Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 89
Elementary 02M089
201 Warren St.
Manhattan
NY 10282

Principal: Veronica Najjar

Dates of Review:
May 16, 2017 - May 17, 2017

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

School Quality Ratings

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
Across the large majority of classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the belief that students learn best when they have collaborative learning experiences that involve high levels of thinking, participation, and ownership.

Impact
The school is guided by the strong belief that students learn best and that meaningful work products are produced when they are involved in in-depth study of material, and when learning is active, conducted in small groups and tailored to students’ individual needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school believes in making cross curricula connections in all grade levels, with a strong emphasis on social studies. Fifth grade students studied the Oregon Trail for several months and their efforts culminated with a public presentation of their work. In fifth grade classrooms every bulletin board was covered with writing, information and graphics that were designed and created by the students themselves. Groups of students collaborated on a scrap book detailing the experience of a family from the time period, and each individual student kept a detailed journal told from the perspective of an individual from that time period.

- In seven of nine classes visited, students worked in small groups with classmates while teachers either walked around to monitor learning or met with clusters of students in instructional groups. This learning center approach was described by the administration and was seen across grade levels. The approach allows teachers to provide students with ample personalized instruction, while ensuring that students are engaged and working on material that best suits their needs. For example, in a fourth grade classroom a subset of kids worked independently on laptops on Reading A-Z (a website that provides books that match students’ levels), a small group met with the teacher on the rug to work on number strings, and groups of kids read independently or worked with partners who were part of their book club.

- In a first grade classroom students were paired up and each pair of students was reading about a different animal. Students talked with one another after reading the book and were challenged to begin listing ways humans use products from their animal. For example, students who read about sheep wrote a list that included the words sweater and wool. While students worked, the teacher circulated and prompted their thinking with probing questions.

- In a kindergarten classroom the school’s emphasis on independent learning was evident as all students engaged in an independent writing activity. Beside every student were specific goals that students were working on. For example, one student had a goal of “placing space between my words so work could be clearly read by someone else.” This child was seen walking across the room to find a “word spacer” (popsicle stick) that he used after each of the words he wrote. This level of independence and goal-driven and self-directed learning was seen across classrooms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.1 Goals and Action Plans</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

There is a short list of clear, focused school-level goals and action plans in the CEP and other planning documents that are tracked for progress and adjusted accordingly which are developed with members of the broader school community.

**Impact**

While school goals are developed with the input of teachers and communicated to the broader community, more quantitative math goals focused on student results would allow the school to further refine instruction and target the needs of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school leader maintains on-going and frequent communication with families and the broader school community. Every month the principal attends Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and provides updates to the community about what is happening, while listening to parents and guardians about their ideas and concerns. An open-door policy is maintained by the school’s leadership, and several parents spoke about the principal and assistant principal’s openness to ideas and feedback. One such idea that emerged a few years ago led to the Learning Link series that has been well attended. Learning Link is an opportunity for the school to support parents with the learning experiences happening in school so they could best support their kids at home. Parents spoke about Learning Links that covered topics such as bullying, screen time and math instruction.

- The school actively assesses and sets goals based on the reading assessments given to students at the end and beginning of every year. In reading Fountas and Pinnell results are gathered formally three times a year, and teachers periodically check on progress informally throughout the year. Parents receive updates from the school on progress reports, report cards and during parent teacher conferences. In this way goals are tracked to accelerate student learning and progress, as the next level of goals are made transparent and public to the student and family alike. In math, progress is monitored through pre, mid-year and end-of-year assessments, and through constant monitoring of growth on unit tests and formative assessments. The school acknowledged they could further track math growth by setting quantitative growth goals that they could share widely with the school community. For example, all students, teachers and many families know that the school is focusing on increasing students’ mathematical vocabularies and their ability to enhance their mathematical dialogue, but larger quantitative goals about increasing the percentages of proficient and advance proficient students are not yet in place. Using data from previous years about the stress experienced by fourth graders as they gear up for the middle school process, the school has partnered with The Child Life Institute to target this age group with stress reduction techniques. The school reports a reduction in conflict and an increase in social problem solving for the students in this grade level.

- Teachers complete surveys at the end of every year detailing the professional growth areas they would like to further explore in the following year. The administration examines these surveys to both set schoolwide goals, and to tailor supports for individuals and groups of teachers. For example, this year’s goal of deepening the feedback teachers provide for students was developed in part because several teachers identified this as a growth area.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
Lesson and unit plans ensure rigorous habits that require higher order thinking, and academic tasks are consistently planned and refined based on student data.

