Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 089 Elmhurst
Elementary 24Q089
85-28 Britton Avenue
Queens
NY 11373

Principal: Laura La Sala

Dates of Review:
November 8, 2018 - November 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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. 089 Elmhurst serves students in grade K 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>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### 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>Area of Celebration</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>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools 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>Additional Finding</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings

Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult. The school community strategically aligns professional development (PD) around Stephen Covey’s *The Leader in Me*, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

Impact

Personalized interventions, routines, celebrations and supports such as the Calming Center help students learn positive behaviors and result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors. Incidents of student behavior not aligned to school beliefs have decreased dramatically.

Supporting Evidence

- Structures, such as having the school organized by academies has made it possible for school leaders, teachers and other staff members to personalize supports for students who are chronically absent, have behavioral challenges, or need social and emotional supports. There is a school leader assigned to each academy. In addition, the school has an attendance team that meets on a regular basis. For example, on an agenda there is evidence of the school having interventions in place for students with chronic absences such as conducting home visits, providing workshops, share school attendance policy and expectations to record interventions using an attendance monitoring system. Attendance rates over a three-year period of time reflect a percentage above 90 percent as compared to the city.

- The school community strategically align professional learning with family outreach to help students adopt effective academic and personal behaviors. For example, to launch the year, parents were invited to the school to meet teachers and were provided with information about the first three habits as part of Stephen Covey’s *The Leader in Me* program that would help parents to teach their children 21st century habits like organizational skills. The information provided was translated into Spanish. These habits were also reinforced in the school by teachers as they too receive ongoing training on how to teach the habits to help children adopt effective academic and personal behaviors. Students and teachers stated that the seven habits are taught and practiced creating a calm and positive environment. Students are able to articulate the importance of each habit in their own words. Students also expressed how these habits help them learn and become better students.

- The school adopted the principles of *The Leader in Me* three years ago. The theory of action was based on the high turnover of teachers and high levels of serious infractions as reported in the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS). As part of the school goals, *The Leader in Me* books were purchased for teachers and members of the School Leadership Team (SLT). Structures are in place such as the *Leader in Me* and calming center to help support students’ social emotional needs. There is a process for monitoring attendance by school staff and interventions are provided when there is a need. Data from the OORS report show a decrease in serious infractions over the course of three years. Students, parents and teachers stated that this program has transformed the school. Family outreach is embedded throughout the school. For example, there are workshops throughout the year to support parents and in turn help their children grow academically and improve personal behaviors.
Findings
School leaders and coaches support teachers’ development including those new to the profession with feedback and next steps from a cycle of classroom observations. The observation cycle has yet to evidence the strategic use of frequent observations, analysis of student work and data and alignment to teacher goals.

Impact
School leaders provide feedback using Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development. Feedback from coaches promote professional growth and teacher reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- There is a frequent cycle of observations focused on Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders established four cycles with different components from the framework to focus on. For example, the first cycle focused on Designing coherent instruction and Demonstrating content knowledge. A review of Advance reports revealed clear expectations such as designing lessons using formative assessments. The teacher was provided with next steps such as designing a more purposeful and targeted group share. Another teacher received feedback on the use of questioning and discussion such as “try having the students jot their prediction before reading then they can check at the end if they were right.”

- Teachers new to the profession are paired up with another teacher that provides feedback and support. A review of Advance reports for new teachers revealed feedback provided to teachers including next steps as well as teachers’ professional reflections. For example, a new teacher reflected that as a result of her attending workshops on teaching children with autism, she reflected that she is now able to better plan lessons to help her students make gains academically and socially. While teachers, including new teachers, are provided with feedback and next steps, and are reflective about their practices, the cycle of observation is not strategic for all teachers and lacks reference to the teachers’ professional goals for the year.

- Teachers are provided with strategies to promote professional growth and reflection. For example, feedback from school leaders, coaches, and consultants’ evidence that teachers are provided with meaningful feedback. Another example, a grade three teacher has been working on improving questioning and discussion in her classroom. The school leader notes in her walkthrough log that the teacher has attended professional learning opportunities around student inquiry and that as a result the teacher has incorporated opportunities to create their own questions and is providing more opportunities for student led discussions. A teacher shared that she received feedback from a school leader about incorporating social emotional learning in her lessons such as the use of a rubric for students to reflect on their behavior.
Additional Finding

