

Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 889

Elementary 22K889

**21 Hinckley Place
Brooklyn
NY 11218**

Principal: Kathryn Ryan Anderson

**Dates of Review:
May 2, 2019 - May 3, 2019**

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

P.S. 889 serves students in grade PK through grade 1. 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 | | |
|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>To what extent does the school...</i> | Area | 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 | Area of Celebration | 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 Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products | Additional Finding | 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 | Area of Focus | Proficient |

School Quality Ratings continued

| School Culture | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>To what extent does the school...</i> | Area | Rating |
| 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 | Additional Finding | Proficient |
| Systems for Improvement | | |
| <i>To what extent does the school...</i> | Area | Rating |
| 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 school-wide 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 the CCLS | Additional Finding | Proficient |

Area of Celebration

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Curricula and tasks across grades and subjects are planned and refined to challenge all students to think critically, emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order skills.

Impact

Curricula and academic tasks are accessible to a variety of learners, so that individuals and groups of students are cognitively challenged and demonstrate their thinking through their work products.

Supporting Evidence

- A standards-based pre-kindergarten *Building Blocks* unit plan was redefined by teachers to incorporate a science unit about plants and still address the mathematical big ideas of counting from one to five, adding on one or two more, and using image cards to represent written numerals, and thus requiring students to recognize, recall, explain and connect ideas. On their weekly implementation sheet, used for daily planning of whole group activities, hands-on-centers such as a dramatic play flower shop where students would gather and pay for selected plants, and small group differentiated tasks and computer games, teachers added in a flower seeds song for each of the five school days thus, nurturing students' descriptions of facts that show relationships related to a topic. Teachers use recorded data sheets to inform small groupings for the next week. For instance, strategies for counting were organized into finger method, eyes only, counts backwards and doesn't count correctly. This data accompanies unit planning pages and thus steers teachers in identifying appropriate and cognitively engaging tasks for individuals and groups of students thus, making the curricula accessible to a variety of learners.
- *GO Math!* units provide teachers with the accompanying resources that include instructional strategies for supporting a diversity of learners. These units have been refined by teachers to include *Exemplars* performance tasks, which emphasize grade appropriate rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills. A pacing calendar to guide instruction across the grade and through each unit signifies administration of one *Exemplars* task as a formative data collection, and then administration of another appropriate *Exemplars* task as the summative assessment for the units. Pacing calendars reviewed included footnotes distinguishing certain dates they underwent revision and updates. For instance, the kindergarten math calendar for May was revised on March 13th, 15th, 25th, and again on April 13th, adding in opportunities for students to model shapes in the real world through building, inserting small group re-teach sessions, and determining a mid-chapter checkpoint of mastery progress, thereby allowing students to deepen their understanding and assuring appropriate cognitive access to the curricula for all students.
- A district initiative has encouraged teachers to merge their English Language Arts (ELA) and social studies units. A spring fairytale ELA unit in grade one, sourced by Lucy Calkins' *If...Then...Curriculum*, aligned with a social studies unit on community, spurred by such texts as Cinderella and Rumpelstiltskin. Non-fiction texts examined roles and responsibilities in a community. A last edit to the unit was recorded on April 4th and included plans for students to focus on a topic, read purposefully, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and participate in a shared writing projects by producing their own fairytale book. Teachers planned to support students to sequence events by providing some students with sentence frames, have students demonstrate command of phonics and conventions through writing while referencing anchor charts, and to carry out individual conferencing which fosters describing and retelling with details. This type of support for students extended across grade and subject lessons reviewed thus, exhibiting plans for all learners to demonstrate their thinking in writing products, in math problem-solving notebooks, and in celebration presentations each month.

Area of Focus

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| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

Teachers assess all learning outcomes, which are aligned to the curricula, using a wide range of assessment strategies, while checking for understanding during instruction.

