

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

The Cornelius Vanderbilt School

Elementary School 014

**100 Tompkins Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Nancy Hargett

Dates of review: November 4 - 5, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Margaret Schultz

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Cornelius Vanderbilt School is an elementary school with 676 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 42% Black, 48% Hispanic, 7% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 88.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal and staff of Public School 14 create a caring environment where the majority of students are happy and interested learners. There are high expectations for students' learning, attendance and behavior. The school creates a monthly calendar that contains scheduled parent workshops, parent teacher conferences, class trips, school events resulting in an increase in parent involvement. Based on formal and informal observations and teacher feedback there is a differentiated professional development plan for teachers. As a result, there is improvement in classroom instruction. Teachers work collaboratively in teacher teams to plan the curriculum and ensure that instruction provides engagement for student learning. However, not all instruction provides differentiated activities to match the students' achievement levels or the pace of learning to accelerate student progress.

Parents have high praise for the quality of education and care their children receive from the dedicated principal and staff. Communication with parents via phone calls, parent teacher meetings and letters home, keeps them fully updated on their children's progress. The school provides many opportunities for parents to be learners in order to assist their children at home. As evidenced by an increase in student performance. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their services to help with in-school activities and school functions resulting in parents feeling welcomed in the school. There are many programs both in and outside of school to assist parents resulting in improved students' academic and social outcomes.

The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan has clear goals and actions for improvement. The administration and staff analyze a wide range of data to develop useful whole school plans and goals in order to improve student learning and achievement. Most teachers use data successfully to create informative goals for students to help them understand their next learning steps. However, not all students have goals to work toward their own improvement. Teacher teams are meeting on each grade and collaborating to improve instruction, resulting in increased student outcomes.

There is an incident reduction plan that the school follows to ensure positive behavior in the school that supports teaching and learning resulting in an increase in student progress. However, specific students have poor behavior that continues to interfere with their learning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school maintains a supportive environment and has high expectations for attendance, learning and behavior that are clearly shared with parents and students.
 - The school is placing an emphasis on improving student attendance by celebrating with pizza parties and bulletin boards. As a result, the progress report demonstrates an increase in attendance as compared to the school's peer group, as well as city schools. The school spirit team creates monthly character themes, such as respect, manners, responsibility, caring and cooperation and teachers incorporate these themes in their lessons to improve student behavior. Consequently, student suspensions are decreasing.
 - The feedback from the parents of the school leadership team is that workshops are necessary in order for parents to help their children at home. The school leaders, faculty and parent coordinator plan workshops based on the completion of a needs assessment/parent questionnaire that is sent home both in English and Spanish. The PTA president is in attendance at these workshops and serves as a translator resulting in the full engagement of parents.
- School leaders and faculty regularly use student assessment data, classroom observations, and teacher feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher capacity building, teacher retention and mentoring supports for new teachers.
 - The administration discusses with teachers the pre-observation and post-observation forms that teachers complete before and after a lesson as a self reflection. The administration utilizes the literacy coach to identify strategies to improve instruction resulting in an increase in Levels 3 and 4 students making at least one year of progress both in English language arts and math.
 - At the beginning of the school year, teachers complete a needs assessment survey reflecting on their strengths and areas of need. The school utilizes this information to develop a differentiated professional development plan, which results in improved instructional practice in aligning key state standards to the curricula and impacts student learning. As a result, the staff is conscious of the next steps they need to undertake in the development of their own instructional skills, whatever their level of expertise.
- The school's systems and an extensive network of specialized support personnel work in a complementary way to meet the personal, social, physical and emotional needs of students and their families.
 - The school's partnership with the Police Athletic League provides an after school program giving opportunities for students to expand their learning in a structured social environment resulting in improved social behavior for students.

- The school's program, First Fridays of the Month invites parents to read with their children in the classroom and see instruction that is taking place. This allows parents to acknowledge their individual child's strengths and needs in the classroom setting. Parents then meet with the guidance counselor who facilitates academic and social content workshops resulting in parents being able to successfully assist their children at home making a true partnership between home and school community.
- A reflective, collaborative, and mutually supportive staff demonstrate readiness to improve student progress through the implementation of lessons learned from their own collaborations and school-based research.
 - Teacher teams are collaborating both on grade level, as well as across grade levels so that communication happens on a consistent and comprehensive basis. Teams utilize common planning time at least twice a week to analyze various data, plan instruction and lesson strategies, share best practices and professional research. The instructional team through their analysis is focusing on their targeted students acquiring academic vocabulary to improve the students' writing. Lead teachers from each grade are sharing strategies with teacher teams on their grade. Consequently, teachers are revising strategies in their classroom lessons and students' writing is improving.
- The administration and teachers use a wide range of data to monitor school priorities and student progress, to plan instruction and create intervention strategies when needed.
 - The school utilizes a range of data sources to identify students' individual needs and set meaningful goals to increase student performance. During the school day, academic intervention service is given to targeted students based on assessment data. Students receive a baseline assessment using Performance Series Assessment which enables students to work on their own performance level. As a result, there is an increase in reading comprehension.
 - The school's core inquiry team's close analyzation of data identified that a large cohort of grade 3 students scored Level 1 on the 2009 English language arts exam. In response and after careful research, team members are helping teachers implement the arts component of the Schools Attuned program to engage, motivate and support students in their learning to raise achievement.
- There is effective communication with families who have high praise for the academic and personal support their children receive from the administration, teachers and staff of the school.
 - The school has various ways to communicate with parents. It schedules parent orientations early in the school year to discuss the goals of the grade. Teachers continually phone and meet with parents before, during and after the school day to discuss the strengths and needs of their children. As a result, there is an increase in communication. Parents feel welcomed in the school and are active participants in the academic growth of their children.

- Parents receive student goals at designated times during the school year providing them with their child's progress towards meeting their June goals. As a result, they are able to support their child's learning at home.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful grouping and challenging tasks to match students' achievement levels in order to accelerate student learning.
 - Teachers do not plan differentiated lessons consistently throughout the grades based on student data. As a result, lower level students do not receive appropriate material to address their specific needs.
- Enhance the delivery of the America's Choice design of coherent and rigorous curricula.
 - Some teachers do not practically apply sample America's Choice lesson plans to the appropriate grade and ability levels of their children which limits the performance of the children.
- Develop consistency and rigor in setting subject and grade goals for specific sub groups, namely, special needs students.
 - Not all students with individual learning plans, requiring additional support, know their strengths, weaknesses and next steps to accelerate their learning. This hampers the child's ability to self direct his learning, and ultimately his academic outcomes.
- Expand the improvement of the school culture for mutual respect, trust and positive attitudes for learning that supports the personal growth of students and adults.
 - Although the overall tone of the building is conducive to learning, there is a small cohort of special needs children that require strategies to build positive interactions among their general education peer group. As a result, their classroom behavior is impeding their ability to make academic progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Cornelius Vanderbilt School	△	▷	✓	+
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