, pair, share was a strategy that the team implemented as a result of these meetings to support some students.
- The school organizes a leadership retreat for teacher leaders two times per year. The teacher leaders meet and build a sense of community for the school and are charged with the responsibility of reflecting on data, planning professional development, and creating an action plan for the rest of the faculty. A teacher spoke that the school was working on improving the socio-emotional status of students and strategies teachers can employ to support students. Teachers shared that after discussions, the teachers implemented F.A.T. (frustration, anxiety, tension) a workshop for all teachers that provided strategies in supporting learners who were having difficulties. Teachers shared they used what they learned in the workshop and applied this learning to their students. As a result, teachers were able to improve their pedagogical practices and reduce the frustration, anxiety and tension level of students.