Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 361 East Flatbush Early Childhood School

Early Childhood 22K361

3109 Newkirk Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11226

Principal: Tiffany Frazier

Dates of Review:
May 2, 2017 - May 3, 2017

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. 361 East Flatbush Early Childhood School serves students in grade K through grade 2. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and provide learning opportunities on professionalism and instruction that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, including use of the workshop model and balanced literacy. School leaders and teachers consistently communicate expectations to families that are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

There are clear expectations for staff, and a system of training and accountability for teaching and learning is in place. Families receive ongoing feedback and support that help them to understand the demands of the Common Core.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders communicate high expectations for staff about professionalism and instruction that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Beginning with the faculty handbook, and continuing with the principal’s daily message, letters to staff, and classroom walkthroughs, school leaders are clear about expectations. A principal’s January letter to staff about expectations for student writing provides clarity about the use of rubrics, organization of the writing folder, and use of pre and post-assessments. School records also show that, about four weeks later, teachers were held accountable for these expectations by being asked to submit two students’ writing folders for review by the school leader, who used a common template to provide feedback, as well as next steps for teachers. For example, one piece of feedback asked how many times a student was able to rehearse before starting to write, and encouraged the teacher to provide opportunities to rehearse their story first through drawing, labeling and writing before beginning a portfolio piece. This practice demonstrates clarity of expectations, and a system of support and accountability for meeting those expectations.

- Other expectations for teachers include following the school’s curricula, teachers taking ownership of their teaching, use of the workshop model, incorporating components of balanced literacy, and differentiated small group instruction and tasks. Professional learning records demonstrate a focus on promoting games in math, and creating differentiated word problems for small groups. School leader walkthroughs and classroom observations are used as a system of accountability for these expectations. A letter to second grade teachers from the assistant principal after a math learning walk echoed expectations for the learning environment from the staff handbook, provided teachers with pictures of expected practice, and clear expectations for improvement: “Games are available to students in every room I visited in some fashion. It is the expectation that the bins for games have identifiable partnerships and be on a shelf accessible for students.” Teachers in a question and answer session articulated that mutual accountability is growing as teachers seek out support from one another.

- Parents shared that communication is a strength of the school, and that there is daily communication with teachers and administrators. Parents shared that texts and emails with teachers are the most common way that parents receive updates on their child’s progress at school. At the parent meeting, a parent shared, “I talk to my child’s teachers every day. I am here every day during afterschool and I get feedback every day.” The school community also hosts events three to four times a year called, Parents as Partners, where parents come into classrooms and learn about content specific expectations and get to engage in instruction and games alongside their children. A few parents also shared ways that teachers are helping them to help their children at home. “For my daughter, she is a great reader and they send me home notices on how I can push her. They don't keep her stagnant because she is ahead, they push her to her potential.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Indicator:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Findings**

Units and lesson plans inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits for all students, as not all plans contained well-defined tasks. Lesson plans are beginning to reflect planning to provide access to students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), with some general modifications for students.

**Impact**

A heavy emphasis on what the teacher does in lesson plans and units, rather than what the students do, provides limited opportunities for access to rigor and cognitive engagement for a diversity of learners, including students with disabilities and ELLs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Unit plans, lessons, and academic tasks observed during the review inconsistently emphasized rigor for all students, including students with disabilities and ELLs. In four of the lesson plans provided during classroom visits, there were no tasks planned, making rigor difficult to assess. For example, a second grade reading lesson plan contained three sections: a warm up, shared reading, and next steps. The warm up stated, “Sing Parts of a Plant. Each person reads a line.” In the shared reading row, the descriptor was written, “Readers have to read the clues around the text to figure out tricky words.” The next steps row of the lesson plan was blank. The plan included no clearly defined tasks or strategy to be taught, making an emphasis on rigor for any students difficult to define. Other plans, such as a math lesson plan on analyzing data from a graph, provided for a math congress, and an instructional strategy to foster student thinking and discussion. Though it included more detail, it included no questions for students to ponder, only what the teacher would tell them. The lesson also included student partnerships, with a notation about language for a few students, demonstrating some planning for access for ELLs, and planning for students who were, “doing well in the unit.” Overall, an emphasis on rigor in lesson plans and tasks is not yet consistent across grades and subject for students with disabilities and ELLs.

- In seven of the eleven lesson plans observed, there was little planning or refinement observed for students with disabilities and ELLs. A kindergarten lesson plan aligned to speaking and listening standards offered more individualized supports, such as providing frequent breaks, and the purposeful pairing of students with adults for support during the lesson. A kindergarten reading lesson for ELLs demonstrated refined teaching points for two small groups of students, with one group focused on sharing ideas from a story and the other focused on the concept of print, reflecting some planning for a diversity of learners, including ELLs. While this demonstrates some planning for access and cognitive engagement of students with disabilities and ELLs, it does not yet reflect a curriculum that has been refined for a diversity of learners.

