

Quality Review Report

2016-2017

I.S. 339

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 09X339

**1600 Webster Ave.
Bronx
NY 10457**

Principal: Kim Outerbridge

**Dates of Review:
April 20, 2017 - April 21, 2017**

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley

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. 339 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	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	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	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	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	Area of Celebration	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:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Teachers' collaborations have strengthened their capacity in instructional design and delivery. Teacher team work has resulted in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- During an observed seventh-grade interdisciplinary collaborative inquiry team, across content areas, teachers who share the same students present examples of student work to the team and the team reviews the student work samples. Teachers are logged into the rolling agenda for the team meeting on Google Drive. Student work examples are identified as having problems with lacking comprehension strategies skills, and one of the teacher's created a graphic organizer for the who, what, where, when, why, and the how. The team discussed cross-content connections with the five W's as the math teacher pointed out that in mathematics those are the questions consistently utilized in their questioning techniques. Student learning needs in math include, looking for key words, order of operations, and struggling with making sense of how they are going to solve the problem. During the meeting, the team is tracking assessment data through an online platform. Team members reviewed how they will collect the data based on conferences, assessments, and exit slips. They also identified student populations who will receive this support, including students in tiers one, two, and three. The team's next steps include development of their action plan as implementation of the 5 W's tracker connected to DOK Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) tool and the use of *iReady* to assess results.
- Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity through team collaborations. For example, a teacher reported that as a result of conversations about successful instructional strategies held during teacher team sessions, "Given that we meet so frequently, I ask my colleagues, 'can I please come see you?' We come back to see if we've implemented some of the skills, and we get feedback as well - what worked well in that lesson. We get to share best practices." Another teacher reported regarding intervisitations, "I'm eager to incorporate the timing in my own classroom, and the discipline accompanying the class discussions times."
- During the eighth-grade teacher team meeting, teachers looked at student work, specifically an informational text from an English Language Arts (ELA) class entitled, *The Vietnam War*. The students were asked to annotate the text and write a chunking note that indicates the main idea of the text. Analysis revealed some of the students are struggling to identify which are the main idea sentences and which are the supporting details. After analyzing the work, the team moved forward to identify which strategy will work best. The team identified a strategy that will help the students improve their understanding of the main idea of a text. The students will be using the 3-2-1 technique in order to break down a text to identify the main idea and interpret their understanding. With the 3-2-1 strategy, students will follow three steps. Students begin by selecting three words from the section of the text that is being studied. Following that step, students will select two phrases that will help to determine the main idea. Finally, students are required to write one statement that summarizes the main idea of the text. The results of this strategy would be discussed at the next team meeting with the intention of increasing students' capacity for analyzing the evidence they provide in support of main idea and supporting details.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although flexible student groups evidence teachers' work toward providing students with multiple entry points into lessons, students have limited opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills.

Impact

Students were unevenly engaged in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrated uneven levels of higher-order thinking skills. Additionally, student discussions inconsistently reflect high levels of student participation.