Impact

Actionable feedback is provided to students regarding their work and staff make effective instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students. However, feedback is not yet consistently meaningful and adjustments have not yet built students' awareness of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Collaboratively designed assessment reports go home at intervals between official report cards. Pre-kindergarten students do not receive grades but holistic assessment is made by teachers regarding their development in such areas as showing curiosity and asking questions, learning and practicing new concepts, and growing as a member of the classroom community. Teachers use agreed upon small group record sheets and anecdotal notes to discern and evaluate progress. Kindergarten and first grade use the DOE's four-level grading system on report cards, and mastered or not-mastered quantifiers on progress reports to convey results of an assessment checklist appropriate to each grade. Science and social studies follow a project-based instructional pattern, with students graded using curriculum-aligned rubrics. Feedback is written in the expressions of glows and grows, and at times is read and discussed with students not yet readers, as teachers explain future actions students need to incorporate to improve their work. However, limiting feedback to written feedback has impeded meaningful feedback for students across some classrooms.
- Teachers interviewed agreed that collaborating on rubrics appropriate for early childhood was done through a process. One teacher recalled, "Rubrics were examined, broken down, and discussed as to what students needed to understand, then we revised. Some English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities receive modified rubrics." Another teacher added, "Teachers show students the written rubric as they begin tasks, then use that rubric to assess completed work." Standardized rubrics are also in use. For instance, a *Teachers College* (TC) language conventions rubric describes vertical skills across pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade. It allows teachers to assess student work using a point system, to which teachers also add written glow and grow statements. Students interviewed about rubrics replied that they tell if work is good or bad and that they are in their folders. Although some of the rubrics in place incorporate picture icons and symbols, there have been missed opportunities to provide age-appropriate meaningful feedback across the vast majority of classrooms.
- Across classrooms teachers consistently use note templates for each individual student's understanding. For example, during a realistic fiction writing unit, a teacher wrote a glow, "Nice job describing Lucy's clothes," and a next-steps grow, "Let's describe her hair and eye color too." Other checks for understanding include thumbs up or down, student retelling of task steps, and cold calling. Teachers collaborate across grades to reflect on student learning and make effective adjustments, such as create student-friendly task checklists, offer some students sentence starters, and conference with small re-teach groups, so as to meet all students' needs. Students interviewed spoke in generalities of good or bad work, needing to add more to their work, or being able to share their work with the class; however, all students are not yet aware of their next learning steps.

Additional Finding

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| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Well Developed |
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices align to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teachers strategically provide students with multiple entry points, high-quality supports, and extensions.

Impact

All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are appropriately challenged with tasks requiring them to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, resulting in meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and staff articulated a belief that students learn best when lessons have clear learning objectives, so that students are aware of task expectations. Students articulate “I can” statements during instruction. For example, in a first-grade writing class, students chorally read aloud the lesson’s objective, “I can write the first chapter of my realistic fiction book by introducing my character and setting in the beginning.” Later, the teacher asked a series of questions. For instance, the teacher asked, “What will you first think about when you read your writing?” A student responded, “I can think, does it make sense?” Another question was asked, “What else does our writing need?” A different student replied, “I can add details.” As students wrote independently, a few ELL students used a cloze form with sentence framing to add in specific details. Furthermore, in a kindergarten class, when small groups assembled for differentiated reading activities, each area had a task card sign. One such area had a sign that stated, “I can stretch words by using my end sound.” Another area’s sign stated, “I can practice my sight word by playing bingo.” These types of practices communicate to students the expectations for their learning, and engages them in activities and assignments through grouping and with appropriate materials, as described in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, which results in all students producing meaningful work products.
- During circle time in a kindergarten class, students contributed ideas, “I can write more on my pages by adding more details.” When the teacher paused and thought aloud that she had forgotten how to spell *is*, one student directed her to the class word wall as a resource. Three ELL students sat in close proximity to an English as a New Language (ENL) teacher who provided picture support on the topic. At another point, the teacher inquired, “What kind of writing have we been doing?” Another student retorted, “Non-fiction,” and a different student expanded this saying, “It’s about real things.” After writing “Soccer is a fun sport,” the teacher asked, “What does it mean to add more details?” One student responded, “Add more words or more sentences.” The teacher encouraged students for an example, and a student who had not spoken out before exclaimed, “Because it lets you kick the ball!” Routines, such as building word walls, and questioning were evident across the majority of classrooms, so that all learners could demonstrate higher-order thinking.
- Students in a pre-kindergarten class participated in themed centers, such as dramatic play, a building hub, and a science area. Here they explored, verbally and non-verbally, using a variety of equipment and materials, enacted scenes of preparing and selling flowers in pots, planted seeds and watered them, and drew depictions of flowers from petals to roots based on an anchor poster nearby. One student verbally exchanged Spanish labeling with the English words modeled by the teacher. Another student extended the activity and wrote labels onto her paper. All students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, were appropriately challenged and demonstrated higher-order thinking in their work products.

