

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

Firefighter Christopher A. Santora School

Elementary School 222

**86-15 37 Avenue
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Yvonne Marrero

Dates of review: October 28 - 29, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Firefighter Christopher A. Santora School is an early childhood school with 342 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 1% Black, 78% Hispanic, 11% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The Firefighter Christopher A. Santora School is an exciting, well-run environment that supports the academic and personal growth of children in their early stages of development. The principal's effective leadership and vision have led to constant improvements since her appointment. Initiatives relating to aligning curricula to State Standards and decisive decisions to highlight key standards, given the needs of students, have been particularly effective, resulting in continued success in State requirements for adequate progress. The school's in-depth analysis of data affords teachers an understanding of students' trends in achievement. The principal uses data and observations to carefully plan for the school in all subjects. Music and visual arts are offered after school to higher achieving students and remediation programs are available to students in need. Consistent communication between home and school is an essential factor leading to students' success. All teachers send a first-day letter introducing themselves and indicating specific routines and plans. In addition, each parent with children in kindergarten through grade 2 receive a monthly newsletter with the goals their children will be working on, which is an effective way of informing parents how they can support their child at home. One dad stated he is in constant contact with the teacher via phone allowing him to be a "true partner" in the education of his child.

The staff does not participate fully in school wide decisions, which impacts negatively on the school's culture of mutual trust and respect and impedes their professional growth. Teacher teams meet weekly by grade level to analyze student work and establish goals which lead to improved learning outcomes. However, teachers have limited input in setting agendas for these meetings thereby restricting their opportunities to contribute to school decisions that influence student learning.

The school leaders have yet to develop strategies to rigorously monitor the quality of the teacher team meetings and the professional development opportunities. As a result, the impact on student outcomes cannot be determined. Action plans do not have interim goals and benchmarks allowing for on-going evaluation of impact for student and staff.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Classroom instruction provides many opportunities for meaningful student engagement in lessons that motivate students to reach their potential, as evidenced by:
 - Classroom routines and teaching strategies that are differentiated through skill-based grouping, learning centers and leveled materials at varying degrees of difficulty.
 - The design of curriculum maps aligned to the State standards to help teachers keep track of what has been taught and plan what will be taught.
- The school pays close attention to selecting remedial programs and implementing enrichment activities to improve student outcomes, as evidenced by:
 - The strategic use of the budget to hire math and literacy coaches, who support teachers in setting explicit goals for student learning and planning instruction to address the goals.
 - The schedule of an additional period for teacher teams to meet each week to set and share goals applicable to their classrooms for improved student learning.
- The principal collects and uses a range of data to inform organizational decisions about grouping of students and to identify trends for individual students, as evidenced by:
 - The use of data to establish classes and to provide comprehensive holistic information to diagnose, and track trends of all students at every stage of development.
- The school communicates clearly to parents the progress their children are making including ways to extend learning at home, as evidenced by:
 - Parents' approval of the Teacher Parent Communicator folder which goes home each night and serves as an open channel of communication to inform parents of their child's academic progress.
- The principal and staff convey high expectations to students and families, thus impacting positively on student outcomes, as evidenced by:
 - Parents' participation and active voice on the School Leadership Team enabling them to be a part of school decision making.
- The school has effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving classroom instruction, as evidenced by:

- Individual meetings with teachers three times a year to review the professional teaching standards and their personal goals.
- The principal's daily walkthroughs of classrooms followed by written feedback to teachers to enhance school wide instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the culture of mutual trust and respect to increase the active participation of staff in school-wide decisions. Currently, the school:
 - Provides a nurturing and inclusive environment that supports the academic and personal growth of students. However, there are few opportunities for staff to participate in school decisions to guide improvements.
- Establish processes to involve teacher teams in a range of whole school planning through a more strategic approach to distributed leadership. Currently, the school:
 - Engages all teachers in team structures to improve learning outcomes, however, the existing professional collaborations do not fully promote shared leadership and professional growth.
- Improve action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress can be achieved, measured and evaluated. Currently, the school:
 - Uses annual planning processes such as the Comprehensive Education Plan. However, it has yet to formalize systems to set interim goals and benchmarks throughout the year to target effective instruction and meet the needs of all students.
- Strengthen the use of data analysis to evaluate and revise as needed processes and systems within the school that lead to increased professional collaborations. Currently, the school:
 - Provides many opportunities for professional development that are based on identified individual or whole group needs, and, professional collaborations are scheduled weekly. However, monitoring is not rigorous enough to evaluate its impact on improving classroom practice and student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Firefighter Christopher A. Santora	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, 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, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			X	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?		X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X				
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use 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, 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					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		X					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X					
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed