Quality Review Report

2019-2020

Lighthouse Elementary School

Elementary 27Q106
180 Beach 35 Street
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: Rachelle Legions

Dates of Review:
February 27, 2020 - February 28, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Sonja Webber-Bey
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

Lighthouse Elementary 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
</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>
</tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

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

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</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></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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 State standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders, teacher peers, and instructional coaches use low-inference and frequent, focused observations that are aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Feedback is accurate and articulates a plan of next steps.

Impact

School leaders’ articulation of clear expectations for elevated schoolwide instructional practices, along with professional reflection, aligns with established goals.

Supporting Evidence

- During the school year, teachers complete surveys after professional learning (PL) sessions. In addition, school leaders collaborate with teachers during initial planning conferences to align differentiated goals with constructed individualized PL plans. The support plans identify type of assistance, who will provide the support, and timeline targets. For example, school leaders implemented a schoolwide close reading period, wherein students across grades move to specific teachers for data-driven instruction. A close reading support plan was differentiated within each teacher’s PL plan, purposely determining which teachers needed support planning for effective use of close reading strategies, while other teachers focused in on practices for differentiating a structured end-of-week check for understanding for those students needing additional support. A checklist of learning cycles was established, aligned with visits from an outside consultant who was brought in to further support professional growth. A math coach, supporting Algebra For All initiatives, visits monthly to help teachers’ inclusion of number talks, strategies for deepening students’ understanding of angles, and other standards content. Classroom visits by school leaders are followed by emailed feedback to teachers. A second-third grade special education teacher was encouraged to pose a question when introducing students to the use of ten frames, giving them an opportunity for productive struggle before explicitly modeling; thus, promoting professional growth.

- Teachers that travel outside the school for PL are required to send the principal a written reflection and copies of any handouts, as well as turn-key learning to their peers. New teachers are assigned buddy teachers to acclimate them to the school’s culture, and mentors to help build their instructional capacity. A schedule of teacher intervisitations is ongoing, allowing colleagues to see the different styles that other teachers have and view new methodologies being implemented. School leaders’ philosophy is that a school that has many experts is more viable than a school that only has some. Collaboratively, the faculty works to implement strategies that promote the growth of professionals, reflect on next steps, and elevate schoolwide instructional practices.

- School leaders conduct cycles of observation based on contractually selected options, as well as instructional walkthroughs that analyze teacher practices and student work experiences. Samples of student work products are collected for review. Each teacher has an additional sixth period built into their schedule to allow for quarterly meetings with school leaders for student learning data conferences. Teachers present assessment data, teacher class-observation notes, and student work samples to demonstrate the progress students are making. School leaders lead a discussion, and collect evidence based on a checklist protocol, then articulate feedback capturing strengths and challenges. School leaders reflect on these meetings to focus on groups of students, and additionally to reflect on teacher growth that aligns with their personal professional goals.
Area of Focus

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Developing

Findings
Teaching strategies include multiple entry points into the curricula, such as needs-based groups; however, practices are inconsistent. The quality of student work products and discussions vary.

Impact
Instructional groups reflect uneven participation, engagement, and disproportionate demonstration of students’ higher-order thinking skills, thus, limiting meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- A science lesson observed in a fourth-grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class included a video of the water cycle. Students’ verbal responses contained content-specific vocabulary. Students with disabilities were given printed prompts to guide their note-taking. English Language Learners (ELLs) had the support of an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher, who supplied additional texts and picture cards. After small group discussions, students responded to a writing task. In another fourth-grade ICT math class, students participated in a two-dimensional shapes and symmetry lesson. Utilizing a parallel teaching approach, teachers displayed models of shapes referenced and asked a series of questions. Initial teacher questioning led to uneven engagement, as one student answered each question, with no opportunity for peer discussions. For example, “What is the difference between a square and a rectangle?” A student spoke about four sides each and ninety degree angles, then added that a rectangle is bigger than a square, demonstrating an incomplete understanding of the concept. The teacher did not address the misconception, instead, followed by asking another student, “Do they have parallel lines?” At first the student said, “Yes”, then reconsidered and changed to “No.” The teacher asked the same student, “What is parallel?” The student response was, “Lines will not touch.” Remaining students in each group were passively listening. Once students were assigned to workbook activities, they did turn and talk with each other. These two examples of teaching strategies reflect the uneven levels of student thinking and participation observed across classrooms, and missed opportunities to engage all learners in appropriately challenging tasks.