Additional Finding

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| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

High expectations, leading to a path of college and career readiness, are consistently communicated to students and families, within an established school culture for learning.

Impact

Ongoing and detailed feedback, with guidance and advisement supports, helps students and families understand student progress towards school expectations and preparation for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- A Back to School Night invites families to hear about school expectations and the plans laid to connect their children to a path towards college and careers. A parent handbook is distributed. Class Dojo facilitates consistent communication between school and home, carrying posts of whole class events, an exchange of videos when all parties give permission, academic updates from cluster teachers as well as homeroom teachers, and individual messages from school support staff. The principal sends a weekly email to all families alerting them to upcoming performances or award presentations, describing current themes across grades, and other information about avenues of outreach available to them for support. Monthly, an events calendar is back-packed home to each family. Together these outreaches help families to understand the progress students are making towards achieving school expectations.
- On Tuesday afternoons parents can visit the school to receive progress updates about their individual children. During this time teachers reach out to families unable to appear in person through phone calls, sharing assessment data, anecdotes, attendance information, requests for materials, and assignment notices, among other matters. For example, one parent shared, "The teacher wrote to me after I called to say my child was having trouble with pronunciation and asked if she needed a speech teacher. The teacher suggested to do at-risk intervention first, now months later, both me and my child meet with the speech therapist once a week." March Mathness initiated parent involvement in extending math packet problem solving through their child's interests, many projects surpassing school expectations. Parents interviewed agreed that expectations are made clear and that school staff consistently offers feedback and updates that results in their understanding their children's progress towards expectations.
- A culture for learning has been established in the building, and the school prides itself on honoring its families' diversity. Students participated in an egg demonstration using both white and brown eggs, which when cracked open had the same visual contents. This reinforced school expectations that respect and equity were valued for all its members. A teacher interviewed spoke of the Just Say Hi Program which organized the egg demonstrations, reporting of its focus to celebrate different cultures of the school community, as well as CookShop nurturing, that provides support for all students to achieve these expectations in an established culture for learning, where it is commonly said, "Do not say yuck to someone's yum!"
- School leaders hold monthly grade meetings where they communicate high expectations for all students, elaborate on criteria for certificates and awards, and define the school's friends expectations. Each morning a group of students make morning announcements over the speaker system. Each announcement ends with the same cue, "Please remember to be kind to each other," thus preparing students for the day. Staff that visits classrooms often remark that they are looking for first grade behavior, or that a work product is second-grade work worthy. Groups of students visit higher-grade classes to try them out thus, preparing students for the next level.

Additional Finding

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| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders and teacher peers use frequent focused observations and analysis of student work and data to provide all teachers with effective feedback and next steps. An effective system drives the use of observation data in the design and facilitation of teacher assignments and professional learning.

