



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 089 Elmhurst

Elementary School Q089

**85-28 Britton Avenue
Queens
NY 11373**

Principal: Laura La Sala

**Date of review: February 26, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell**

The School Context

P.S. 089 Elmhurst is an elementary school with 2,004 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 20% Asian, 0% Black, 77% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 41% English Language Learners and 15% students with disabilities. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 96.4%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Well Developed
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Focus	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The vast majority of teachers use assessments and grading policies that are aligned to the school's curricular. Teachers use ongoing checks for understanding and adjust curriculum to support students' learning needs.

Impact

Targeted feedback is provided to students, to support movement toward their next learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use a variety of assessments such as running records, teachers college reading and writing project (TCRWP) unit assessments, Exit Slips, teacher conferences as well as item skill analysis of summative State assessment data, to determine the needs of the their students. For example, an analysis of second grade literacy data revealed that many students were having difficulty decoding words independently. As a result, the school identified the students in need of additional phonics supports and started the 'Rising Stars' After School Program for targeted grade 2 students. A benchmark assessment revealed that of the 60 students enrolled, they have shown a 1.5% increase in their ability to decode words.
- The school maintains a data portal with English Language Arts (ELA) and math data on all the students enrolled in the school. All teachers have access to information on their students to compare their progress from grade to grade. One of the assistant principals, who is very proficient in technology, maintains the portal with up to date entries of students' benchmark unit assessments, summative state assessments and formative data. In addition to data trails for individual and groups of students, the portal provides information on various interventions that students have been provided with from grade to grade, information on classes the students have been assigned from grade K to grade 5, attendance data, along with English Language Learner (ELL) and Student with Disabilities (SWD) designations. For instance, a review of the portal showed that a second grade student was receiving Rtl (Response to Intervention) services in ELA.
- The school's grading policy is aligned to the curricular and the District's policy. Across grades 3 through 5, all students receive grades that are normed to reflect exceeding proficiency (90-100); meeting proficiency (75-89); approaching proficiency (60-74) and below proficiency (0-59). On an informational writing rubric, students are provided with detailed criteria for proficiency at levels 1 through 4 and for meeting the expectations for writing elements such as description, elaboration, organization and transitions. Students use checklists to self asses their work and their peers to help them determine if they are ready to move to their next goal.
- Teachers maintain clipboards with student's names and skills to conduct on going checks of students' comprehension. During one-to-one student conferences, teachers provide ELL's, SWD's and Young Scholars, the advanced learners, with specific strategies to move toward their next step. One student shared that during a conference, his teacher told him that he needed to elaborate with more details in his writing.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the staff aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Communication with parents continues to address ways to support all families on building pathways for college and career readiness for their children.

Impact

Teachers share a mutual accountability for improving their practice. School leaders are working toward more effectively communicating with all families.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct walkthroughs and classroom observations of teachers and provide them with oral and written feedback, in alignment with the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Feedback to a teacher around 3d, *using assessment in instruction*, stated: “You listened in as students worked with their peers during the whole-class lesson, researched the room during the work period, checking-in and guiding them as they worked independently. You said, ‘How’s it going?’ You recorded your observations onto a template attached to a clipboard.” Additionally, the principal provides a weekly blog to the staff on the instructional goals for the week. Teachers indicate that they look forward to reading the blog as it provides focus for the work they are doing in the classroom. Teachers are held accountable for their individual goals and implementing best practices to support the school’s goals through participation in initial conferences and mid-year evaluations.
- Teachers state that they feel accountable for their professional growth. All teachers have opportunities to complete a professional development request form to attend workshops. In order to maintain accountability, teachers are required to cite specific components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, which the workshop will provide additional supports for. The teacher must also indicate how the information will be implemented within their classroom. In addition, teachers engage in inter-visitations of their peers to observe and learn new instructional strategies to improve their teaching practices.
- The school provides a plethora of workshops for parents. Such as, Literacy Strategies for parents of toddlers, aged two to three years old, Using Consequences to Reinforce Positive Behaviors at Home, Stress Management, ESL Adult Class, Nutrition Parent Workshop and Homework without Tears. While the school is providing ongoing workshops, parents indicated that parent engagement is limited, as indicated in the 2014-2015 School Survey. Parents state that because of the various languages spoken within the community, many parents do not come out to participate. During the parent meeting, parents shared that they would like to have more supports to address the languages that are spoken by different families in the school, to more effectively meet their needs. While the school provides information in different languages, many parents feel that their language needs are not always addressed at the school level. All of the parents present at the meeting feel that the school provides a strong instructional program for their children, and provides them with interim progress reports in between report cards. The leadership shared that they are in the process of creating a website to more effectively address the multiple languages spoken by their families.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school provides a Common Core curricula strategically aligned to the instructional shifts. Revisions are made to support groups of students.

