New York State EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment
Final Report

Leadership and Systems

Curriculum

Instruction

Social-Emotional Learning

Family Engagement

BEDS Code	310400010497
School Name	Central Park East I Elementary School
School Address	1573 Madison Avenue, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10029
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 4
Principal	Gabriel Feldberg
Dates of Visit	June 3, 5, 7, 2019

Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school's commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials

The most recent results for the "All Students" group at the school are as follows:

Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progress Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
1	2	1	-	1	3

Central Park East 1 serves 192 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The team visited a total of 17 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited seven classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including schoolwide data, student work, and school developed instructional frameworks.
- In advance of the visit, eight staff members (50 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. Parents and staff told the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) that this school year there is a stronger school community that is more attentive to the school's vision, traditions, and student outcomes. Staff and parents said that the principal has earned their trust because he is transparent about his approach to improve the school while remaining resolute in keeping with the school's mission to meet the developmental needs of students through an investigative and reflective approach. Parents, staff, and students said that they can go to the principal with questions and suggestions about issues such as being identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) School or a kindergartener's advocacy activities to improve conditions in the girls' bathroom. As a demonstration of the school's strong sense of community, more than 50 parents attended the parent meeting facilitated by the IIT to discuss the traditions and instructional practices that make the school an educational home for them.

2. The principal created a formal system to track schoolwide progress in mathematics for the 2018-19 school year, and teachers input data at established intervals. The principal reported that teachers are now able to see whether students are making expected growth and, if not, teachers are able to adjust instruction as needed. For example, the principal and teachers reported that they used the data from the February 2019 TERC Investigations-based schoolwide assessments of number, operations, and algebraic thinking, which showed that students grew approximately four to six percent across grade levels, to pinpoint learning gaps and to strategically work toward meeting the year-end goal of an increase of eight percent on average. Teachers reported that the new data system has been beneficial to them because the data helped them to create activities and facilitate individual learning conferences based on identified learning gaps.

3. For many years, the school enjoyed a teacher turnover rate below 12 percent. However, since the 2014-15 school year, the turnover rate has steadily increased to a level where, for the 2018-19 school year, more than 70 percent of the school's teachers have three or fewer years of experience in the school. At the beginning of this school year, the principal and staff acknowledged the issue of ensuring that all new staff understand and embrace the unique traditions and practices of the school. As a result, the principal, in collaboration with the Faculty Council and the Teaching and Learning Committee, began a process to memorialize the school's instructional and social-emotional learning values. Now the school has two documents, "Stages of Reading" and "Foundations of a CPE I Student," as guides for all staff to follow. Staff shared that these documents were beneficial to them this school year, and they believe that they will be helpful to new staff for the 2019-20 school year.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **The principal, in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Committee, should create an intervention support system for students in grades two through five.** The IIT learned in discussions with teachers and the principal that the school community recognized the need to provide intervention services to improve reading performance this school year, and the Faculty Council and the principal agreed to fill a vacancy and create a Reading Recovery position. Although the school provides reading recovery supports for grade one students, the school does not offer a similar intervention program for students in grades two through five. Currently, a teacher dedicates half time to support grade one students with reading recovery and provides upper grade teachers with reading recovery strategies and techniques to use with their students. Discussions with the reading intervention teacher and the principal indicated that the students who participated in the intervention program have met the schoolwide goal by increasing two reading levels this school year. However, both the

reading intervention teacher and principal acknowledged that there are many other students in need of support and that the Teaching and Learning Committee will need to identify additional resources to expand the school's intervention program to the upper grades.

- **The principal will need to ensure that the school's data collection system includes data points from the revised "Stages of Reading" framework.** The school community recently adopted a new Stages of Reading policy to track student progress. However, according to the principal and several staff, the current data collection system does not have the capacity to manage longitudinal data aligned to the ten stages of reading. For example, teachers are unable to upload data that will reflect how kindergarten students are progressing toward differentiating between letters and words or the extent to which a grade two student has grown in making predictions from vocabulary, visual cues, or syntax. The principal shared that as teachers begin to understand and use data to track student progress based on the framework, the school should have in place a platform that represents each reading stage identified in the framework so that teachers can make instructional shifts as needed.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **The principal, in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Committee, should develop protocols for reviewing student work/projects as a part of an inquiry cycle model that is consistent with the school's academic philosophy and goals.** Teacher teams meet weekly during common planning times to discuss student work samples. Teachers said that in addition to the weekly meetings, they informally discuss student work products with each other and with the principal whenever possible. Teachers also reported that there is a pre-inquiry plan, cross-grade-level practice in which they participate, to talk about what children are doing and learning throughout the year. However, teachers and the principal shared that although there are inquiry cycles in place, the school needs clear and concise protocols to guide conversations about work samples. In the future, the principal will need to ensure that teachers have protocols aligned to the school's academic goals to follow during each inquiry cycle.