Supporting Evidence

- In an eighth-grade science course for English Language Learners (ELLs), students were asked to distinguish between renewable and nonrenewable resources. The lesson included opportunities for students to practice English by reading a text aloud to the class. The teacher posed questions to students in Spanish. During the teacher review of vocabulary, the answers provided to the students included two mistakes from the answer key. In a seventh-grade ELA class, the students were using an informational writing checklist and a rubric for informational writing. However, the teacher's directions limited students' ability to engage with the assignment. Two students indicated that they were not clear about what to do after students transitioned to independent work time and looked up to the screen to try to read what they were supposed to do next.
- During an eighth-grade ELA lesson asking students to debate their position if parents should have access to students' social media accounts, a majority of the students participated as they used accountable talk stems during the class-wide discussion. The class had a rubric on each desk for participating in class-wide discussions. However, there were multiple missed opportunities for student-to-student discussions. In a seventh-grade ELA class, the lesson had a slow start due to the teacher's directions not being explicitly clear and questioning techniques not being planned out and refined, "Anyone?" led to uneven student engagement. In an eighth-grade class where students were participating in a Socratic seminar on which World War II dictator had the most influence. Only eight of fourteen students participated in the discussion and there was a lack of teacher facilitation.
- During a sixth-grade lesson, students were presented with questions that evoked inconsistent levels of student participation. After the teacher modeled the problem, she asked the students "Who can tell me?" and one student raised a hand to answer the question. Another question followed, "Why is there only one answer? Can anyone tell me?" and one hand went up from the students. When the teacher asked another question and followed it with, "Can anyone tell me?" once again, one student hand went up. During a seventh-grade social studies lesson, a Socratic seminar on Lewis and Clark saw five of seven students sitting within the inner circle participating while a majority of their partners in the outer circle only participated in a limited role, including some students who did not write anything during the time they were supposed to be taking notes and assessing their partners performance on a handout. The teacher did not ensure that all students were participating, leading to uneven levels of engagement.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students. Faculty members adjust materials through the creation of resources that make curricula more accessible to the school's diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core and NYS content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. The school uses *Expeditionary Learning* curriculum that is augmented with EngageNY curriculum. Curriculum documents include evidence of modification by teachers to meet students' needs. Modifications are documented in the school's Google Drive through track changes.
- Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, in a sixth-grade math lesson plan, students find the area of triangles and quadrilaterals in real-world situations, such as calculating the area of new carpet needed for a bedroom and a hallway in a home for a family, figuring out the area of a middle school basketball court, figuring out the area of a vegetable garden given the measurements. Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of the ELA instructional shifts. For example, an eighth-grade science lesson on renewable and non-renewable resources includes opportunities for students to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts. Similarly, a seventh-grade Socratic seminar social studies lesson on The Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition requires students to cite textual evidence. An eighth-grade ELA lesson plan also includes citing textual evidence.
- Across grades and content areas, curricula are planned and refined so that all learners have access to challenging materials. For example, a seventh-grade social studies unit four plan includes modifications for students with disabilities. Social studies teachers differentiate instructional tasks by content/what is learned, process/how it's learned, and product/completed tasks. For example, a lesson plan on the Louisiana Purchase has students learn that content through map analysis. Students demonstrate their learning through the creation of their own maps. Differentiation for ELLs includes using thinking maps, annotation skills, and a modified cause-and-effect chart. Another example of differentiated supports for students includes a sixth-grade math lesson plan; the PowerPoint is translated into Spanish for ELLs along with tiered worksheets and exit tickets. Another example includes a sixth-grade math lesson using ratios and unit rates to solve real-world problems involving rates. Students were identified by name and were strategically grouped into three separate tiered groups based on assessed needs and supports. The results showed group one was able to solve question one along with supplemental questions with appropriate supports for setting up conversions of seconds to minutes. Group two was able to solve question two along with example four, and group three was able to solve question three along with example four without additional assistance.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school's curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback that students use to improve their work. Teachers use students' assessment data to adjust curricula and instruction and inform teacher teams' inquiry work.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use rubrics to rate narrative writing, analysis essays, independent reading, students' turn and talk discussions, and for accountable talk during classroom discussion. Teachers also indicate "Some things you did successfully" and "Some things you could improve upon" and "Student next steps" on *Teacher Feedback Forms* attached to rubrics and student work. Additionally, teachers use rubrics as checklists. One student reported, "When we use an ELA rubric, we look at level four or three. As we're writing the essays, we look at each criteria step by step and look over the rubric to see what we need to do to qualify to get that score."
- Samples of student work products evidenced teacher-written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. In a seventh-grade social studies class, for example, "Your introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion mostly relate to the task. Some things you could improve upon: using proper closing sentences in document analysis in your body paragraphs." Another example of teacher-written feedback includes, from a sixth-grade math class, "You showed great understanding of elevation. Some things you could improve upon: explaining absolute value. Student next steps: reviewing absolute value." One student reported regarding feedback from her teacher, "I wrote a compare and contrast essay about Sojourner Truth and the freedom for women and equal rights. My teacher gave me feedback around the contrasting paragraph, more details were needed to help the readers understand where my claim was coming from, guiding me into finding better details. I made some changes, and my essay was improved."
- Common assessments include baseline assessments across content areas, unit and module exams, and *iReady*. The common assessments include writing, science, social studies, math, and reading. This data was reviewed during content-area and interdisciplinary teacher team meetings during which curricula were adjusted as teacher teams engaged in inquiry work. For example, an eighth-grade ELA module was revised, to use the 3-2-1 annotation strategy to support student knowledge of making determinations and inferences regarding central ideas. Based on *iReady* data, modifications were made to sixth-grade math curriculum based on data regarding "Fluently add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation."

