

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Edna Cohen

Elementary School 090

**2840 WEST 12 STREET
BROOKLYN
NY, 11224**

Principal: GRETA HAWKINS

Dates of review: May 13 - 14, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Edna Cohen School is an elementary school with 594 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 59% Hispanic, 19% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has aligned curricula across grades and subjects, integrated Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and are aligning tasks into instructional units to meet the academic needs of all students. (1.1)
 - All teachers are aware of the instructional shifts and actively work to incorporate them into units of study. Across grade levels in literacy, there is an emphasis on exposing students to a balance of informational and literary text. For example, fourth grade students were working on telling the difference between a firsthand and secondhand account of an event. Students had to write an account from the survivor's perspective of the Titanic disaster and then as an interviewer write a third person narrative. The content of the stories was required to be the same but the point of view needed to be different. Similarly, fifth grade students were comparing and contrasting the conditions of the Inca colonization with those of the American colonists before the American Revolution. Another class was analyzing more than one account of the same event or analyzing multiple accounts of the same event or topic. First grade students in an integrated collaborative team teaching (ICT) class were describing characters, settings and major events in a story using key details from the text. Additionally, teachers work in grade level teams to plan math curricula and tasks for the groups of students they teach. All students, including English language learners are taught the same curricular content but supports are built into the structure of the curricula to meet student's individual needs. As a result, students receive a program of instruction that promotes college and career readiness, and curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data so that a diversity of learners are engaged.
- School leaders make informed and highly effective organizational decisions that elevate coherence of practices toward meeting instructional goals. (1.3)
 - A newly hired interim-acting assistant principal (AP) primarily focuses on improving student outcomes in grades pre-Kindergarten through grade 2 by supporting teachers to administer Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System (ECLAS-2), helping teachers to understand how to extrapolate key findings from a variety of data sources and use the data to form next steps. Additionally the AP is supervising the preK-2 professional development on providing systematic and explicit instruction on the five core elements critical to reading success; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and text comprehension. The school has also hired teachers, including technology, music, and a librarian, to provide students with a coherent curriculum. Additionally, students receive pull-out/push-in Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for one or more subject areas. Acuity assessments are scored, an item analysis is generated, and small group instruction targeted toward specific skills and strategies during the extended day program. Most students receive focused interventions three times a week for 30 minutes in small groups. The work in English language arts includes vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, writing skills and/or to improve students' English acquisition for English language learners. In math the focus is on developing proficiency in problem solving, number awareness, and attacking word problems. First and second graders receive Response to Intervention (RTI) and first graders below reading level receive Reading Recovery. As a result of teachers working together, instructional goals are attained, targeted support provided for students, and student progress is monitored, allowing for effective adjustments. In addition, staff from the school's partnerships with YWCA, AstroCare, and 21st Century Community

Learning Center, works closely with the school to further support meeting school goals.

- A buy-in by all school staff allows for a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes towards learning that is highly supportive of academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - Parents stated that they feel their child is safe in school, are known well by school staff and there are adults in school that their children can go to when they have a problem. Student voice is welcomed and valued through the Student Consultation Committee where students have a voice initiating, guiding, and leading school improvement efforts. Currently students are engaged in a school wide project of the school's six pillars of character. Each month the school's devoted discussions, student chats, assemblies, and class work on one of the following six pillars Responsibility, Choices, Effort, Respect, Caring and Honesty focuses the school community on how each pillar can make the school stronger. Parents are encouraged to continue the conversations at home. Additionally at the monthly staff meeting teachers receive professional development on the specific pillar of focus and how they can additionally reinforce its message during delivery of lessons. Parents also said they are satisfied with the education their children receive at the school, their child's teacher gives helpful comments on class work and tests, and they are kept informed regarding their children's behavioral and academic progress through Jupiter grades. Parent attend bi-monthly meetings on topics including Understanding the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), Helping Your Child Learn the Road to College, Why the Changes in Standards, Our Pillars and Habits of Mind, and Helping Parents with Read Alouds. As a result students, parents, and staff acknowledge that the school offers a supportive environment and inclusive culture of mutual trust and respect resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors that impact students' academic success.
- The school uses the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - Using the Danielson framework for the past two years, the school has been able to assess and support teacher practice and student achievement. Each teacher has a copy of the text, and references to the framework are made on a regular basis in the school's weekly bulletin, *Monday Message*, as well as in additional memoranda's to specific teachers and/or grades as a support for the work. Structured focused dialogue with teachers as to where they are on the continuum provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their development and to make changes in their instructional practices. Specifically the goal for this school year is to help teachers achieve proficiency in designing coherent instruction and questioning and discussion techniques. These competencies, chosen to ensure coherence with the City, also support the focus on domain three as a support for teachers improving the quality of questions, discussion techniques, and student participation. The principal and assistant principals use a research-based common teaching framework, during regular classroom visits, to provide teachers with feedback about their practice. These classroom visits prompt school administration to suggest professional development for teachers, in the form of workshops or interclass visitations, to further support their practice. As a result teachers are constantly reflecting on their practice and are growing professionally as evidenced by shifts in their instructional practices.

- At the beginning of the year all teachers receive a specific professional development plan tailored to their needs. Topics include collaborative planning, units of study, ESL, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and text complexity, cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of ELL/SWDs, as well as a book club entitled *Teaching Our Students to Reason and to Engage in Analytical Thinking*. Teachers also add topics of interest for additional professional development (PD). Administrators follow up these requests with a variety of videos and specific targeted PD to meet individual teachers' needs. Teachers give feedback forms to administration to let them know how effective the PD was and work with the administrators to plan turnkey workshops for colleagues and next steps. One general education teacher who works closely with a special education teacher in an ICT class asked for professional development in understanding students with disabilities and by attending the professional development was able to learn strategies to meet all students learning needs. As a result of this individualized professional development teachers feel well supported and are willing to take risks as they implement instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of their students.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher questioning and student discussion during the delivery of instruction in order to enrich student participation, thereby increasing opportunities for further development of critical thinking skills. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teachers follow a similar instructional model that begins with a whole group lesson followed by small group work time, where students are assigned tasks designed to demonstrate their understanding of the skills and concepts taught during the lesson. Tasks are differentiated according to groups of students' learning needs. Teachers typically work with the struggling learners to provide guided support in completing the assignments. However, the whole group teacher directed lesson is often more than twenty minutes long, which then cuts student centered tasks. Additionally, supports for struggling learners during the whole group lessons are inconsistent across classrooms. Similarly, in some classrooms, extensions that encourage high achievers to think deeply about skills and concepts are missing during student work time. As a result, all students do not actively participate in lessons and student work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking.
- Strengthen the analysis of data gathering at the grade and school level to develop a stronger understanding of subgroup patterns and trends to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
 - Teachers use a variety of assessments including Degrees of Reading Assessment, ECLAS-2, and Acuity benchmarks in grades 3-5 and item analysis to identify struggling students in specific areas of ELA and math. ECLAS-2 results are evaluated and used to identify at-risk decoders. Teachers also collect a range of data including unit tests, rubrics, checklists, and conference notes that is used to determine differentiated groups for classroom instruction and student progress toward learning goals. Although teachers analyze student work to make adjustments to their own teaching practice, some teachers do not have a clear understanding of what students know or do not know before planning independent group work. Additionally, teachers provide feedback to students both verbally and in writing; however the feedback is not always specific enough to support independent engagement in tasks and therefore does not consistently provide information that is meaningful to all students. Therefore, only some students are able to take ownership over and attain their learning goals, but overall improvement by subgroups is not yet evident.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Edna Cohen School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
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?		X					
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				X			
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?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
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?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed