

# Quality Review Report

## 2019-2020

**P.S. 021 Edward Hart**

**Elementary 25Q021**

**147-36 26 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11354**

**Principal: Michael Swirsky**

**Dates of Review:  
January 15, 2020 - January 16, 2020**

**Lead Reviewer: Daniel Kim**

## 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. 021 Edward Hart 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		
<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 State standards and/or content standards	Area of Focus	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient
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	Additional Finding	Proficient

## School Quality Ratings continued

<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults	<b>Area of Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Rating</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Finding</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school's approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is driven by a theory of action. School leaders strategically align school-developed core values with a research-developed program to support schoolwide social-emotional learning efforts.

### Impact

School efforts result in a safe school environment and inclusive culture that support progress toward the school's goals, and in the student adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school community's efforts for culture-building emphasize building students' emotional intelligence skills and strategies to foster critical thinking and academic risk-taking. The theory of action states that by explicitly teaching these skills, then students will be successful not only in self-regulation in social and academic settings but also serve as a foundation throughout their lives. This is applied consistently across the school through its positive behavioral management system, which rewards students for consistently applying the school's "Lion Harted" core values that reflect the school namesake: supportive, persistent, thoughtful, dependable and outstanding. These values are re-emphasized in the classroom and non-classroom settings through teacher- and student-lead lessons and discussions, including the creation of the classroom and staff charters. During meetings, parents, staff, and students unanimously agreed that the school community fosters a safe and respectful climate where students' social, emotional, physical and academic needs are readily addressed by school efforts.
- Students actively initiate, guide and lead schoolwide improvement efforts. Student leaders serve as trainers of their peers so that the school mindfulness exercises can be consistently lead by students from year to year even after a cohort graduates. Student leaders also collaborated with faculty and the school nurse to create a student-driven needs assessment, including their experiences during recess. They advocated for schoolwide changes that would make their experiences safer, including that of more structured games and play centers. This has led to supervising adults and school aides to receive training with an outside community-based organization. Interviewed students shared how this has allowed them to have a safer recess time and also play with peers that are not in their immediate classes.
- The school community strategically aligns social-emotional professional development (PD), family outreach, and student learning experiences with a research-based program that results in the adaptation of positive personal and academic behaviors. Across all classrooms, there was evidence of teachers making explicit connections, either in lesson plans, charts or in verbal instructions, for students to peer-lead focusing exercises, or for students to share their emotional self-assessment. A first-grade student was heard in the classroom, "I am calm and focused because I can take my time in doing my work." Students unanimously stated, during the meeting, that they have utilized various focusing and calming strategies at school and at home. For example, a student shared that while playing an online game fellow gamers were using unkind words towards him. He related that he identified where he was emotionally, took steps to disconnect and conducted some mindfulness exercises which allowed him to address the situation at a later time. Moreover, interviewed parents relayed suggestions for fostering emotional self-regulation from a family workshop, such as creating a calming corner at home that their child uses when frustrated. A parent noted that in a recent sibling conflict, their second-grade child stated, "I am feeling really angry right now, and I need to stop speaking. I will talk to you in five minutes."

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for a variety of learners, including multi-lingual learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities, through student discussions. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

While learners have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged, there are missed opportunities for cross-grade and content coherence, and planning for individual and groups of students including the highest performing students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Planned tasks within lesson plans and other curricula documents consistently emphasize rigorous habits through student discourse in partnerships, small or whole groups to support student cognitive engagement, foster student ownership, and demonstrate their thinking. As a culminating part of the Social Studies Canada unit, plans for grade five students include students conducting a Socratic seminar debate on whether or not students should invest in a Canadian maple syrup farm. Curricula documents for the Social Studies unit include focusing students' research on economic, geographical and cultural concepts as they inform their positions so that they can articulate their positions to their peers. Planned supports for students, including students with disabilities and multilingual learners, include utilizing an online platform to share student work and conduct self-assessment, discussion guidelines, linguistic frames, and sentence starters, as well as student partnerships. Plans for the above unit provide evidence of planning with English Language Arts (ELA) tasks, which include students conducting research and writing argumentative essays to establish a claim and support it with research-based reasons and evidence. Such cross-curricula planning, however, was not consistently evident, representing a missed opportunity for cross-curricula coherence across grades and content areas for rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills.
- Reviewed planning documents provide evidence of refinement of student tasks so that diverse learners have access to the curricula. For example, a grade one writing lesson plan task students to draft informative, "all-about" books on a topic of their choice. Based on previous work products, groups of students are identified for small group strategy instruction and to be provided with scaffolds such as alphabet strips and sentence frames such as "Did you know that...?" or "I can teach you all about..." Supports for multilingual learners include an English as a New Language teacher providing small group instruction, the utilization of linguistic frames and word banks, to aid students in discussing their noticings from non-fiction texts and images.
- Plans for a grade two reading lesson focus on students getting to know the personality of a character and using text evidence to understand character traits. Plans include strategic student groupings and linguistic frames to support students with disabilities and multilingual learners with examples of oral language use; utilizing technology to provide listening stations on independent reading level texts for groups of multilingual students; guided reading groupings to teach specific reading strategies to identify character traits and how those traits helped the character; those at mastery or above were challenged to identify traits on multiple characters, and choose which tool would best support their work. However, such refinement of student work for individual and groups of students, including the highest performing students, was evident in most but not the vast majority of planning documents reviewed, thus presenting a missed opportunity to foster cognitive engagement for all students.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teaching strategies such as small group instruction, tiered scaffolds, visual, content and language supports, provide multiple entry points into curricula, student work and peer-to-peer discussions.