- In a second-grade class, students met in two small groups with teachers for reading support, while a third group interacted with digital learning platforms. After reading short leveled texts, teachers used questioning and prompts to enable students to reference texts to deepen their understanding of the characters’ actions and feelings. One teacher’s question inquired about what the character had learned. A student replied, “He learned he was following his own footsteps.” The next student when questioned stated, “I agree.” Each question was directed to one student individually for response, without peer discussion opportunities. Students had personal word walls and a character emotion chart available when completing written responses. Responses reviewed showed students identifying events and recalling details, but not completing the tasks. For example, the teachers asked for students to include two details in their written responses, but student work products submitted only show one or no details that support student thinking. Teachers’ questioning was low-level, thus, there were missed opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

- Third graders shared the reading of an article about a scientist. Some students underlined key words and phrases, while a few did not attend to the text. After a timer rang, the teacher asked a series of one-to-one questions about the central idea of the text. Three individual students responded, and there was no opportunity for peer discussion, thus, engagement did not reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.
Findings

School leaders and teachers articulate how they purposefully ensure curricula are aligned to State standards. Units of study and academic tasks are refined using digital data tools and by examining student work.

Impact

Faculty decisions promote college and career readiness and build instructional coherence so that a diversity of learners have access to cognitively engaging curricula and tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders provide State developed literacy curricula, a standards-based published curricula for science, and grade scope and sequence social studies plans. Staff gave input into a decision to bring in new math materials for this year. Algebra for All programming is integrated into math planning for grades four and five. Teachers review grade standards and use a digital platform to backwards map curriculum units. All unit plans reviewed followed a template format that included standards, overarching understandings, ‘I can’ learning targets, essential questions, suggested higher-order questions, possible student misconceptions, targeted skills, key vocabulary, planned assessments, performance evidence, and descriptions of learning activities which indicate supports for students’ needs and differentiation across learning styles. These maps are available to all staff to ensure alignment with standards is also building coherence from grade to grade as students move along a path that promotes college and career readiness.

- Teachers make purposeful decisions about text selections that support the school’s instructional focus on close reading and use of discussion protocols. Inclusion of culturally relevant materials is highlighted, and new sources of articles, books, and multi-media products have been added to units. For example, second grade staff revamped one of their literacy units into a beach theme, appropriate for their neighborhood and school that is located one block from the boardwalk. Another unit was tailored using an engineering and design process for small group work that presents problems and promotes students collaborating on solutions. This year’s theme focused on hurricane flooding, a real-world connection to the school’s history. Upper grade teachers agreed on use of the text *Esperanza Rising*, reflective of a large portion of their student demographic makeup. A curriculum planning cycle includes teachers’ review of student work products, and requires teachers to submit updates and revisions into a tracking document each week to drive curricula to include cognitive engagement and accessibility for a variety of learners.

- Data reviews follow mid-unit, end-of-unit, pre-tests and post-test, allowing teachers to refine tasks and/or curricula as student achievement progress sheds a light on probable outcomes. Student tasks are designed for a range of abilities, from pushables to high achievers, with additional extensions for independent learners. Teachers complete a student-work-analysis form for each content area, noting student groupings based on performance levels, plans for supporting struggling students, and resources and/or collaborative outreach efforts planned. Consequently, a diversity of students will be cognitively engaged and have access to the curricula.