- While some units were planned utilizing templates that did not call for planning or refinement for students with disabilities and ELLs, a few were planned with templates that asked for modifications, or guidance for making adaptations for diverse learners. For example, a second grade unit of study on becoming a strong independent reader contained some general modifications to support students with disabilities and ELLs such as, picture supports on charts, acting out, and small group interactive shared writing books created by the teacher and students. Similarly, a first grade reading unit on opinion writing broke up writing components, such as developing a lead, use of transitions, and elaboration, and matched students to groups during the unit, with adapted lesson topics to support students within the groups, some of whom were students with disabilities and ELLs.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

Lesson structures and routines inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and opportunities for student thinking and participation.

**Impact**

Teacher-led instruction, and an inconsistent use of scaffolds and supports, limits the ability of students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, to consistently demonstrate high levels of thinking in appropriately challenging work products.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teaching strategies, including scaffolding and supports, inconsistently provided multiple entry points for students, leading to uneven levels of student engagement in appropriately challenging tasks. In six of eleven classes visited, teachers provided supports for students, such as modeling, anchor charts, and student toolkits in literacy that included supports such as alphabet charts with letter sounds and editing checklists. In some classrooms, there were anchor charts for expectations for partnered work and turn and talks for students as they worked. Music was also seen as a scaffold in three classrooms. High levels of scaffolding were seen in a first grade writing class where support for students, such as a writing checklist, was in their folders at the desk.

- Despite the school's student body being over twenty percent ELLs, little focus on vocabulary and language was observed as a support to students, even in classes that were specifically for ELLs. As a student shared, "Sometimes students don’t know why we are doing things or we don’t speak the language and you don’t know what they are saying." This was also an echoed need in the teacher discussion at the vertical ELL team observed. Teachers at the meeting discussed a student, and the five or six other ELLs in his class, and the need to create more opportunities for students to learn new words, through use of technology or labeling of the classroom environment. In some classes, students had personalized word banks, but they were sheets with lists of words, sometimes with pictures, sometimes without, making them of little use to some students.

- Opportunities for students to engage in high-level discussions were mixed across classrooms, with student-to-student discussion high in a few classrooms, teacher-led classes in others, and unclear learning tasks in a few that yielded lower level student thinking and discussion. In two classrooms, no student work was produced at all. Teacher-led instruction dominated the lesson in four classes, providing little opportunity for students to demonstrate high levels of discussion. Student to student discussion were high in four classes, including a math classes where students gave each other written glows and grows on picture and bar graphs that they created about student likes and dislikes at school, such as recess and word study. Students engaged in high level discussions, not just about the content, but also about how the students had collected and displayed data in their graphs, and how they could improve their work. A few students talked about the difficulty of collecting data, and another student suggested that in the future, she should record the names of classmates who responded, to ensure that she has accurate data, and knows where to go to get more.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Findings

Teachers' assessment and practices provide limited actionable feedback to students. Teachers are inconsistent in making on-the-spot adjustments in the classroom to meet student-learning needs.

#### Impact

Students receive limited actionable feedback. Ongoing checks for understanding across classrooms are inconsistently used to make effective adjustments to meet student learning needs.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently use rubrics and feedback to provide students with actionable feedback on their work. Much of the student work shared during the student meeting, did not have rubrics or teacher comments about the quality of the student's work. As a student shared, “The only time I got a feedback was on one math work. In writing, I sometimes get feedback when she puts it [the writing piece] on the wall.” One math piece shared by another student had a grade of a level four, and the following feedback, “You used two strategies that show good understanding of place value. Next time, decide what strategy is more efficient.” From this feedback, it is unclear whether the student did the right thing by demonstrating two ways to find the answer, or did not, but somehow still received a level four, sending mixed messages to the student about possible next steps. Some student writing shared had a checklist that students and teachers could use to determine a student's next step regarding achievement.

- In classroom visits on both days of the review, student work folders observed in classrooms had mostly ungraded work, or work with check marks or x’s, with no explanations or actionable feedback attached to guide the student toward a correct answer. Work posted on the walls in classrooms sometimes was graded, and provided students with next steps. In one classroom, a teacher provided a student with a glow and grow, “I love the way you drew your picture. Next time try to explain your piece.” Other times, in the early pre-kindergarten classrooms especially, student work products did not have feedback, but teacher written descriptors of the students’ writing. In one classrooms, collections of student work in folders across the subject areas contained rubrics, grades, and feedback to students. The collection of assignments with grades and progress throughout the year was also demonstrated on the cover of the folders, and demonstrated a portrait of student mastery over time. This practice was not widespread across classrooms.

- In about half of the classrooms visited, teachers checked in with students about their understanding during the lesson, asking questions or reviewing student work, but few adjustments were seen to meet student-learning needs. In three of the classrooms, the teachers conferenced with students, and used questioning with groups or individual students to make adjustments for individual learners. In one reading class, no adjustment was made for the majority of the class, and students toiled away, unclear about the task, or looking at books that were too hard for them to read. In another writing class, the teacher listened in to a student group debating the difference between “how to” stories and “all about” stories, but didn’t interject to clarify student misunderstanding about the genres, creating a missed opportunity for clarifying student thinking and meeting student learning needs. In another class, the teacher asked students to give a thumbs up or thumbs down to check for understanding. While many students complied, seven abstained, and the teacher went on with the lesson, without clarity about whether or not students understood the material.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps that are connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and articulates clear expectations for teacher practice. Teacher observation data is used effectively to design and create professional development.

