Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 90 Edna Cohen School
Elementary 21K090
2840 West 12 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11224
Principal: Greta Hawkins
Dates of Review:
February 24, 2020 - February 25, 2020
Lead Reviewer: Glenda Esperance
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. 90 Edna Cohen School 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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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 State standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by State standards and the 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>Proficient</td>
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<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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</table>

1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults

| Additional Finding | 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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products

| Additional Finding | Proficient |

3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community

| Additional Finding | Proficient |

4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection

| Additional Finding | Proficient |

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning

| Additional Finding | Proficient |

5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to State standards

| 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, discipline, and social emotional support is grounded in the belief that it is staff members’ responsibility to teach tolerance and peaceful solutions to conflict. Structures are in place to support the coordination of social emotional learning and youth development for academic success.

Impact

Students are being nurtured in a safe and respectful environment evidenced through initiatives such as monthly surveys, feeling-circle sessions, and social emotional training programs for teachers and family members.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grade levels, the school faculty ensures that students are well known by at least one adult. Students participate in class morning meetings on a daily basis. During these sessions, students engage in Feelings Circle, a time for students to share the emotion that best describes their mood for the day. Students are encouraged to draw and jot-down their emotions as well as offer recommendations to peers on how to cope with difficult feelings. Students shared that they feel safe sharing their emotions freely amongst their friends. Students also participate in a social emotional learning curriculum that helps deepen their understanding of the school’s six pillars for positive behavior: Respect, Responsibility, Choices, Caring, Honesty, and Effort. Each week all teachers select one pillar to explore with their class and provide students with guidance on how to demonstrate attributes that are aligned with it. For example, classes were discussing cooperation. Consequently, students were encouraged to put competition aside when working on a project with classmates and to listen to peers’ opinions and include their ideas in the group’s assignment.

- School leaders create and administer student surveys so that student voice is incorporated into the school culture. Across grade levels, students complete a school-wellness survey on a monthly basis. The principal shared that this tool was designed to review the school tone on a consistent basis and create subsequent action plans that address identified concerns highlighted in the survey results. For example, students shared that they had issues completing homework on a nightly basis. As a result, school leaders and selected teachers met and modified homework expectations based on the feedback provided by students. Students also shared that the survey results were used to eliminate selected items from the lunch menu. Thus, this structure serves as a platform that ensures students’ voices and ideas are incorporated into the school community.

- School leaders believe that in order for students to succeed, the entire staff must work collaboratively to attend to the social-emotional components of learning. Thus, administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals have been trained on several initiatives that support students’ behavioral needs, including de-escalation techniques. As a result, these practices are being implemented across classrooms schoolwide. Several staff members have attended Therapeutic Crisis Interventions for Schools training and are able to respond to students in crisis situations. Veteran teachers facilitate professional learning (PL) that provides participants guidance in establishing positive rapport with students. In addition, the faculty partners with multiple community based mental health organizations. These programs provide on-site mental health consultants who assess the mental health needs of school community members, including family members, and assists in the identification of school resources to address identified needs. These initiatives contribute to the positive climate felt within the school building amongst all its constituents.
Findings

Students are provided with feedback on their work, and teachers’ in-the-moment assessment practices include tracking sheets.

Impact

Feedback given to students based on rubrics is not consistently actionable. Teachers’ instructional adjustments based on tracking sheets do not support all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Across some classrooms, student work is evaluated using common rubrics. There is evidence of a variety of feedback provided to students from teachers that is accurate, specific, timely, and advances learning. For example, multiple samples of student work products had a task-specific rubric attached as well as a self-reflection form that required students to identify one strategy used that was an area of celebration and one strategy that was an area of growth. However, there is limited evidence of these practices taking place across all content areas. A review of student work samples from a range of classes reveals feedback being provided in numeric form and offering limited next steps. Furthermore, students were unable to articulate how the feedback they were provided in these subject areas improved their performance.

- School leaders indicate that teachers have begun to take criteria from rubrics to craft student-friendly feedback to guide students’ performance on learning tasks. For example, a review of extended response work samples from a grade-four literacy class included teacher comments specific to areas that needed improvement. Sample feedback included, “Great job tying your facts together using transition words…Next time, let’s add on and give more details” Another sample stated, “Your paragraphs are well written and factual…You need to review your spelling and use of capitalization…see me so that we can discuss revisions together.” However, this practice is not being implemented across all content areas. There were multiple occurrences of students receiving feedback without the presence of a rubric or of a rubric being used without explanatory notes. For example, a third-grade student received feedback on his math assessment solely in numeric form without explanation or suggested next-steps. However, there was no rubric attached identifying the grading criteria for the assignment and no written actionable feedback.

- During lessons observed, teachers monitored and checked-in with groups of students using a tracking sheet to assess understanding of the learning. However, across classrooms, there was limited evidence of adjustments being made consistently to provide support to struggling students and extension opportunities for high-performing students. In a grade-five health class, the teacher circulated throughout the room to monitor student performance during group work. Several students were unclear about the expectations of the task, struggling for five to eight minutes before the teacher addressed their concerns. During a grade-two English Language Arts (ELA) lesson, the teacher tracked students’ performance. Although several students demonstrated mastery of the day’s topic, the teacher did not make any in-the-moment adjustments to further challenge these students. Consequently, the learning needs of all students were not consistently met.
Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

| 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Proficient |

**Findings**

Unit and lesson plans include academic tasks that are accessible to a variety of learners, including students with disabilities. Academic tasks are planned and refined using student work.