- **The principal, in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Committee, should strategically plan for the implementation of descriptive reviews aligned to the school's history and philosophy.** In the past, staff conducted a descriptive review, or an action research review, of every student to obtain a comprehensive and holistic assessment of the child. Teachers, parents, and the principal said that the information gleaned from the reviews provided invaluable insight into how children learned, what was important to them, and where they were academically and socially. However, the principal, teachers, and the parents told the IIT that the reviews, when conducted, are not administered regularly and that they are not as strong and comprehensive as they could be. Previously, reviews were conducted five times yearly with multiple staff who had questions about the student's work, home, and aspirations and who made recommendations for the primary adult to adapt to the child's learning and social-emotional needs. According to the parents and the principal, new staff need a clear set of criteria to guide the process. In preparation for the 2019-20 school year, the principal will need to provide training opportunities for staff on how to conduct descriptive reviews; confirm that teacher teams evaluate student work artifacts based on established protocols; develop schedules for teachers to observe students' work habits; and dedicate time for teachers to interview students and report their findings to staff and parents.

- **Teachers should use the school's "Foundations of a CPE I Student" document as an instructional planning guide.** The school community created a framework this school year to help teachers plan work/project time and to support their understanding of the foundational expectations within each grade level. Students choose the projects they want to work on during this time, the materials they will use, and the big ideas they will explore. While the framework describes attributes students should demonstrate to reflect deeper thinking, the IIT's many classroom visits showed that instruction needs to engage students in more complex thinking activities. The team found that the level of students' meeting expectations of inquiring about problematic situations or connecting background information varied, based on the students' interpretation of the project rather than the design of the project or task itself. For example, there were many student projects and artifacts in each classroom, and students were able to describe the work they had done toward completing their projects. While there were exceptions, the IIT found that the majority of students had difficulty in articulating why they were performing the tasks, what the big ideas was related to their tasks or what they were to learn as a result of having completed the activities on their housing and community projects. Most students shared that they were making their neighborhood. One student noted the need to add a tree, and another student indicated the construction of a basketball court needed to be included because the student's father played basketball as a child. In the future, the principal will need to ensure that teachers use elements of the "Foundations of a CPE I Student" framework to plan study units and projects to extend students' investigative and reflective abilities.

- **Teachers should incorporate mathematical modeling and mathematical reasoning into the work/project time**. Teachers received extensive professional development (PD) and support this school year on how to increase students' ability to model and use mathematical reasoning to problem solve. While the IIT did not have the opportunity to observe small-group support in mathematics, the team observed instances where students used manipulatives to support visual representation of mathematical concepts, and students were able to talk about working in small groups during mathematics instruction. For example, the team observed students using colored bears to represent patterns and configuring sticks from popsicles to make bundles of ten to create addition problems. Additionally, although the IIT did not observe manipulatives utilized in all classrooms, there were numerous manipulatives in each classroom for use to support visual representations. The principal, teachers, and parents said that because the majority of teachers have improved their practices related to mathematical modeling and mathematical reasoning, the next step should include integrating the two areas into students' work/project time. In doing so, the principal said, the integration would align with the school's instructional philosophy, its goal to increase rigor, and its efforts to improve mathematical reasoning, conceptual thinking, and problem-solving skills across grade levels.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Parents would like more of the school's traditions and instructional practices reinstated.** Parents reported that some traditions, such as the descriptive review process, are not implemented schoolwide because of the many changes in staffing and leadership within the past few years. Parents also shared that, although the school conducts a weekly All-School Sing, music and visual arts are not as integrated into the work/project time as they were in the past. Parents said that restoring some of the practices that made the school such an educationally exciting place in the past will provide a stronger foundation for their children's future learning experiences.

- **Students, parents, and staff would like students to conduct more research projects.** Parents and staff reported that the quality and depth of students' final work products need to be strengthened. The staff shared that, although students sometimes work on projects for months, students do not typically have opportunities to conduct thorough research to extend their learning. Students said they want to do more research using technology, books, and external resources in preparation for middle school and beyond.
- **Instructional staff would like time to collaborate and plan for the upcoming school year.** Instructional staff suggested the reinstatement of a previous tradition, the annual summer retreat. The retreat was designed to build community and to provide time for staff to collaborate and plan for the upcoming school year. Because the number of new staff hired has increased dramatically during the past two years, staff expressed that the summer retreat will provide opportunities for new personnel to become familiar with the school's philosophy and core values.
- **Students would like more opportunities to write about what they are reading.** Students told the IIT that they would like more in-class opportunities to write specifically about their reading choices during the independent reading block called "Choice Reading and Quiet Reading." Students reported that they are required to write in their project journals about the procedural steps taken to complete a task and about their personal connection to the work/project. However, they said that they do not have many opportunities to write their personal thoughts or feelings about what they have read during the independent reading block.