### Impact

All learners, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, demonstrate higher-order thinking skills, and reflect high levels of thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies, such as the use of small group strategy instruction, tiered graphic organizers, as well as discussion, content and language scaffolds, provide multiple entry points for a variety of learners into challenging academic work across classrooms. For example, in an English Language Arts lesson, grade two students were observed working individually and in pairs to identify how their character feels at the beginning, middle and end of the story within their independent reading level books. Students, including students with disabilities and multilingual learners, were supported with a visual representation in a feelings vocabulary sheet, a character study checklist, as well as tiered graphic organizers at four different levels that structured student identification of the emotion and articulation of text evidence to support that identification as the character changed over time. Those at or above mastery were pushed to not only identification of the emotion, the text evidence, but also why the character was feeling this particular emotion. Teachers during this time also met with students in guiding reading groups to focus on a specific reading strategy, conduct individual and group conferences to assess student mastery and offer concrete feedback to students.
- In a math lesson, grade five students worked in collaborative groups to not only to solve a division math problem but think through how and when to represent the remainder as part of their solution. In order to make visible their problem-solving thinking, students constructed a shared chart to display their thinking on whether or not they are going to ignore the remainder, use only the remainder in the answer, share both the quotient and remainder or round the quotient in the answer. Their work included sections for sketching their thinking, identification of strategies, solving their math problem, as well as explaining their thinking process and work. Students at various levels were supported with online content and language references on their laptops, discussion, and accountable talk stems to help students to the challenging academic work.
- Grade five students worked in pairs to “flash” draft persuasive essays on whether or not chocolate milk should be banned from schools. All students were observed working on their essays on individual electronic tablets or laptops, supported by an online platform that scaffolded organizing their arguments with evidence from various texts. Students were observed at various stages of their work, ranging from working on their organizer, writing their draft, peer assessing each other’s writing in pairs, conducting revisions or conferencing with the teacher. Such high levels of student thinking and participation in their student work products and discussions were evident across classrooms visited.

## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Faculty use common assessments such as on-demand writing tasks and State exams to determine student progress toward goals. Assessment practices such as teachers' individual and group conferences and student peer assessment consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

### Impact

Assessment results are used to provide actionable feedback to teachers and students. Across classrooms, teachers make effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

### Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use assessments such as on-demand writing assessments that are aligned to the school curricula. Students receive teacher and peer feedback through teacher-created assessments and rubrics that align with specific content areas. For example, in mathematics, teacher feedback included a student self-assessment checklist, as well as a problem-solving rubric that articulated expectations for math strategies, accurate mathematical representations, and clarity of student explanations. In writing, teacher feedback for a student included their performance with grade-specific expectations on writing structure, craft, evidence use, organization, and mechanics. Individual feedback to students combined a rubric score as well as teacher comments.
- Through school assessment practices, students receive actionable feedback that supports their growth. For example, a student shared that teacher feedback has improved her writing and she tried something that she had never done before, which was to utilize various text structures within her informational writing about tap dancing. During the meeting, other students shared that in addition to teacher feedback, they evaluated peer work and gave each other feedback as part of their learning experiences, resulting in concrete ways to improve their work. A student shared that during a writing lesson, students evaluated each other's writing work based on the persuasive writing rubric, and debated whether or not their partner met the expectations within the rubric and to outline the next steps for their writing.
- Grade five students worked collaboratively in groups to debate the best way to articulate their use of the remainder within their answers for a division word problem. As the students worked on their group tasks, the teacher conducted conferences with multiple groups, to assess their work and performance. Utilizing a group monitoring tool, the teacher noted where students were on the standard for mathematical practice, articulated the specific strategy provided for the students during the conference, which allowed the teacher to follow up with and hold students accountable on previously given group feedback and make adjustments on what the students should focus on within the group task to best support their needs. In another grade five classroom during a persuasive writing lesson, students were heard making suggestions to each other including improving arguments through the quality of writing in staking a position, use of evidence, or using counter-arguments to argue against. Students self-managed their process by an online task tracking form and self-assessment, which the teacher used to organize her sequence of conferences with specific students based on their progress.

