Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 051 Elias Howe
Elementary 02M051
525 West 44Th Street
Manhattan
NY 10036

Principal: Stephanie Lukas

Dates of Review:
December 5, 2019 - December 6, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Edward Hazen
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. 051 Elias Howe 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

### Instructional Core

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

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

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

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

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<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### School Quality Ratings continued

#### School Culture

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<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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#### Systems for Improvement

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<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</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>
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<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>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<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>Proficient</td>
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<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 State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by the school’s belief statement and training that is provided to support the schoolwide vision of creating a student-centered environment. Student support services allow staff, students, and families to collaborate in addressing all students’ academic and social-emotional needs and fostering the adoption of positive habits.

Impact

School leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that contributes to a personalized learning environment in which students are well known by adults, resulting in social-emotional learning that supports student growth and their adoption of effective personal behaviors habits.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s approach to promoting an inclusive and nurturing school environment that is conducive to learning is rooted in its schoolwide belief that every child is gifted and talented and the shared vision of educating the whole child. School leaders and staff members reported their belief that students are most likely to achieve at the highest level when classrooms are student-centered and designed to support their social-emotional growth in addition to academics. Students and parents reported that they feel that the school is part of the community and students have ample voice in schoolwide decisions. For example, students reported that the school council has a representative from each upper-grade class that is charged with promoting ideals to improve the school, such as students collaboratively making a concerted effort to keep the school grounds clean by not littering. Additionally, daily morning meetings and end of day closing circles provide opportunities for students to share their feelings, address concerns, or surface issues.

- The school has a Social Emotional Team (SET) in place led by the school social worker and counselor who ensure that students’ social emotional needs are met and encourage them to attend school every day and maintain positive attitudes. Students’ daily engagement in end of day closing circles allows them to express how they are feeling and ensures that they are known well by at least one adult and their peers. To promote regular daily attendance, the school leaders created an attendance committee to monitor student attendance, celebrate students with perfect attendance, and intervene for students that have excessive absences or are at-risk of becoming chronically absent. Daily attendance rates and signs promoting the importance of attendance were observed conspicuously displayed around the school. At the time of the school review, the average daily attendance rate was 94.2 percent, as compared to 91.6 percent at the same point in time the previous year, an indication that the SET and attendance committee is positively impacting students’ daily attendance.

- The majority of staff members have been trained to use Responsive Classroom strategies to help students and teachers create a safe and inclusive learning environment. In addition, the SET trained staff members in using Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) to recognize symptoms of students in crisis and potential trigger behaviors. This professional development allows them to intervene therapeutically by using de-escalation techniques and teaching students strategies they can employ to self-regulate their behaviors and make alternative positive choices. As a result, students are adopting effective personal and academic behaviors. A student who was exhibiting untoward behavior was observed taking a calming break from a literacy circle and was able to return himself to the group activity once he was able to regroup and refocus. At the time of the review, data showed that the number of reported extreme behavioral incidents decreased from twelve incidents to three from the same point in time the previous year.
Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned to the school curricula. The school uses common assessments and checks for understanding to determine students' level of understanding.

Impact

Assessment results are used to adjust curricula and instruction and most teachers use checks for understanding to determine next steps for instruction. While teachers provide actionable feedback to students and teacher teams regarding student achievement levels, feedback is not meaningful for the vast majority of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use common rubrics and assessments across grade levels that align to the school's curricula and have adopted the practice of student conferencing and maintaining running records to monitor student progress. A review of student work samples indicated that most teachers provided students with actionable feedback and next steps for improvement. For example, many teachers cite an area in which each student met or exceeded the criteria for proficiency on a writing progressions rubric and an area in which the student needs to improve, including next steps. Some students indicated that the feedback helped them focus on the next steps to improve their work, but also noted that the quality of the feedback varied by content area. Additionally, they noted that the majority of actionable feedback received was on their writing tasks. While some of the student writing samples examined across classes had concise next steps that aligned to the rubric, some feedback statements were vague, such as "next time put more thought into your writing." In math, some statements were limited to “great job” or “be careful when regrouping.” Additionally, students were not able to articulate how the feedback they have received from teachers has been meaningfully integrated into their learning styles.

- In all grades, teachers use common assessments to identify students’ strengths and weakness, plan small-group instruction and interventions, and identify reading and writing goals for students. Data are then used to identify students who are not progressing and to determine appropriate interventions that will get them back on track to meeting the benchmark. The school’s instructional leads support teacher teams by sharing instructional practices that are most effective in improving student achievement. The leads work collaboratively with individual classroom teachers, cluster teachers, teacher teams, and intervention specialists to review data collected from various assessments, including exit tickets, mid- and end-of module tests, State assessments, grade level performance tasks, and running records conference notes. A review of agendas and meeting minutes indicates that the data are then used to adjust unit plans, pacing guides, lesson plans, and intervention plans.