- Beginning of year reading levels and mid-year reading levels are charted for review, showing below, approaching, on, and above grade level ability for each grade cohort by percentages and by number of students. School leaders and teachers collaborate on changes of curricula materials, such as transitioning to State published literacy modules, to positively impact student progress for all learners.
Findings
Teachers use a variety of strategies to actively monitor and assess learning outcomes, which are aligned to the curricula. Students reflect on their learning and progress.

Impact
Information on student learning provides actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement, thus, enabling effective team and classroom adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Rubrics are introduced to students at the beginning of units and are available during tasks. For example, a teacher entered checks on areas of a third grade writing rubric about proficiency achieved. The student’s work showed, “Writing is organized, with progression of ideas from beginning to end, develops and elaborates on the topic using facts, definitions and details, and uses some correct but repetitive sentence structures.” A math rubric used for kindergarten through second grade showed a teacher’s assessment of one student’s work product to be a level four, the highest level of proficiency. The teacher circled areas on the rubric, such as, “Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the mathematical concepts, representations are clear and labeled, and student uses math vocabulary in their explanation.” A written note on the rubric also indicated a digital platform for the student to use for individualized growth. A published grading policy, included in the staff and parent handbooks and posted in all classrooms, aligns to the four proficiency levels described in school rubrics. Use of rubrics and a corresponding grading policy provides actionable feedback to teachers and students regarding student achievement.

- Teachers’ feedback aligns with the curricula, and provides actionable next steps usually in the form of glows and grows. On a second grader’s writing piece, the teacher’s glow stated, “Great job using transition words to show equity.” The actionable next step grow was, “Next time, work on adding an introduction and conclusion.” Another second grade teacher wrote a glow and grow for a student’s math work, “Great job using two new strategies to solve the word problem: chip model and vertical method; Next time, try checking your work to ensure you get the correct answer by doing the inverse operation.” In a fifth grade class where students were studying the ecosystem, one glow read, “Good job determining the parts of the diagram and using scientific vocabulary to express your ideas.” The grow for that student was, “Remember to use details from the text to support your inferences about how animals grow.” A review of student portfolios across classrooms revealed improvement of student skills over time. Thus, actionable feedback is impacting student learning outcomes.

- During instruction teachers use checks for understanding such as thumbs up or down, mid-lesson review of expectations for note-taking, questioning about use of available anchor charts, and exit tickets. Teachers construct student-friendly checklists that also align with proficiency goals. Checklists are formatted as ‘I can…’ statements that students physically check off as they engage in tasks. For example, an informative writing checklist for first graders had indicators for capital letters, spacing between words, correct spelling of word wall words, words that match the picture plan, and ending punctuation. One student responded by coloring in choices between a happy face or an unhappy face for each area, based on his assessment of his performance. The teacher listed students for a small group to revisit spacing words appropriately. Upper grade students enter checks with pluses and/or minuses onto checklists to self-assess their work products. Some teachers then added a column where they signify if they agree or disagree with the student’s reflection, thus, providing feedback to students and enabling teachers to make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all learners.
## Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Findings

School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations for an established culture of learning, and offer ongoing feedback on a path to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Staff helps families understand their children’s progress towards school expectations, and provides detailed feedback, guidance, and support that prepares them for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- A parent handbook, and a new parent welcome packet were distributed to families. Information about the school’s dress code, grading policy, student responsibilities, and parent progress reports and teacher conferences were among the items included. In addition, the school engages parents through a variety of digital platforms, such as Twitter, an eChalk website, Class Dojo, and emails. For example, a teacher wrote to a second grade parent, “He did well in social studies today.” The parent replied, “So happy to hear this.” Later in the year, the teacher sent a message to let the parent know her son was retested on a math end-of-unit assessment and was given manipulatives to use at his discretion, and that he gained additional points. One new parent shared that when her child came and spoke only Arabic, several staff members came over to help, one teacher using a book to help translate, and later when signing up for parent-teacher conferences she noted a prompt to check for translation and to which language. Thus, helping all families to understand student progress towards expectations.