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

Through teacher team inquiry and planning work, along with school leaders’ work in assessing the effectiveness of those structures, curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Integration of the instructional shifts have ensured that students are acquiring fluency, reading complex text, and applying math to real world applications across content areas. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged through differentiated groupings and leveled materials.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teachers meet on a monthly basis to plan the curricula and conduct inquiry to make adjustments so that there is alignment to the Common Core State Standards and to the instructional shifts. For example, teachers meet to look at units from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP). Units of study across subject areas evidence coherence of teaching how to support claims with textual evidence and an emphasis on academic vocabulary. In math, students are learning to solve multi-step word problems. Across grades, curriculum units emphasize the use of strategies such as visualizing the problem, drawing, and underlining key words in the problem. Students learn to use the Circle the numbers, Underline the question, Box the key words, Evaluate and draw, and Solve and check (CUBES) strategy. Similarly, in English Language Arts (ELA), the curriculum outlines different strategies to teach students to use textual evidence such as the Opinion, Reason, Example and Opinion (OREO) and the Part of the Question in the Answer (POQITA).

- At monthly meetings student work is analyzed so that curricula are adjusted to provide access to cognitive engaging tasks for all students. Students have access to reading materials at their level, visuals, manipulatives, sentence starters, higher-order thinking questions, and graphic organizers. For example, in an ELA grade four unit of study, students learn about forests. Teachers planned lessons that include opportunities for students to engage in discussions using sentence starters, prompts and cues, advanced organizers such as concept maps, physical objects, and movement. In a grade five lesson, students use games, task cards, and other manipulatives in baskets to work on their individual math goals. For example, one group of students will practice place value by drawing lines and playing a game. Another group will play multiplication war to practice multiplication of double-digit numbers.

- Across all lesson plans, the teaching point is written in student-friendly language such as “Students will be able to label/write a pattern book and describe a photograph they see,” in a first-grade lesson plan. For students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) and need support in writing, the lesson plan calls for the use of chart paper to model for students how to label names of animals. The lesson plan also states that students will use their alphabet chart to work independently for those students that are ready to move on. In a grade five math lesson plan, the students are charged with using place value to round decimals to a given place. Students have an opportunity to illustrate their answer by using a decimal place value chart. In a grade five ELA lesson plan, students have a choice to study a topic based on their interests. As they learn about key details and main idea, students can use digital or paper text and take notes by using different tools. Higher achieving students have to synthesize three or more sources on one page.
**Additional Finding**

### Quality Indicator:

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<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
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<td><strong>Rating:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
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**Findings**

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs that students learn best when they have appropriate materials and are engaged in activities to meet their diverse needs. Additionally, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

**Impact**

In all classrooms, students are situated in leveled groups and are tasked in activities using scaffolds so that they are better equipped to develop and show their understanding. Students were engaged in student-to-student discussions with a high degree of thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, instructional practices aligned to Danielson *Framework for Teaching* reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when provided with the appropriate instruction to address their diverse needs. In a grade four classroom, the teacher listed the students’ tasks on the interactive whiteboard that included some things to keep in mind when reading non-fiction text such as text features and what to do when confronted with difficult vocabulary. Students were tasked with identifying supporting details in a non-fiction book at their reading level about weather topics. Students worked in groups, partnerships and independently. Students used graphic organizers to plan their writing and list the details to support the main idea. In a grade five classroom, students worked on achieving their Academic Intervention Services (AIS) math goal. Students selected an activity based on their goal and kept track of their own progress. Other students worked with the teacher in a small group. Students had a choice of selecting a math game, using a laptop to practice using math software, or write about their goal and explain their goal and their progress.

- Instructional strategies across classrooms also include instructional shifts such as developing fluency and engaging with complex text. In a grade two classroom, the students worked on their short- and long-term goals. Goals are individualized according to students’ reading levels. Students are provided with authentic books and checklists to push their thinking such as Common Core aligned books like *The Marble Champ* to write a literary essay. In a grade four classroom, students are conducting research on weather phenomenon by reading non-fiction books.

- Across classrooms including dual language classrooms, students are actively engaged and reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. For example, in a grade four dual language classroom, students learn in Spanish about the algorithm to solve the problem of the day. Students debated in Spanish with each other using accountable talk about which steps to implement to solve the problem which involved multiplication. In a grade two classroom, the students worked on the stop and jot strategy by using different tools such as a chart with visuals of different strategies to become better readers. Students shared with each other their strategy and why they chose it to remember parts of the story and cite textual evidence.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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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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**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics, checklists, and assessments aligned to curricula that provide a clear portrait of student growth. Common assessments are used across grades and subjects to monitor progress, create strategic groups for mini lessons and adjust lessons and units.