- Across classrooms, teachers use exit tickets to determine next teaching steps and checks for understanding to determine students’ level of understanding of the learning objective or concept to provide additional support to students. In most classes, teachers that identified students as struggling to demonstrate their understanding are pulled for further instruction while the other students practice independently or in groups. However, teachers’ use of ongoing real time checks for understanding does not always result in an effective change of instruction so that all students are aware of their next learning steps. In a math lesson, some students were struggling to demonstrate how to subtract three digit numbers and explain their rationale for the strategy they chose. However, students’ confusion did not result in further modeling or re-teaching despite students expressing their confusion. Similarly, during a science lesson, the teacher checked for understanding by calling on volunteers and accepted multiple answers from the same students.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
Curricula are aligned to the instructional foci and State standards, and college readiness habits are strategically integrated. Curricula and academic tasks are purposefully refined to emphasize rigorous habits and tasks that are accessible to all learners.

Impact
There is curricular coherence across grades and subject areas that promotes high levels of student thinking and college and career readiness. Faculty routinely plan and refine curricula to ensure access for a variety of learners so that all students are cognitively engaged and able to demonstrate rigorous habits and thinking in academic tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that curricula align to the State content Standards and the school’s instructional foci by planning multiple opportunities for students to engage in meaningful higher-order discussions and the writing process. Teachers strategically integrate cognitively challenging questions, discussion starters, and problem-solving tasks into units of study and lesson plans. For example, in kindergarten through grade five, lesson plans and curricula identify common conversation practices that teachers utilize to foster high levels of student engagement, such as turn and talks, math talks, and higher-order question prompts. Furthermore, to build coherence across grade levels and content areas, school leaders and teachers have adopted the workshop model of instruction and use common strategies and protocols in their unit and lesson plans to encourage high levels of student participation and discourse and to promote the adoption of college and career readiness skills.

- The use of student checklists for writing ensures consistency in the writing process across disciplines and requires student self-reflection, as they are required to double check that they have included the criteria to meet or exceed proficiency on their writing tasks. Similarly, having students justify their rationale for choosing a math strategy to the class, a partner, or cooperative group is commonly identified in lesson plans by teachers as a means to foster student metacognition in math. Employment of requiring students to show their thought process requires students to write reflections about their math thinking and explain the reasoning for the strategy they chose to solve a math problem. In addition, teachers use a writing process learning progressions rubric across classrooms and content areas for consistency in writing. As a result, there is coherence in planning for all students to demonstrate their thinking across grades and subjects.

- Teachers meet weekly to work collaboratively using a schoolwide protocol to assess the quality of student work products and analyze trends in common assessment data. These meetings result in revisions to curricula, lesson plans, and pacing guides, and the development of student groups to meet the needs of all students. Groups are organized by ability based on whether they are below, on, or above grade level in reading, writing and math so that teachers can efficiently plan for supports such as scaffolds and extension activities, as necessary. Similarly, targeted small-group instruction is planned for students with disabilities using this format and include differentiated tasks and individualized supports. Likewise, entry points into lessons and student supports for challenging academic tasks are provided through universal norms and protocols such as student routines, checklists and rubrics, common writing strategies, and the use of scaffolds such as annotation methodologies, graphic organizers, accountable-talk prompts, and discussion stems.
**Additional Finding**

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

Teaching strategies align to schoolwide goals and provide entry points through the use of scaffolds to promote student participation in challenging academic tasks and high levels of discourse.

**Impact**

Students engage in high levels of thinking and discussion, leading to the development of meaningful work products across classrooms. Teaching practices include the use of multiple entry points and supports to engage students in rigorous tasks.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, teaching practices align to the school’s articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best and the schoolwide instructional foci. One of the overarching beliefs is that classroom instruction must engage students in purposeful high-order academic tasks and discussions to promote rigorous habits for all students. The instructional leadership team also requires that teachers provide multiple entry points into lessons and differentiate tasks so that all students have access to the lesson and are cognitively challenged. School leaders and teachers identified the workshop model as the best way to align teaching practices to the schoolwide instructional foci and beliefs. The workshop model, in which teachers model a skill or concept and provide opportunities for students to practice together and independently, was observed being utilized across classrooms and grade levels. In most classes, students were observed participating in group and partner discussions utilizing a turn and talk protocol and students were often provided with differentiated tasks or materials such as leveled texts.

- In most classrooms visited, teachers used common strategies such as routines, inquiry, collaborative learning, questioning, and discussions to promote cognitive challenge and engagement. Teachers design rigorous activities and use scaffolding techniques to provide entry points into lessons and academic tasks for a variety of learners. To begin a second-grade writing lesson, the teacher modeled how good authors capture their audience’s interest by providing a hook at the beginning of their stories. Students then transitioned to ability-based groups to write their own informational books while the teacher provided further small-group instruction to students who were struggling to develop their ideas for a good hook. Since students had mastered the routine of transitioning to independent or group practice, minimal prompting was required by the teacher. Students were provided with idea webs, referenced anchor charts, or received coaching from their peers to support them in developing their ideas for their books while the teacher provided conferencing to other students.