Impact

Students are provided a curriculum that supports college and career readiness skills and have access to cognitively engaging tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school provides all students with a curriculum that supports building academic vocabulary, close reading of complex text, with a focus on building math and writing skills. The Teachers College Reading and Writing Curriculum is embedded across the school to support students' college and readiness skills in English Language Arts (ELA). The leadership shared that this curriculum was selected because it consistently provides updates in alignment with any changes to the Common Core. Students engage in units of study that incorporates informational and literary texts. Junior Great books supplement the ELA curricula to provide students with more complex texts and opportunities to engage in text based discussions and book clubs. The school conducted an analysis of the development of language skills in the early grades and decided to focus on vocabulary development, this resulted in selecting Sadlier Vocabulary and Grammar Workshop for grades 2-5 and Sadlier for grades 1 and kindergarten. Students engage in the "Go Math" curriculum, which pushes cognitive thinking. The school is piloting the STEM curriculum to further support science, technology, engineering and math skills, which is specifically integrated into the social studies curriculum in the Young Scholars program in grade 5. Students are immersed in the Arts through the addition of a licensed theatre teacher to compliment the Visual Arts and Music teachers.
- The school designed an after school program to support the literacy needs of its diverse population specifically targeted for kindergarten students. The "Ready to Read" program provides additional literacy supports for low performing students. The program is offered twice a week on Wednesdays and Thursdays with a focus on building phonics and phonemic skills. This is done through the Foundations curriculum along with phonemic awareness games to provide cognitive engagement via iPads.
- Teachers use data and students' work to make adjustments to the curriculum. Grade level teams meet monthly to review and revise units of study. During the planning sessions teachers are provided professional development on upcoming units of study to revise teaching points, in order to better support the Common Core expectations. For example, adjustments to a grade 3 unit on opinion writing for "The Baby Literacy Essay" was made to provide teachers with more background knowledge on how the unit will support students in meeting the Common Core Standard for text based evidence. In addition, curricular modifications in ELA allow students to make a claim, come up with one reason, write about it and then only at that point think, "What other reason can I come up with?" Student work reflects the use of transitional phrases and improved organization of the essay.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teaching practices across the school are aligned to the school's belief around how students learn best. Teaching strategies provide multiple entry points to support students' comprehension.

Impact

Teacher discussions frame lessons for students' engagement, in alignment with the *Danielson Framework for Teaching* and the school's philosophy on how students learn best. Teaching strategies purposely support students' at their instructional levels with appropriate tasks.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership articulates the belief that students learn best when they are provided with inquiry based explorations, differentiated scaffolds to support their specific learning levels and tasks that push cognitive engagement. For example, turn and talk, small group collaborations, the use of technology, in addition to extensions. Classrooms and hallways reflect multiple displays of student work with tasks and attached rubrics. Students were observed working in guided whole and independent small groups. Computers are provided to students to engage in tiered work. Teacher teams share the belief on how students learn best and design lessons to support student inquiry in whole and targeted small group instruction to support the development of content skills and concepts in alignment with instructional shifts and lessons aligned to the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*.
- Across classrooms students participate in tiered lessons, at their instructional levels. In an early grade classroom, the teacher led a whole group lesson on developing an opinion writing piece and how to make their writing stronger by using a checklist. The teachers modeled how to use the check list to improve a piece of writing. The students were provided with a checklist on how to make their writing stronger. They were reminded to have an opening with a "hook" such as "Do you want to read the best book ever?" The students engaged in turn and talk, discussing what they needed to do to write an opinion to support why a book they read was the best book ever. Students stated that they needed to include three reasons, use the magic word, "because..." and have a "hook" at the beginning of the writing.
- In an upper grade classroom, students with disabilities (SWD) were observed working in table groups as with targeted reading texts. At one table the students were working on fluency and reading with expression. At another table the students were working on using "envisioning" as a strategy to create a picture in their mind around text, in order to help them comprehend the selection. The teacher was working with a group on developing the main idea of a passage in *The Princess and the Pea* and one student worked on summarizing the text she was reading.
- During an upper grade math lesson, students work in small groups at their tables to determine a strategy to solve a word problem involving fractions. The teacher circulated to each table, giving individual supports and rephrasing the question to align with students' learning levels. Students shared at the student meeting that they engage in small group work and meet with their teacher to get feedback on their learning. They use the Junior Great Book to discuss characters and provide text based evidence to support a claim.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers participate in structured professional collaborations using the inquiry approach. Leadership structures are embedded across the school.

Impact

The systematic work of teams results in school wide coherence of teacher practice and shared decisions that support students' learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Horizontal grade teams and vertical professional collaborations support the coherence of instructional practices across the school, in alignment with the Common Core. A vertical team composed of teachers from grade 1 to grade 5, engaged in a discussion of instructional practices to support the improvement of students' opinion writing. The teachers began their discussion on how to increase the evidence students incorporate in their writing pieces through an analysis of students' work, data findings and how that guides their classroom instructional practices. A strategy of developing student led conferences was reviewed by the group on a video. Two students were observed on the video in a peer conference, related to a piece of writing. The student leading the conference was noted as the "student teacher" and used an opinion writing checklist to guide the feedback during the conference with his peer. The student teacher uses prompts such as, "I like you're...", "I like the way you...", "I wish you would...", "Let me show you how I...", "Now you try it." Teachers reviewed student-writing samples prior to and after conferences to determine improvements.
- The PS 89 eLearning portal provides information to all teams on the results of strategies they have used to support students' achievement. Teams upload information onto the portal to present their team's presentation. A review of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) and Inquiry portal reveals presentations on: "Integrating extension activities to scaffold during math workshop", "*Promoting stamina and rigor with special populations.*" "*Supporting Language Development for English Language Learners (ELL's) In All Content Areas.*" as well as "*Student Led Conferences* and Providing Feedback to Students: All teachers have access to the Inquiry Portal where they can click on topics they would like to view to inform their instructional practices and improve students' achievement. A review of the School's 2014-2015 School Quality Snapshot reveals that 97% of former grade 5 students are passing course work in ELA, math, social studies and science in grade 6.
- Teachers shared that they are provided with ongoing opportunities to share their voice in decisions to support their professional growth and student learning. For example, they engage in leading professional development sessions on Mondays, during the extended day to share best practices. They are organizing the "Tune Up Tuesdays" to offer additional support to teachers. Teams make school wide instructional decisions for students as they revise units of study, such as different teaching points to support students' learning. Teachers are encouraged to share new strategies to support coherence across the school with student led conferences to improve writing.