Impact

Teacher support, supervision, and professional learning are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and elevate schoolwide instructional practices.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders support all teachers, including those in need of improvement or teachers that are new to the profession, with frequent cycles of observation. School leaders created cycles of observation, and ensure that each teacher is observed an equal number of times teaching literacy and math curricula to students. In the beginning of the year, the school leaders conduct many of the observations together, especially for teachers on formal improvement plans, and then decide who will continue to observe and support through the next cycle. This is the same process for establishing the cycles of observation and support for teachers who are new to the building. This support for teachers in need of improvement, or new teachers extends beyond support from school leaders, and includes support from a mentor or coach. As a new teacher shared, "This is my first year here and the literacy coach gives me a lot of in the moment feedback. There is also a lot of modeling for me, and feedback for me as I teach."

- Advance data, along with teacher commentary, demonstrate that observations are frequent. Records demonstrated that teacher observations provide effective feedback that is tied to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. As a third year teacher shared, "I have been observed four times formally and two more times informally. I receive feedback in a reasonable amount of time, and it's explicit. Sometimes, it is to visit another teacher, and I welcome the collaboration. I feel that they really get a sense of who I am as a teacher, and they use that and it makes it more useful to me." Teachers are provided with clear next steps, and although student work and data was not always mentioned in observation reports, teachers shared that they are often asked, or volunteer to bring, student work products from the lesson. Teachers also shared that they regularly upload student assessment data into an online data tracker, and this data is often discussed along with observation of the classroom visit. As one teacher shared, "We upload all of our data on the Google Drive so it is accessible during our talk after the visit. If they leave before the lesson ends, they will ask to bring the student work, especially in writing."

- School leaders have an effective system in place for designing and facilitating professional learning. School leaders identify teacher leaders in the building, who serve as teacher ambassadors, leading at the district and school level, and demonstrate an approach to succession planning. Professional learning is aligned to the observations cycle, and opportunities for teachers include teacher visits, internal learning led by school leaders and teacher ambassadors, as well as professional learning opportunities at the district, or with external coaches. As a teacher shared, "The most valuable professional learning for me came from outside of the school. As an ambassador, I am collaborating with teachers from across the district, and then I come back to turnkey with my colleagues. It has been a push for me, and it has been extremely helpful." Another teacher pointed to the math work at the district level. "It has given me a different way of teaching math. I am moving away from computation to reasoning and thinking more about mental reasoning. Having teachers do demo lessons for us has really helped to improve my practice, especially student engagement."
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
Teachers look at student work and collaborate on vertical teams; they are not yet engaged in a structured inquiry-based process. This collaboration does not yet result in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Impact
An inquiry approach is developing across teams, and as such, teams are focused on student learning needs, rather than the efficacy of new teaching strategies put in place to promote progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders shared that the school’s teams are all vertical teams, focused on student writing, and include an English Language Learner (ELL) focused team, vertical writing, Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) partners, and special educators who provide self-contained services. Teachers who do not fit in to any of these categories meet together. The school also has a wellness committee, led by the physical education teacher, and focus on fitness, nutrition, and healthy snacks. The team leads several initiatives to improve students’ physical activity, such as Move to Improve, which integrates movement in the classroom, and the Mighty Millers, a running club for students. While the principal shared that teams have selected students to focus on throughout the year that the data specialist will put together at the end of the year so that they can track their progress in, teachers at a question and answer session and the team meeting did not articulate this as a consistent practice.

- The teacher team observed during the review engaged in a structured collaboration as an ELL vertical team, with a presenting teacher sharing opinion writing pieces, culminating pieces on what they could improve in their school. The school also has a wellness committee, led by the physical education teacher, and focus on fitness, nutrition, and healthy snacks. The team leads several initiatives to improve students’ physical activity, such as Move to Improve, which integrates movement in the classroom, and the Mighty Millers, a running club for students. While the principal shared that teams have selected students to focus on throughout the year that the data specialist will put together at the end of the year so that they can track their progress in, teachers at a question and answer session and the team meeting did not articulate this as a consistent practice.

- While the presenting teacher at the vertical ELL team meeting left with some possible strategies to try with three of her students, it was not clear that the review of student work leads to analysis of student work that results in progress toward goals for groups of students. The presenting teacher shared, “This student was not communicating at all, and now she is talking about her pictures; she can explain it. But take a look at her on demand piece, she is ready to write. I always let her choose her paper and she stays comfortable. I must have given her this paper by accident, and she really stepped up.” This demonstrates that perhaps this accidental adjustment to paper choice, a product of the team’s focus on student deficits, rather than strategies that can be implemented and studied over time, created student improvement. It was not clear that the team made curricular adjustments from this new learning, or was able to demonstrate progress toward goals for groups of students.