Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Edward R. Murrow High School

High school 21K525

1600 Avenue L
Brooklyn
NY 11230

Principal: Allen Barge

Dates of Review:
April 26, 2018 - April 27, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Michele Ashley

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

Edward R. Murrow High School serves students in grade 9 through grade 12. 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**	**Developing**

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	**Area of Celebration**	**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	**Additional Finding**	**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**	**Well Developed**
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**	**Well Developed**
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**	**Well Developed**
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:	Well Developed

Findings

The school community's approach to culture building is informed by schoolwide values and students are active participants through school improvement teams, student government, student alliance, and fundraising initiatives. Personalized attendance, youth development, and social-emotional supports are in place.

Impact

Clear values and the meaningful involvement of students result in a safe and inclusive culture that supports progress toward school goals and encourages students to initiate, guide, and lead school improvement efforts. Guidance and advisement supports positively impact student attendance, communication, and collaboration in projects, clubs, and tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that the schoolwide mission and values inform all instructional and social-emotional decisions. The school mission is guided by four values, to "**C**hallenge all students, **A**chieve academic excellence, **R**espect differences, and **E**ngage all students in the learning process (CARE)…because at Edward R. Murrow, we CARE about our students." Faculty, families, and students shared that the school community has created a safe and inclusive learning environment in which students take on a variety of leadership roles. Students shared that all students work well together and teachers respect their privacy when addressing any issues that arise. Students also shared that there are a variety of ways the faculty helps them to celebrate diversity, including a schoolwide diversity circle, Chinese New Year celebration, and a Day of Silence to support Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) research and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) rights. One student noted that the school is a "safe place to express yourself."

- Students are active members of the School Leadership Team, student government, and alliance organizations. Junior and senior students mentor grade nine students as part of the school's Little Sibs program. Mentors receive training and provide support and guidance for mentees on a variety of topics including navigating the building, academic expectations, study habits, extracurricular activities and clubs, choosing electives, and college research. Students initiate the development of new student clubs and choose from a fall and spring club directory. The spring 2018 directory included information on student run groups such as the Council for Unity, Peer Mediation and Peer Tutoring, and clubs such as the Activism Club, Feminism Club, and Murrow Green Team. Students also produce newsletters such as the Club Newsletter and Senior News Update that keep students informed of new club opportunities, updates, fundraisers, and senior deadlines.

- Assigned guidance counselors, deans, and mentors support students with personalized assistance so that students are known well by at least one adult. Faculty provides workshops to develop students' academic and personal skills. This year, workshops included sessions on safety and security at school, bullying, bystander intervention, using social media responsibly, and how to use your voice for positive change. Teachers shared that each year the number of student initiated clubs and events grows, with students finding new ways to share their interests, talents, and concerns. For example, this year, students joined the national response to the rise in school shootings and organized a student led walkout to protest violence in schools. Students shared that the clubs and opportunities at the school inspire them to come to school. The school consistently maintains an overall attendance rate of 91 percent.

Quality Indicator:	**2.2 Assessment**	**Rating:**	**Developing**

Findings

Teachers create assessments that loosely align to the curricula and have begun to develop and pilot schoolwide rubrics. Although some teachers have begun to regularly check for understanding during instruction, most classrooms reflect the inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Although current assessments provide teachers with feedback on student achievement, there is limited evidence of actionable feedback to students. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to instruction to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Leadership shared sample rubrics being piloted across contents in order to make formative assessment part of the norm in all classrooms. Rubrics are being developed to assess responses to Regents based questions. Teams of teachers are analyzing the effectiveness and alignment of the pilot rubrics to select the best tools to use schoolwide. Rubrics are used to assess *challenge and achievement, collaboration, content skills,* and *levels of engagement.* The rubrics enable teachers to assess student performance on a scale from Level 1 to Level 4. For example, a Level 4 on a pilot skills rubric read that students can "successfully participate in the activity by following <u>all</u> instructions and can guide others who are struggling by telling them about the <u>next steps</u> and <u>why</u> they are performing them." A Level 4 on a pilot *challenge and achieve* rubric read that students can "successfully explain <u>all </u>aspects of today's aim by writing <u>complete</u> statements and using <u>evidence</u>. I can help others who are struggling by <u>teaching</u> them the topic."

- Teachers use the data from current and pilot assessments to gather information on students' levels of achievement and shared that they have begun to share feedback with students verbally. However, there was limited evidence of written feedback and next steps on rubrics or student work samples. A review of student work samples showed that some teachers have begun to include actionable feedback on written English Language Arts (ELA) assignments. For example, on a Topic, Evidence, Analysis and Link (TEAL) writing task, the teacher provided written feedback to the student. The teacher commended the student for their use of vocabulary words and strong evidence. This teacher also noted that the student was summarizing when they should have been analyzing the evidence and suggested that the student focus on explaining the conflict. Feedback such as this was not present across contents.