**Impact**

Across grade levels, a diverse group of learners are cognitively engaged in standard-based curricula and project-based units designed to ensure success in college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across grades, unit structures allow for different pathways to understanding for diverse learners. Project-based literacy lessons incorporate reading, writing, and technology and require students to create culminating projects. For example, grade-four students engage in a unit entitled “Flint Michigan Water Crisis.” Throughout the unit, students deepen their understanding of the crisis by conducting research and participating in hands-on activities. Students are required to build a water-filtration system prototype to solve the water crisis. Students are also provided with a video camera and are instructed to create and film a news broadcast reporting on the water contamination. Additional assignments include the creation of a digital infographic to inspire community activism and a comparative essay comparing and contrasting the crisis in Flint to the water crisis in Newark, New Jersey. At the end of the study, students showcase their work products with their peers. The unit plan includes shared readings, leveled texts, graphic organizers, visual aids, anchor charts, and scaffolds for students with disabilities.

- Across content areas, school faculty include accommodations in their unit and lesson plans to help optimize teaching and learning for diverse learners. Most unit plans are designed to provide multiple means of engagement for students. For example, a grade-two literacy unit incorporates videos, illustrations, anchor charts, sentence starters, and word banks that are provided to students as needed, based on data derived from formative assessments. A grade-one science plan includes the use of word banks, reference sheets, videos, anchor charts, and slide-show presentations. Additionally, lesson plans include a section that addresses the range of learners in the classroom. Most lesson plans list the strategies that will be used to ensure accessibility to the curriculum. For example, a grade-three plan on the different levels of government incorporated the use of maps, graphic organizers, pictures, and technology for selected students. These features support cognitive engagement for a wide range of learners. Including students with disabilities.

- Curricular documents include evidence of refinements made based on student data. A grade-two math unit plan on addition and subtraction of multi-digit numbers was adjusted after the data from a formative assessment revealed that the students needed additional practice with skip counting 10s and basic addition and subtraction facts. The teachers decided to supplement the unit with fluency sheets focused on single addition and subtraction. In a grade-three math plan, data obtained from exit slips indicated that selected students struggled with the concept of placing numbers on a number line. The teacher retaught that topic based on the results and also incorporated manipulatives and visual models to address the needs of the range of learners.
Additional Finding

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teacher pedagogy reflects a set of beliefs that students learn best when there are opportunities for student discussion and when supports and scaffolds are in place.

Impact

Teacher pedagogy that is aligned to a set of schoolwide beliefs and lessons is designed to meet the learning needs of a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provide students with opportunities to talk with their peers or engage in class discussions. In a grade-five health class, students participated in a discussion on the level of impact that family, peers, media, and technology have on an individual’s mental and emotional health. Students reviewed a video on mental health and jotted down notes and questions they formed in relation to the topic. Afterwards, the teacher led a whole-class discussion based on the video and then randomly called on students to respond. In a grade-five math class, students responded to specific math word problems involving fractions, multiplication, and division. Students were divided into five small groups and assigned a math performance task to complete collaboratively. Each group was then called on to present their solution to the class. The teacher provided students with a list of accountable-talk prompts to use as a reference. Students were also provided with a Performance Assessment Presentation task guide packet as well as discussion protocols. After the discussion, students completed a reflection sheet. These tools helped ensure the participation of all students in the discussion.

- Intentional groupings were observed across multiple classrooms. In a grade-two math Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students created models of fractional units to solve word problems. Students were divided into predetermined groups. The teacher provided three variations of the task to ensure accessibility to the wide range of learners in that class, including one version to address the needs specific to English Language Learners (ELLs). There were also adjustments that included follow-up questions to gauge student thinking, and checklists and manipulatives as scaffolded supports for students. In a kindergarten literacy class, the teacher created three versions of the day’s activity. Students performing below grade level were provided with extra scaffolds and supporting documents such as visual aids and scaffolded questions to help them complete the activity. Students in this group also received a reference sheet that displayed pictures of content-related terms and their definitions. Students performing on-grade level were provided with additional higher-level questions that required them to reflect about the activity.

- In a grade-four ICT class, students were conducting research to prepare for a discussion that asked their point of view on topics related to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Students were provided with a wide array of texts to extend their understanding of their designated topic and were encouraged to jot down their questions and wonderings. Students reviewed multiple articles that had been vetted by the teacher and stretched across a wide range of reading levels. Students read independently and were provided with various types of graphic organizers designed to help them effectively extract pertinent facts and details from the text. Additionally, students were provided with access to various tools and resources, such as highlighters, pictures, word banks, checklist, sentence frames, content related charts, and a list of reading-comprehension tips to support their research. These teaching strategies ensured that a variety of learners were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through classroom checklists, PL, and on-going feedback. School staff successfully partners with families to support their children’s progress utilizing a variety of communication modalities.