- Observed teaching strategies represent a knowledge and understanding of students’ diverse needs, resulting in academic tasks and activities that engage students in high levels of cognitive challenge. Most lessons include academic tasks and supports such as scaffolds and generate challenging discourse to engage all students, including students with disabilities, struggling students, and the highest achieving students. In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) reading and writing class, the teachers used a flipped model in which students were grouped by ability and received reading instruction from one teacher and writing from the other. Students then flipped to the other teacher. Both teachers used several scaffolds to support the groups including modeling, read aloud, guided reading, and visuals. Consequently, the use of multiple entry points ensured that all students were engaged in challenging tasks requiring higher-order thinking.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

School leaders use traditional means as well as multimedia platforms to consistently and effectively communicate high expectations to staff, students, and parents. Staff members provide ongoing feedback to parents on their children’s academic progress.

Impact

Systems of mutual accountability for staff are in place to ensure that they meet high expectations. Communication with families is consistent and clear so that the students and their parents are aware of their progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school’s leadership team is committed to communicating high expectations to the faculty and holding them accountable while providing the ongoing support that is required to meet those expectations and improve their professional practice. Instructional expectations have been articulated to teachers via professional learning (PL) sessions, teacher-team meetings, and ongoing collegial support from the school’s instructional leads. School leadership team members support teachers in advancing their professional growth and aligning their instructional strategies and curricula to the schoolwide goals and the State standards through ongoing and frequent PL sessions. A review of meeting agendas and sign-in sheets indicates that PL sessions on differentiating the math curricula, implementing student-centered and social-emotional learning, and providing student conferencing have occurred, among others.

- School leaders and staff have initiatives in place that include the implementation of rigorous curriculum, instruction, and academic tasks by utilizing the workshop model of instruction across all grades and subjects. Additionally, teachers are expected to analyze data and student work products to design instructional groups and differentiated lessons that take into account students' individual learning styles and needs. Teachers reported that the majority of the PL sessions align to the mutually agreed upon instructional foci and programming and helps teachers to meet those expectations. Teachers further reported that they are held accountable to the schoolwide expectations through formal classroom observations by school leaders and by participating in non-evaluative class visits with their colleagues so that they can emulate identified best practices in their own classroom. Additionally, teachers hold school leaders accountable by ensuring that they follow through with ongoing PL, guidance, instructional coaching, and support. Teachers stated that this practice has improved their pedagogy, which is supported by Advance teacher evaluation ratings indicating that 97 percent of teachers were rated effective or highly effective in the 2018-2019 school year.

- School leaders have structures to communicate high expectations to families that lead to next-level readiness for their children. Parents report receiving regular communications from the school, including information on curriculum events, social-emotional learning workshops, and publishing celebrations through a variety of means including Parent Teacher Association meetings, emails, backpack notifications, and the school web site. Parents noted that most teachers use mobile applications which allows them to monitor their children's academic and behavioral progress daily and communicate with their teacher via texting. Students reported that they frequently conference with their teachers so they can monitor their progress toward meeting their academic and reading goals. Parents were appreciative of having several modes in which to communicate with the school, including mobile applications which many noted are the most convenient means to communicate with families.
Additional Finding

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations that align to the school's goals of improving teaching and learning. Collaboration and teamwork have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers.

Impact

Targeted instructional planning and collaboration have improved teacher practice, resulting in the increased coherence across grades and content areas. Teacher team analysis of student assessment data and work products typically results in improved pedagogy and leads to progress toward goals for students across grade levels.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations to promote the implementation of the State standards across grades and subjects. Grade-level teacher teams are provided with common planning time to meet to plan rigorous lessons and make revisions to curricula to ensure accessibility for all students. Teacher-team analysis of curricula and academic tasks contained in lesson and unit plans results in the identification of gaps in skill development and the provision of multiple-entry points and academic supports for students and informs next steps in curriculum decisions. For example, the need for a student-centered, small-group instructional model to ensure rigorous academic tasks while providing differentiated academic tasks for students led to teachers and school leaders implementing the workshop model of instruction. To this end, teacher teams adopted a program focused on literacy-instruction as the best resource for teaching literacy and identified a supplemental math curricula to differentiate the core curriculum math tasks accordingly.

- Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work products to devise strategies for students to help close identified achievement gaps. After a review of State assessment and common grade-level assessment data revealed that students were struggling with mental math and explaining their rationale for selecting strategies to solve math problems, a new math instruction program was adopted by teachers. This math program requires teachers to reflect on the scope and sequence of their units of study, how they are differentiating curricula and instruction, and how they provide math supports to a variety of learners. Additionally, lessons are inquiry focused that has students reflect on their math thinking and explain the reasoning for the strategy they chose to solve problems. As a result, the overall percentage of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the State math assessment increased by from 41 percent in 2018 to 51 percent in 2019.

- A third-grade teacher team was observed using a Learning from Student Work protocol to analyze students’ constructed responses on a common end-of-module math assessment. The team’s focus was to determine students’ progress toward mastery of place-value understanding, operations, and ability to perform multi-digit arithmetic. Teachers noticed that several students missed opportunities to show their thinking because they relied on the algorithm. In response, a team decision was made to have students think about the problem first without a pencil, thereby forcing them to use mental math. Student instructional groups were also reorganized based on the assessment results and students requiring further intensive support were identified for one-on-one conferences to promote their progress toward mastery.