## Additional Finding

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

School leaders and teachers consistently communicate instructional high expectations to the entire staff through individual, grade and department meetings, and expectations connected to a path of academic success to families.

### Impact

Faculty share a culture of mutual accountability for instructional expectations, and successfully partner with families to support student progress through concrete suggestions and plans that are implemented at home.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate high expectations for all staff through discussions at schoolwide professional development (PD) days and faculty conferences, the teacher handbook, as well as individual, grade-specific and cross-grade inquiry team meetings. Through these individual and group meetings, school leaders detail expectations related to instruction, planning and professional collaborations. School leaders meet regularly with teachers individually and collectively to engage in reviews of professional growth, expectations for high-quality teaching such as universal design for learning principals in instruction, and follow-up based on attended PD to see practices applied or shared among colleagues. To expand capacity in delivering effective instruction, all teachers receive formal and informal feedback on their performance in relation to best practices highlighted by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.
- Through individual and team discussions at grade and common planning meetings, staff members receive professional development support from school leaders and colleagues that are aligned to their needs and interests. For example, teachers across grades collaborate regularly to examine student performance, note student challenges and needs, modify curricula maps and to adjust instructional practices through peer-lead professional learning cycles. Following teacher team inquiry meetings, teachers set collective plans for instructional adjustments and how they will articulate the measurable impact on student performance. Teachers also lead and conduct intervisitation rounds that focus on instructional best practices. Such collaboration, interviewed teachers stated, results in a sense of mutual accountability in which teachers trust each other to collectively monitor and support struggling learners and challenge those at mastery and beyond.
- Staff members form effective partnerships with families by communicating expectations that prepare students for the next level through a variety of means, including the schoolwide grading policy, the student-parent-school compact, online family engagement platforms, regular newsletters, as well as individualized conferences and phone calls with parents. Interviewed parents unanimously described how they receive concrete suggestions and ideas from teachers and staff members that they apply at home to collectively support their children. Examples included parents adopting and referencing at home frequently used sight words from a teacher conference; utilizing the teacher-provided suggestion to focus their child's reading at home by stopping at each page to ask each other questions, and playing online math games with their child to build their fluency infrequently used fractions. Interviewed parents all noted that by consistently applying the concrete suggestions, their child is achieving noticeable growth, such as in mastery of content, fluency in reading and math, and in academic vocabulary use.



## Additional Finding

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Teacher teams systematically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice and student work. Distributed leadership structures, such as grade leaders and grade representations in vertical content teams, are embedded throughout the school.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams result in improvements in instructional practice and mastery of goals for groups of students. Through distributed leadership structures, teachers play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- Grade one teachers met in inquiry focusing on student writing, examining three student work samples from multilingual learners at different levels of proficiency, in alignment to their schoolwide inquiry focus of supporting Hispanic language learners. Teachers were given a graphic organizer and the three student samples before the meeting so they came to the meeting prepared to share their noticings and analysis. Teachers identified strengths in each of the writing samples but also areas of need, such as a stronger closure, student use of evidence and facts, as well as writing conventions. Teachers then planned next steps for these and other students who displayed similar characteristics across the grade, including increasing the content access for students on the topic of the student choice through use of technology and multi-media, building in opportunities to discuss and verbally share their writing as part of their self-reflection and revision strategies, as well as additional teaching point regarding small group instruction to teach how to write a closure and mini-lessons on punctuation. Such inquiry practice was evident across grades has led to the mastery of goals for groups of students. For example, 91.5 percent of grade one students, including multilingual learners, made progress between the unit pre and post-unit writing assessments. This is also echoed schoolwide by the consistent growth of student performance in the New York State examinations. For example, the percentage of multilingual students scoring level 3 and 4 has grown from 13 percent in 2018 to 24 percent in 2019 in English Language Arts, outperforming the district average by 9 percent.
- Artifacts from a cross-grade math team include teacher noticings on student performance from State tests, curricula-aligned unit assessments and student work products. Referencing best practices garnered from professional development, teachers planned changes within math instruction such as embedding discussion and close-reading protocols, as well as conducted intervisitation walkthroughs to colleagues' classes to see these practices in action and to identify instructional patterns and trends. Such cross-grade inquiry results in changes in instructional practice. In math lessons across grades observed during this review, students were engaged in math academic conversations in partnerships or in small groups, supported with language frames and discussion starters in all math lessons, with groups of students applying a close-reading strategy to solve complex word problems.
- Faculty play integral leadership roles as grade leaders or representatives within the cross-grade inquiry teams, making key decisions for the school community including determining the schoolwide instructional focus of working on strengthening student discourse to build conversational and academic language. In addition, teacher peers serve as hosts and facilitators for instructional rounds focused on pilot initiatives or best practices on instruction, curricula planning, and technology integration. Through these structures, teachers have an impact not only on high expectations for instruction but also on schoolwide improvement efforts.