- Across classrooms visited, few teachers consistently checked for student understanding during instruction and only some teachers have incorporated self and peer assessment tools to enable students to assess their own learning and provide feedback to their peers. During a science lesson on the skeletal system, the teacher checked for understanding by visiting student groups and probing them with questions such as, "How do you know it's not a femur?" and "Can you identify the mandible?" In this class, teacher questions sometimes led students to higher-levels of thinking and investigation. Other times the teacher over-prompted or provided students with the correct response. In an *Enduring Issues* unit*,* teachers prompted students to assess their own learning using *Enduring Issues* reflection prompts. Prompts included "What was easy about writing this essay?", "What was hard about writing this essay?", and "Next time, my teacher can support me with…" Overall, checks for understanding and self-assessment opportunities were inconsistent, hindering students and teachers from making effective adjustments to enhance learning.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty align curricula to content and Common Core Learning Standards and integrate opportunities to apply skills. Curricula and tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits such as annotation, analysis of content, and opportunities to explain and draw conclusions.

Impact

Purposeful curricular decisions build coherence, emphasize higher- order skills, and promote college and career readiness for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across lessons and units reviewed, teachers identify the aim or learning objective and the aligned Common Core standards. For example, an ELA lesson plan includes the aim. "How can we propel conversations about a piece of literature by posing and responding to questions that stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas?" This lesson includes standards for reading, speaking, and listening, and includes the learning objective that students will, "Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas."

- Across lessons plans reviewed, teachers intend for students to make connections and apply their learning. A biology lesson plans for groups of students to use their research data to make claims and provide evidence to support them. A math lesson plans for students to practice using learned methods to solve quadratic equations and then engage in small group discussions regarding which methods are best used for different types of quadratics and why. A social studies lesson requires students to have a turn and talk discussion to transfer their knowledge of the impact of technology on the Inca people and the impact of technology today, using modern day examples.

- Teachers make purposeful decisions to include rigorous tasks and skills in their lessons. Teachers incorporate essential questions that ask students to analyze and draw conclusions. For example, a science lesson includes the essential question, "How do the sediments deposited by glaciers and streams compare to each other?" In this plan, the teacher also requires students to take detailed notes, make tables, and draw labeled illustrations to support their analysis of the content. Teachers across classes use a *5-3-1 Close Reading* protocol to support students in the annotation and analysis of text. The *5-3-1* protocol requires students to read and annotate a document on their own and select five important points, then work with a partner to narrow it to three key points and finally join with another partner group to identify the "one single most important point."

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings

Teaching practices align to articulated schoolwide CARE values and are informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Across classrooms, students participate in small group and turn and talk activities.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products and discussions that reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Leadership shared that instructional practices are guided by CARE values and the instructional focus on discussion techniques. Leadership also shared that the focus on discussion was in response to teacher data and a need to enhance the use of questioning and discussion techniques as identified in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching.* Classroom visits demonstrated that teaching practices align to the values of **r**especting others and **e**ngaging students in learning. Across classes, students were actively engaged in a variety of tasks demonstrating respect for their peers and teachers. In a global studies lesson, students respectfully debated the importance of key details in a document before coming to consensus on the most important information.

- Across grades and contents, teachers support students in the development of meaningful work products, including works of art and music. Teachers work with students in art classes and clubs to produce meaningful visual arts pieces. Students participating in a sound technology class created a video of students on a trip to Rome and Greece, which included vocals by choral students and filming and editing by music technology students. Music technology students also create music tracks for the school planetarium, dance performances, student audition tapes, and choir contests.

- Across classes visited, teachers engaged students in a variety of discussion formats including discussions with a partner, turn and talk prompts, *5-3-1* protocols, and small group discussions. In an Advanced Placement biology class, students conducted experiments on the inhibited or stimulated growth of seedlings. In this class, the teacher prompted small groups of students to analyze and discuss their data, collect evidence, and support their claims. The teacher asked students, "How can you use the data to support your claim?" Students immediately began to review their measurements and graphs. One group noted that they originally predicted garlic would inhibit the growth of carrot seeds but the data suggested it may stimulate growth. The teacher then reminded the students to assess the results based on the confidence interval, which led to a reevaluation of the data and further student discussion.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations via emails, newsletters, and observation feedback and provide training to the entire staff. School leaders and staff effectively communicate with families via an online grading platform, mid-year reports, emails, and workshops.