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits support teachers' understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. Teacher teams ensure that instruction, across classrooms, prepare students for the next level through detailed use of student portfolios.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. Teachers also receive a staff handbook that covers topics ranging from roles and responsibilities of staff, team/meeting responsibilities, classroom environment, expectations regarding how to address hallway behavior, verbal behavior, grading schedule, instructional expectations and priorities, common assessments, homework policy, evaluation, lesson plan checks, and parent involvement. Additionally, teachers receive the professional development (PD) plan at the beginning of the year. Included within this plan are opportunities for learning walks, instructional rounds, team meetings, conferences, presentations, and study groups that support the different domains of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- The school's culture for learning consistently communicates high expectations that help prepare students for their next level of education. In addition to progress reports and report cards, student portfolios are maintained as resources for both students and teachers to monitor progress towards high expectations. The portfolios include a student ELA profile sheet which includes report card data from marking periods one, two, and three. New York State Exams from 2015-16, including NYS performance level, NYS scale score, proficiency rating change from the previous year's NYS Exam and an action plan determined through conferences and guidance from the student's teacher. Developmental reading assessments, including baseline assessments from September 2016, interim assessments, mid-line assessments, end of unit assessments, and final examinations are recorded across reading and writing in the portfolio. A goal and action plan is included for each section of the portfolio as students write two goals and an action plan, based on their identified strengths and weaknesses, to improve their academic scores. The portfolio also includes a notebook scoring rubric that is checked every month of the school year by the student and their teacher.
- Nineteen eighth-grade students are given the opportunity to attend a Living Environment Regents course leading to NYS mandated science labs and preparation for the Living Environment Regents. The Living Environment Regents course is offered in addition to the student's regular class schedules, after school and during Saturday Academy.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders support teacher development with frequent classroom observation cycles. Prompt written feedback captures teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

Impact

Formal and informal classroom visits grounded in the observation and analysis of student work, result in written feedback for teachers that make clear the expectations for teacher practice and the supports available to help teachers meet them.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Each rated item is supported with specific detailed evidence from the observed class to support the rating. Next steps for teaching improvements are included throughout the class-specific evidence directed to specific categories of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and at the close of each observation report. School leadership calibrates the first few walkthroughs of the year together before going on their own walkthroughs.
- Observation reports contain feedback that captures teachers' strengths and weaknesses and is accompanied by next steps teachers should take in order to improve their practice and impact student success. For example, feedback regarding assessment practices read "After communicating expectations, ask students to explain the criteria in their own words before they begin and throughout the lesson as you are taking the pulse of the class and checking for understanding." In another report, "Actionable next steps: Attached are student self-assessment checklists. Please add actionable feedback to student notebooks and update the student portfolios." Another report included, "Actionable next steps: 3b, 3c, 3d - Deepen the student level discussion through literature circles. Pick literature at the students' instructional level but make it high interest. Give the students level four question starters on sentence strips to remind them to go deeper."
- The school conducts teacher mid-year performance reviews to review all components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* with accompanying ratings and supporting evidence. The mid-year performance review includes comments and action steps. For example, the principal summarized the feedback to a teacher during a data talk that included a detailed review of a group of students in the teacher's class who were identified for specific additional supports. The goal communicated by the feedback was to move the lowest achieving students in that identified group. All of the students in certain classes for this teacher were specifically identified based on learning needs. The feedback concluded with, "The teacher must move this group into level 2." The mid-year performance review also assesses teachers based on their current overall performance, aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, Ineffective (HEDI) rating scale.