Impact
School leaders create a culture of accountability, setting forth clear expectations to staff that promote teacher development and foster family involvement that supports student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- In September, the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) goals and instructional foci are presented to the entire staff. In addition to a faculty handbook, school leaders have created a classroom checklist to clearly communicate high expectations to staff. This document provides staff with a list of requirements pertaining to lesson plan design and execution, classroom environment, technology use, discussion protocols, and classroom artifacts. School leaders also distribute a weekly newsletter that updates staff on schoolwide events, PL opportunities, compliance concerns, as well as celebrations of upcoming milestones. In one edition of the newsletter, school leaders reminded staff about the expectations for math-classroom word walls and shared feedback based on observations from a recent instructional walk. In another edition, teachers were provided with resources and an article from an educational expert that provided tips for teaching reading comprehension strategies to students with disabilities.

- School leaders create a PL plan to support teachers in meeting high expectations. Staff members are surveyed and asked to select areas that prioritize personal goals. Their feedback is used to plan schoolwide PL and supports for the year. Professional learning is monitored on an ongoing basis and adjustments and next steps are made accordingly. It is provided for leadership, teachers, and paraprofessionals. For example, the school created a paraprofessional professional development plan to build capacity among classroom support staff. The activities are aligned to school goals and support the initiatives used to drive student achievement. In addition, all staff members are responsible for supporting one another to ensure that schoolwide expectations are met. School leaders consistently remind staff of the instructional foci by grade level, and of the availability of administrators and coaches to meet with teachers for lesson planning support. Additionally, teachers demonstrating effective strategies in this area were encouraged to host intervisitations and share best practices with their colleagues.

- The school hosts an annual curriculum night to review a parent handbook and explain the school-year expectations to parents. Workshops include a Middle School Parent Forum that invites fifth-grade parents, guardians, and students to a discussion on the articulation and high school application process. There are on-going efforts to communicate academic expectations and student progress to families. For example, every Friday the school distributes a newsletter to parents that includes information on the subject specific grading policies and specific targeted monthly goals. Parents are also encouraged to access the school’s online communication platform regularly. This system allows parents to stay informed about their children’s progress in class. At present, most parents use this software to stay current about academic expectations and monitor progress. One parent shared that he accessed his child’s assessment results and subsequently shared concerns with the teacher through the online platform. The teacher then provided the child with tutorial classes, ultimately improving the child’s reading performance. The strong partnership between parents and school staff contributes to an increased number of students making progress towards grade-level mastery.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations through ongoing teacher-team grade meetings. Distributed leadership structures, such as the grade-leader and school-assessment teams are in place.

Impact

Teacher collaborations have strengthened teacher capacity. Shared leadership allows teachers to have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- From kindergarten to grade five, teacher teams meet during grade-specific, common planning periods to engage in inquiry-based work centered on the schoolwide goals. For example, the second-grade teachers’ focus is on strategies that will help improve math fluency and develop number sense. First-grade teachers focused on strategies to support student understanding of fact families. Each team has a specific instructional purpose based on an identified problem of practice. The foci of the teams are established in partnership with the school leaders. Progress towards meeting each team’s objective is monitored over the course of six-week cycles. At the end of these cycles, each team creates a presentation specific to their content and grade level. For example, a team created a presentation that outlined teachers’ pedagogical improvements over the course of the inquiry cycle. The document also highlighted best practices, challenges, possible strategies for improvement, and next steps. These practices help strengthen teachers’ capacity to support student achievement.

- During an observation of the grade-three team, the group used the Rounds Protocol to collaboratively provide constructive feedback to a colleague. A team member served as a facilitator to ensure norms were upheld and the inquiry work was completed with fidelity. One teacher presented multiple samples of student work from an ELA performance task while members listened and took low-inference notes. There was also an opportunity for the group to ask the presenting teacher clarifying questions. The team then identified trends and patterns across the selected work samples. Overall, the group noticing included students’ use of textual evidence in their writing and their limited ability in identifying the overall main idea of a text. At the end of the meeting, the team collaboratively created a list of possible instructional next steps including the reduction of the use of the standard graphic organizer and sentence stems provided as support tool for all students. There was a recommendation made to create customized tools based on a student’s individual needs. At the end of the meeting, the presenting teacher also shared reflections about the process and feedback provided. The team members indicated that this collaboration has improved their teaching practices. One teacher stated, “This group helps me with planning, and I have been able to broaden the resources accessible to me.”

- Teacher-led committees ensure that faculty members have a role in decision-making. Committees on curriculum, social-emotional learning, PL, and community advocacy meet with school leaders regularly to plan initiatives to support the mission of the school. For example, the curriculum committee works collaboratively to maintain coherence across grade levels and provides instructional strategies that support student growth. This team meets consistently and is comprised of a leader from each grade and school administrators. The team members have been trained in vocabulary development and lead grade-specific PL to support the school’s goal of increasing explicit instruction to students on academic language. The Green Team takes the lead in training staff, educating families, and ensuring ongoing staff development around sustainability and recycling initiatives.