Impact

Faculty and administration hold each other accountable for teaching and learning expectations using videotaped lessons, observations, and shared feedback. School leaders and staff effectively partner with families to support student progress toward learning expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teaching, learning, and professional development. The principal outlined professional learning expectations in memos to staff distributed at the beginning of the fall 2017 and spring 2018 professional development cycles. In each memo, the principal aligned expectations to the Growing and Developing Professionally domain of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The principal also reminded staff that "the complexity of teaching requires continued growth and development in order for teachers to remain current." He also shared that, "growth in content, pedagogy, and information technology are essential to good teaching." Memos also highlight key indicators of developing professionally. The fall 2017 schoolwide professional development schedule listed sessions from September 2017 to December 2017 and included topics such as lesson planning, instructional focus, Domain 3 Instruction, differentiation, and inter-visitation. Memos also included resources available to staff for self-directed learning, including online resources, professional literature, inter-visitation opportunities, peer collaboration, and union and central New York City Department of Education supports.

- Leadership distributes *Murrow Minutes* and *CARE Corner* monthly newsletters to all staff. The January *CARE Corner* highlighted and defined the professional learning foci, including discussion techniques and strategies, rigor, and differentiation. It defined rigor as, "To ensure that students are intellectually engaged, lesson tasks, activities, and questions need to promote high-level student thinking." Leaders and teachers shared that they hold each other accountability for the success of their students and that teachers collaborate to plan, develop, and share best practices. Teachers participate in inter-visitations and volunteer to be videotaped during instruction in order for colleagues to be able to observe the implementation of expected practices. Teachers use inter-visitations and video observations to develop their own practices and provide colleagues with feedback. A sample inter-visitation tool focused teacher feedback on engagement through questioning and assessment and asked teachers to share the strengths and weaknesses of their colleagues' discussion techniques and to suggest ways the teacher could promote more student-based discussion throughout the lesson.

- Parents shared that administrators and faculty effectively communicate with them regarding their children's progress with frequent calls, emails, texts, flyers, and access to their children's grades using an online grading platform. Parents participate in a variety of parent and teacher run activities and workshops. Activities have included paint night fundraisers, meet and mingle potluck, and freshman breakfast and workshop topics have included bullying versus conflict, emotional intelligence, anxiety and depression among teenagers, college financial aid, and college exploration night. Parents partner with the school to support school programs as Arts Patrons, leading fundraisers including regular ice-cream sales, concession stands at student performances, and the sale of advertisement space in school programs to local vendors.

Additional Finding

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings

Teachers systematically analyze elements of teacher and student work through collaborative inquiry. Embedded leadership structures enable teachers to have input on key decisions regarding assessment design, course development, and instructional supplements.

Impact

Collaboration results in shared improvements in teacher practices such as turn and talk strategies, small and large group discussion techniques, and mastery for groups of students. Teachers play an integral role in decisions that positively affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The vast majority of teachers collaborate on grade level and content teams to systematically analyze teachers' practices and student data. Teacher teams analyze teacher work based on observations of instruction and student outcomes and develop shared practices across grades, teams, and schoolwide. Teams create resource kits to support new practices on their team that are then shared with other teams and implemented schoolwide. The math team created a resource kit that students could use to support math tasks. This idea quickly spread to the science and social studies department, who created content kits of their own. An ELA team created an annotation guide and resources, which has now spread to all grades and content areas. Revisions to the TEAL guide and rubric, as well as scaffolds for students have been shared schoolwide. Teams across the school have agreed to a schoolwide purpose for teamwork and criteria for highly effective teacher teams.

- Teachers shared that teamwork has resulted in common strategies and language of learning for teachers and students. Across the school, students use common teacher-developed resources such as TEAL paragraph tip sheets, annotation guides, and 5-3-1 graphic organizers. Teachers also stated that their collaborations have resulted in increased mastery for groups of students. A comparison of student data from the Regents High School Examination – Comprehensive Examination in English from 2016 to 2017 demonstrated an increase in both passing rates and mastery levels. The ELA overall performance data increased from 88 percent to 92 percent passing and from 52 percent mastery to 58 percent mastery. For this same assessment, the students with disabilities passing rate increased from 42 percent to 82 percent and the percent of students reaching mastery increased from 0 percent to 32 percent. A comparison of 2016 and 2017 Regents High School Examination in Algebra 1 data also demonstrated improvement for general education students, students with disabilities, and English Language Learners.

- Effective teacher leadership structures are in place to support the development of teacher leadership practices as team leads, school leadership team members, peer collaborative teachers, and members of an inter-disciplinary differentiation team. As leaders, teachers play an integral role in curriculum development and the development of teacher resources for use schoolwide. As leaders of instruction, curriculum, and resource development, teachers have created departmental and schoolwide tools such as *Differentiation Moves* and *10 Easy Ways to Differentiate.* Teachers have revised and created new tasks, scaffolds, and rubrics for *Enduring Issues* units and developed departmental indicators, tips, and best practices for highly effective questioning and discussion techniques, which have been shared and implemented schoolwide.