Impact
All learners are engaged in inter-disciplinary, thematic learning experiences within a coherent curriculum that promotes acquisition of college and career skills and provides them opportunities to interact with a variety of content and demonstrate their understanding in a variety of ways.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses TERC mathematics and has recently purchased the latest edition that has been updated to meet the requirements embedded in the Common Core. Planning for math has been supported by Metamorphosis since last spring, as teachers have modified their math routines to support deeper mathematical understanding. For example, teachers are routinely working with number strings to help students sharpen their mental math capabilities, and to support them with the identification of number patterns. Additionally, on the spot math assessments are consistently implemented, including identifying students’ “just-right” math facts, and student tasks and assignments are modified according to results. In Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classrooms, teachers utilize parallel teaching to ensure that specific student needs are met and attended to in smaller group settings. This practice was routinely observed around the building.

- ICT classes on each grade support the varying needs of a diverse set of learners. Planning for parallel teaching and small group instruction is evident in teacher lesson plans, and accommodations for various student needs are met. In one lesson plan a teacher noted the “Goals, reference charts and books are differentiated to meet each student’s needs,” which was a practice seen across classrooms and grade levels, and which is a reflection of the cycle of assessment and planning seen throughout the school. In several lesson plans there was a section called “Intervention” and a section called “Extension,” indicating that planning is happening for students that need support, as well as students that need further challenge. An example of an intervention in a third grade lesson plan was “Clarify the task,” that included a description of how the teacher would ensure that students understood what the quantities in the data meant for a given math lesson. The extension in that particular lesson with a description of how the teacher would make sure all kids knew what was to challenge kids to create a new double bar graph with a new set of data.

- English Language Learners (ELLs) who are new to the country are supported in a variety of ways. A parent who arrived from Brazil shared that her Portuguese speaking daughter was deliberately paired in a classroom with another Portuguese speaker so that she could feel comfortable while she was learning English. In a fourth grade classroom, a student who had recently arrived from Japan was working on the same worksheet as her classmates with the assistance of Google Translation. By making content available with translation services and through strategic partnering, as well as through the English as a New Language (ENL) instruction that’s provided to all students who require it, the school is able to emphasize higher order thinking for all students.
Findings
Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based teams supported by content experts, and a variety of distributed leadership structures are embedded throughout the school that allow for authentic teacher leadership.

Impact
The inquiry teams focus on math this school year has led to greater teacher understanding of mathematical concepts and higher level questioning. Teacher teams lead the development and refinement of Social Studies themed units of study that extend for several months at a time, and which require high levels of teacher communication and collaboration continually to develop and refine.

Supporting Evidence

- Student work is at the center of regularly held grade level meetings, and all classroom and special education teachers attend these meetings. For the past year and a half the school has been working with Metamorphosis Education, a math-content professional development group that focuses on cultivating and strengthening teacher learning communities. This emphasis on adult learning was evident in the observed teacher team meeting that centered on students' mathematical thinking. Teachers looked at what students could do on a word problem when not provided with teacher support, and then carefully logged student strengths, growth areas and feedback questions they would ask the students. In this way teachers were building their own mathematical knowledge, while enhancing their own skills as teachers. In a third grade math lesson, evidence of the higher level thinking that the teachers were exposed to in their sessions was reflected in the classroom through the level of conversation and conjecture students were having. Students’ use of academic vocabulary--like naming and distinguishing between the associative and commutitive properties in third grade--reflects the adult learning and emphasis on mathematical thinking. Teachers reported gains in students solving complex, multi-step word problems--and parents, teachers and leaders support observation evidence that students are using advanced mathematical language during class discussions.

- Teachers take the initiative to lead professional development for one another. For instance, a teacher in the building led a training over the course of five weeks on guided reading for the first grade team. The second grade teachers heard about how effective it was so the principal and the teacher leading the session decided to extend the workshop to second grade, supporting teachers with the development of more cohesive plans, providing them with a broad variety of templates, and general helping them become more impactful instructors., leading to schoolwide gains in reading according to the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment that is conducted multiple times throughout the year. An ICT teacher who was new to teaching collaboratively shared how supportive the administration and teaching staff was in helping her transition to her new role. She shared how she visited ICT classrooms in the school, and how she and her partner were provided with a range of professional resources by both leadership and teachers. This level of community support was widely cited by teachers, and captured by a teacher who said, "We are never alone because we have strong leaders and colleagues."