- School staff organizes multiple parent workshops to communicate expectations for both academic work and social-emotional growth. Topics included curriculum overviews, a parent–child book club, math madness, a test prep university, and planned for the spring, a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fair. A parent commented, “Teachers here bring in new programs, like iReady. It helps students practice things they need to know.” Fifth grade parents had a workshop explaining the middle school application process, and received individual follow up. Parents agreed, staff knows the students well. One parent stating, “Starting with security, the teachers and the principal, they know all the students. Not just grades, they use character trait books, and my son uses those words.” A fifth grade boy recalled, “When my dad, who only speaks Spanish came, the counselors came to translate. “Thus, families are helped to understand their children’s progress towards expectations.

- Monthly progress reports indicate the school’s grading policy, includes an attendance update, and contains areas for teachers to denote proficiency levels for ELA and math, check offs for effort, progress and homework status, as well as areas for a strength and a growth comment. For example, a kindergartener’s progress report in December stated she had grown in both academic areas, was working hard, and received 100 percent on recent tests in both subjects. The area of growth for this student included using words to express her feelings during challenging situations and to complete homework every night.

- Every morning students affirm a school pledge as the focus for the day. A digital app reinforces students’ awareness of positive development in their lives and their communities, as well as training for a positive mindset which students receive. A parent said, “Teachers explain to students what they are expected to do.” One such area is in preparing for student-led parent conferences. Students share goals they have set for the year, show portfolio selections, make ‘I can...’ statements and answer parent questions, leading the conversation about next steps that connect them to a path towards school expectations and college and career readiness.
### Additional Finding

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

**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and assessment data through collaborative structures and distributed leadership that includes teacher leaders and a literacy coach.

**Impact**

Shared leadership ensures teacher voice in key decisions and typically results in improved teacher practice and progress towards goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams, representing kindergarten through second grade and third through fifth grade, each have a teacher leader. Staff agreed on the inclusive mantra, “It takes a village”, with each team band purposely having an ENL leader and a special education specialist leader included to address the needs of all learners. A former kindergarten teacher explained that as more ELLs came into the school, staff began coming to her as a resource for strategies. She is now the ENL liaison for the school and participates on the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Teacher leaders monitor calendars, share observation feedback, and address the school goals to expand discussions towards improved teacher practice.

- Teams meet during shared periods utilizing a multi-tiered student support (MTSS) framework of corrective action that includes research-based strategies to address both academic and behavioral needs of students. The literacy coach hones in on close reading and intervention practices. Rolling agendas track teacher bands as they engage in digital and other protocols, examine student work for those they are focused on, look at associated data streams, and identify teacher problems of practice. During an observed teacher team meeting for third through fifth grade teachers, they purposefully discussed an instructional strategy for addressing students approach to math multistep word problems. The identified ‘problem of practice was that teachers do not present enough challenging word problems so that students persist. Each team member was given time to suggest a strategy that could be used across the grade’s band. One note-taker used a tuning plan protocol note-catcher to record the proceedings and decisions. Consensus was reached to invest in a five day plan for a problem-of-the-week, allowing for deeper understandings to develop, similar to close reading. At the next meeting, the teachers planned to collaborate on a student checklist for this initiative and to determine when an assessment would be given to measure improved student learning.

- Teachers serve on multiple PL teams, which drive specific foci from Danielson’s Framework for Teaching and from the Department of Education’s Instructional Leadership Framework’s hallmarks. For example, a team that focuses on Hallmark 1, Work with Engaging Text that Feature Big Ideas and Rich Content, is examining how to align their literacy curricula with features of these documents. Each teacher team has a lead staff member, and clearly identified resources to support learning. The team described above is reading a book about advanced literacy skills and how to support linguistically diverse students. In addition, there are learning teams that engage in three cycles during each year with each cycle culminating in a share out as well as a parent engagement plan. Other structures wherein teachers have a voice include a staff development team, a Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) team, and the ILT, all of which build leadership capacity and improved teacher practice, giving staff a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.