Impact

School leaders and teacher peers elevate schoolwide instructional practices and reflection, whilst implementing strategies that promote individual professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Two of the eight homeroom teachers are new professionals, who have received next-step advice such as pre-plan questions for read-aloud wait time based on data, work with literacy consultant for grouping foci and management, use a popsicle stick system to ensure a more even distribution of calling students to participate, and look at the *Building Blocks* units, including the Triad website, to deepen your understanding of the various levels of students' ability, as well as to supply appropriate vocabulary for extending discussions. Another teacher responded to inquiries of how she knew which students were listening to her during instruction by creating mouth and ear picture paddles. Students now hold up either side to indicate to her which sense they are focused on. Each of these strategies, when implemented, promoted reflection and professional growth.
- Through a combined effort of out-of-building coaches, such as a universal literacy coach, a Building Blocks coach, and a pre-kindergarten instructional coach, and in-house specialists, such as the intervention teacher and the ENL teacher, schoolwide practices are elevating. One teacher remarked, "The ENL teacher pushes in. We will collaborate on the ability of my ELL students and she suggests additional supports individually needed." Additionally, each new teacher has a mentor. One new teacher stated, "Our questions on management or instruction can be answered by more senior teachers." These supporters cultivate implementation of strategies that promote professional growth.
- Four of the eight homeroom teachers in the building serve on district teams as subject ambassadors. They provide written summaries of their meetings, then lead professional development (PD) to share learning with school leaders and peers. For example, the social studies ambassador reported about assessment practices she had observed at another school, which included a student participation checklist, students doing a stop and jot before note-taking, turn and talk guided by questions, sticky note responses collected on a class chart, and independent worksheets that incorporated mini-assessment questions on its bottom half. The work of the ambassadors furthers teacher capacity across the building through scheduled and informal intervisitations. A newer teacher stated, "They model, give concrete feedback, help us plan, and leave resources for us to use. I'm learning each day."
- School leaders designed an effective system of PD targeted at assessment in instruction by generating a schedule of sessions wherein each teacher on staff would prepare and lead the training, including topics such as Writing Revolution activities, the breakdown of an Amplify science unit, an overview of Reading Rescue, and pursuing literacy publishing parties. A training on Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) assessment analysis led to the building of an open resource library from which teachers can borrow leveled books. A teacher shared, "With F&P not all students on a level are the same, we have learned to differentiate into specific skills. Now can select books for individual needs and design mini-lessons towards specific skills or reading behaviors." Collaborative staff efforts such as these elevate schoolwide instructional practices.

Additional Finding

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| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |
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Findings

School leaders and teacher teams use distributed leadership structures to consistently analyze data and student work for the students they share or on whom they are focused.

Impact

Teachers have a voice in key decisions and have built leadership capacity among them that focuses on improved student and teacher learning. This shared leadership typically identifies progress towards goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers rotate leads for their team meetings promoting a shared sense of responsibility. Teams focused on math visited the Triad math website to view trajectories of child development in mathematical thinking, then used that understanding to further analyze their students' assessment data and to plan out next instructional steps. A teacher recalled, "One strategy I learned was to have students feel shapes, rather than look at them, and then describe their characteristics." A first-grade teacher team was observed discussing reading instruction. Teachers reviewed and analyzed samples of running records for students whom they focused on, then reviewed a guided reading lessons designed to target those students. The teachers gave feedback to the presenting teachers and together discussed the strengths of the lessons, as well as suggestions for embellishing the desired outcomes, such as coaxing students who are reading level J-K books to chunk unknown words to discover longer words and to model fluency for students by attending to phrases of words, often referred to as scooping up words. Teachers agreed that guided reading in the building had evolved this year, especially in the understanding behaviors that influence students' comprehension. Teams have been supported by the literacy coach who often suggests specific books for individual students' needs and has assisted teachers in organizing an open leveled library, to which teachers can come and borrow selections and return for others use.
- Teachers participate as members of the School Leadership Team on a regular basis, contributing teacher voice to discussions such as surrounding math night, student involvement in the district science expo, project-based learning, necessary class reconfiguration, and prioritizing educational trips and experiences. The school leaders' cabinet meetings consistently include a teacher, where discussions have included alignment of learning objectives, funding of enrichment initiatives such as *Just Say Hi*, *Arts Connection*, *Nature Based* and *Change Makers*, and assessment best practices, resulting in a focus on improved student and teacher learning.
- Teams meet on Monday afternoons across the school year in alternating grade and vertical teams with rotating leads, and then meet periodically afterschool, funded by per session monies. Collaborations with other district schools has facilitated teacher team visits to other buildings to view best practices, such as around Integrated Co-Teaching models and Individualized Education Program (IEP) writing and developing. With several experienced teachers as models throughout the staff, and with a committed staff that has accepted a rotation of professional responsibilities that inspire each to the forefront of PD, the school has built leadership capacity, giving teachers a voice in key decisions, such as extensive coverage schedule to allow continual out-of-building learning opportunities, that affect student learning across the school. For example, the special education teachers who visited another school to see their model for using data to drive small groups, has expanded their strategies for addressing IEP goals, which buttresses student learning.