- The school works hard to keep the families and community involved in what is happening in the school, so that they could be educational partners supporting kids in the home. Learning Links is an educational series conducted by the school. Sessions for families include awareness about screen time for kids, supporting kids with current approaches to math instruction, and integrating social studies throughout the building. These Learning Links sessions are often led by teachers in the building, providing them with opportunities to not only contribute to the messages that families receive, but taking real leadership on the scope and depth of the subject matter.
Findings
The school leaders communicate high expectations to staff and families through Learning Link sessions, Family Fridays, and grade-level academic celebrations, and students are supported on their path to college and career readiness.

Impact
A high level of communication and contact between the school and families provides everyone with a mutual understanding and respect for the rigorous academic work happening in the school. Leaders and staff model high expectations and respect for all through their regular communications with families, and their expectations for college and career readiness have been communicated regularly supporting all students and families in the school.

Supporting Evidence
- High expectations are regularly communicated to the staff. Regular emails to teachers about operational and instructional matters are shared, and the cabinet meets weekly to ensure communication across the building is clear and direct. Staff are regularly built up and encouraged with notes, comments and feedback as the two leaders in the building were described as helpful, present and accessible. Teacher surveys provide teachers with opportunities to share their ideas about what is and isn’t working, and leadership is responsive to the needs expressed. For example, teachers expressed a desire to learn more from one another and an intervisitation schedule was set up so that individuals could be supported with their specific needs.

- Family Friday events (the first Friday of every month) provide opportunities for families to come and see the school in action. According to families and staff, nearly every family attends. Parents shared that these events help families understand the high expectations expected of their kids because they get a chance to see instruction in action, look in kid’s notebooks, and see the evolution of projects as they change over time.

- Parents have a high level of communication with the school and are regularly updated with class updates and school updates. Updates on reading level are provided after each iteration of the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment is completed, and individual students who are falling behind in math or English Language Arts (ELA) are invited to early intervention and receive ample supports from the school. As the school prepares for exams in the spring parents are notified and additional supports are provided, if needed. Parents, teachers and leaders shared that November and March conferences are never the first time problems are shared, because there is a high level of communication happening between the home and school.

- Parents are kept well informed of the middle school articulation process which begins with discussions at the end of fourth grade and the beginning of fifth grade. Students applying to competitive middle schools are supported with applications, and families shared that cumbersome application process was made clear due to the support provided by the school.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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</table>

Findings

School-wide, teachers use common assessments aligned to the curricula and ongoing checks for understanding that include students’ consistent engagement in peer and self-reflection opportunities.

Impact

Formative and summative assessment data provides teachers with a clear portrait of student mastery, and new methods to assess math growth are recognized as a need. Students receive and provide to their peers meaningful feedback and can articulate their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school utilizes pre-printed “post-it” notes to provide various types of feedback to students. For example, some of them say at the top “You could add…” or, “You could try to…” then the teachers continue with a personalized note. There are also reflection prompts that state at the top “REFLECTION: I improved my work by…” Use of these pre-printed post-its, as well as teacher completed “grows and glows” were widely seen across classrooms, grades and subjects. A student shared that the notes help her “know what to focus on next.”

- Peer feedback practices are widespread across the school. When asked about feedback, students confirmed that it is a regular part of their school’s culture and routine, with one student sharing that “Feedback from my peers helps me with specifics, but feedback from my teacher helps me with the big ideas.” She went on to explain that peers provide feedback on things like spelling and specific sentences sounding good or not making sense, but that teachers give more comprehensive feedback about the overall piece of writing or project that she is working on. Another student provided two pieces of writing with post-it note comments written by a peer. The first one was from earlier in the year where the classmate had made more than twenty comments, and the more recent piece had about five. The student went on to explain that as the year went on she and her classmates learned to refine their feedback to focus on the most important areas. Further still, there is evidence that students self-assess by writing reflections and personal “grows and glows” after some assignments.

- This year the school has engaged with an external math professional development coach who has helped them refine their math assessment practices. Now, in addition to having pre, mid-year and end of year math assessments in place for each grade, the school has also developed systems for identifying students’ “just right” math needs. By administering on the spot assessments of students’ number sense and mastery of number facts, as teachers do with dry erase boards and with manipulatives, teachers are better able to provide instructional support that is tailored to the students’ specific needs.

- In a third grade class students worked on individualized reading goals that the teacher monitored progress on formally on assessments and informally by conducting reading conferences. Goals were turned into bookmarks that students could easily reference while reading. For example, a reader focusing on character traits has a bookmark reminding them that “A good reader pays attention to how a character acts,” and “A good reader pays attention to what a character says.” In this way, the goals that students set could be easily worked on and reinforced at a glance while reading independently or with a partner. Teachers monitored progress by circulating and having kids read to them. They supported students by pointing them to their book marks to help them become more independent and careful readers.