**Impact**

Teachers’ use of assessments, rubrics, and checklists provide meaningful and actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding their achievements and progress. Teachers and teams use data to adjust lessons and units that ensure all learners can demonstrate increased mastery across classrooms.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use checklists, exit slips, rubrics, and grading policies aligned to the curricula. Teachers provide meaningful feedback to students and assessments provide a clear picture of student growth. For example, in a grade four classroom, bulletin boards display student work with teacher feedback on an individual basis. Rubrics, aligned to TCRWP are also displayed in student friendly language such as a rubric to let students’ groups know whether they used capital letters, conjunctions, and cooperated with each other. In a grade five classroom, the teacher uses individualized goals for students where students check their own progress by using a goal tracker. A grade five Opinion Rubric is written in student friendly language and a student received actionable feedback such as “you used transition words such as ‘in other words’ and next steps such as you need to use more text quotes.”

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers provide actionable feedback that is meaningful for students. For example, a grade five student stated that her teachers use rubrics and provide feedback with next steps. Students spoke about getting meaningful feedback to help them understand how to improve. For example, a grade two student stated that she wrote about robots and earned a four. However, the teacher pushed her to plan her writing to write more. Her goal is to write five pages from writing two pages. A grade five student stated that as a result of her teacher’s feedback, she was able to go from a three plus to a four on her next piece of writing. Students also received actionable feedback about the class work as teachers conferred with students and took notes of student progress based on each student’s goals. These notes and student conferences inform classroom instruction and planning for small group instruction.

- The school uses common assessments such as running records, benchmark assessments and state assessments to inform curricular adjustments. For example, students in grades three and four struggle with fractions and multi-step word problems. As a result, teachers decided to focus on fluency and automaticity so that students attack word problems more effectively. In addition, grade four teachers decided to teach multiples and factors first before teaching multiplication and division. The use of chapter assessments in GO Math! help teachers track student progress and adjust their instruction so that all students demonstrate growth. Teachers embed scaffolds in math lessons such as the use of manipulatives and games for students with disabilities and ELLs. In ELA, teachers have made curricular decisions such as reorganizing the literary essay from the TCRWP to be taught before the state test to better prepare students. In the lower grades, teachers use Fundations to keep track of students’ phonemic awareness. In grade one teachers noticed a trend that resulted in the adjustment of the scope and sequence of the lessons. According to the latest state assessment data students with disabilities and ELLs have demonstrated increased mastery.
# Additional Finding

## Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development

**Rating:** Well Developed

### Findings

All teachers engage in structured professional collaborations using inquiry protocols and coaching to implement the Common Core and systematically analyze assessment data and student work.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened instructional capacity and promoted the implementation of the Common Core that result in instructional coherence, improved teacher practice, and mastery of goals for groups of students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are engaged in inquiry work to plan lessons and units that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Teams meet by grade level and content area to align the TCRWP to their lessons and unit plans. Unit plans emphasize the instructional shifts such as the use of textual evidence and developing academic vocabulary resulting in instructional coherence across grade levels. Over the course of three years, the proficiency levels of students in ELA has increased by 24 percent.

- The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based teams that pinpoint a problem of practice such as students lacking academic vocabulary and literacy deficits for ELLs and students with disabilities. These teams meet regularly to plan lessons and units for ELA and math that are informed by student performance. Teachers reported that they meet regularly to collaborate and to make learning accessible for students such as the creation of materials to scaffold learning and rubrics to assess student learning and promote instructional coherence. Students’ reading and math data evidence a steady increase in student performance in state assessments for all learners.

- The teacher team observed were analyzing the teaching points in the TCRWP non-fiction unit to ensure that the teaching points were appropriate and if not, they adjusted them. Teachers used laptops to create the new units using Google Drive. By examining student work, teachers realized that second and third graders need lessons to learn to elaborate in their writing. Teachers stated and all present agreed that having teacher teams to collaborate on creating lessons and units have helped the school establish instructional coherence and for groups of students to increase mastery of goals such as students with disabilities and ELLs. The work of teacher teams has helped with establishing strategies such as POQITA in ELA and CUBES in math. Over the course of three years both the proficiency of ELLs and students with disabilities in ELA has increased by four and eight percent and in math by ten percent and four and half percent respectively.