

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Public School 188

Elementary-Middle School 188

**770 Grote Street
Bronx
NY 10460**

Principal: Shanie Johnson

Dates of review: April 14 - 16, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 188 is an elementary-middle school with 402 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 40% Black, 55% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 79% of the students enrolled and girls account for 21%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 82.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Public School 188 is a special education school, dedicated to its mission of serving its very diverse population of special needs youngsters in the least restrictive environment across three safe, peaceful and industrious school sites. Teachers state, "We are for children", "Their needs drive us." This powerful belief system focuses all efforts on careful differentiation, matching instruction well to student needs and creating high levels of student engagement. A student acknowledges, "Work in my class is based on my assessment." Students state that teachers "work hard for us," and, "want to see us succeed" and, "help us to become a better person". Parents describe the school as "dedicated with a big D". They express heartfelt appreciation for the school's success in improving their children's scholastic and social-emotional development and they rely on the school's frequent communications, workshops and tools to help them support their children's academic and social skills growth at home.

The principal makes strategic decisions to support long-term goal acquisition. She reinforces emphasis on data, benchmarking, and identification of tailored learning objectives very successfully through empowering teacher teams to make curriculum decisions for their particular service categories. Supervisors differentiate and monitor professional development to maximize teacher learning and development of leadership opportunities. Professional collaboration drives efforts to improve student outcomes. The school, however, is still honing its professional development on inquiry process to make the link between learning and pedagogical practice more explicit through action research into particular problems of practice.

School staff collect a comprehensive range of data judiciously and astutely to evaluate performance and to inform organizational decisions and goal setting. Tactical use of this data results in measurable improvements in achievement of classroom and school-wide goals. However, although the school makes good use of research-based assessments and continues to develop its own tools, it does not have sufficient systems to evaluate how it aggregates data. This inhibits concise comparative analysis within and across classrooms, grades and service categories needed to ensure coherence of practices school-wide. The school recognizes the need to better evaluate systems and practices and is piloting new assessments and developing a centralized data pool to support evaluation that is more rigorous to foster building alignment and coherence. The school tackles major initiatives very thoughtfully and consistently by establishing interim benchmarks ensuring focused efforts and on-going progress checks. The new principal has generated overwhelming enthusiasm for reflective collaboration. Teacher teams have become the vehicles of school-wide self-assessment and action planning.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A strong, shared belief system focused on individualized assessment and differentiation drives instructional focus resulting in classroom instruction that produces high levels of engagement.
 - o Teachers universally emphasize strategic identification of best learning tools and assessment to determine learning goals and adaptive instruction. Continual assessment practices employing research-based and teacher-made assessments evaluate student progress against prescribed curriculum standards to guide daily instruction that promotes students' success. Across the board, teachers' comments reflect a strong commitment to "individualized student learning" and "meeting the kids where they are". Teachers recognize the value of teaming in building cohesiveness and acknowledge a "sense of overall responsibility" for every student's achievement.
 - o Teachers pay close attention to individualized education plans, ensuring tailored lessons based on particular needs. Within individual and group lessons, teachers use picture exchange symbols, signing, use of open ended or choice questions, adaptive technology devices and smart board adaptations to match instruction well with student needs, resulting in high levels of student engagement.
- Intentional organizational decisions align resources and foster accountable collaboration to support long-range plans and provide structures that promote improved student learning.
 - o The principal initiated strategic changes raising expectations for student performance. She has created a math coach position to support the new school-wide emphasis on improving mathematics instruction. She has developed point teachers for each key specialized curriculum to ensure on-site expertise and investment and has introduced an extensive leveled library and curriculum resources for alternate assessment classes.
 - o The principal established new professional learning communities in order to harness in-house teacher expertise, empowering teachers to take leadership in assessing practice and in collaborative projects. Teacher teams evaluate the precision of current assessments to determine if the data provides sufficient information to inform next learning steps. Interdisciplinary teacher teams also work together to create themed hallway 'Cozy Corners' constructed by students and the woodshop teacher to provide a functional supplement to the classroom environment.
- School leaders and faculty gather and analyze a wide range of data with care, identifying strengths and areas of need to support student learning.
 - o In order to develop a clear understanding of school needs, school leaders and faculty gather data intentionally through weekly administrative team data reviews and regular review of classroom periodic assessments, work portfolios and classroom data binders. In addition, supervisors carefully analyze attendance and behavior data and input from staff surveys. As a

result of these data analyses, the school is implementing a new program to improve the writing skills of standardized assessment students. The attendance team now identifies and supports target students tactically, as evidenced by a 3% increase in overall attendance this year. The addition of behavioral goals for every student improves student self-control and independence.

- Professional development promotes growth of strong pedagogical expertise and shared collaboration to improve student outcomes.
 - o The school supports teachers' growth aptly through in-house support, collaborative work with coaches and outside professional development options. These opportunities ensure that all teachers can continually grow their skills. Teachers express appreciation for frequent supervisor feedback based on daily classroom visits and analysis of student work. In addition, supervisors use school developed teacher profile sheets and observation forms aligned with professional teaching standards to conduct focused discussions to reinforce expectations and build capacity.
 - o Scheduled common prep periods support on-going collegial learning. Teacher teams work with coaches to use ARIS Web 2.0 tools to document their work and to upload resources. These practices strengthen communication and shared accountability. Teachers speak about their teams excitedly and identify new needs, such as forming an interdisciplinary team next year to analyze student behavior more closely.
- The school builds incremental steps in establishing benchmarks toward long-term goals and monitors progress astutely.
 - o The school writes goals with interim benchmarks that reflect strategic alignment to long-term impact. They phase in new initiatives over time allowing adequate intervals for faculty to learn and study together, assume ownership, and make adjustments toward interim steps.
 - o The school analyzes key documents carefully and revises plans and strategies based on emerging needs. Recognizing the need for greater consistency between classroom work and report card grades, the school developed a universal grading rubric that they use successfully across content areas for both standardized and alternate assessment students.
- The school communicates high expectations clearly and supports parents with tools so that students can meet academic and personal goals.
 - o Parents state that the school "absolutely" conveys high expectations by encouraging them to work together with the school "to get the job done". Parents contribute to school decision-making through surveys, and as a result the school conducts specific parent-requested workshops such as math homework help. Parents acknowledge that the "school continually asks for input" and enables them to participate at teacher conferences by making special child care arrangements.
 - o The school communicates with parents effectively through daily communication logs, school newsletters, weekly behavior reports, and a web resource recommendations flyer. Parents rely on these

communications for information on their children's academic and personal progress. In addition, the school provides training in use of assessment rubrics, ARIS parent link, and SMART goal development. As a result, parents report that they understand expectations and goals better and can help students with schoolwork and behavior modification at home.

- The school analyzes data on professional collaboration frequently and capably to build capacity and to foster distributive leadership.
 - o Supervisors monitor ongoing progress of teacher teams regularly through reviewing team ARIS postings and hard copy logs, conducting daily classroom visits, and consulting with school and district coaches. These practices enable timely feedback to teachers and targeted supports for new staff. Teachers demonstrate leadership and self-monitoring skills, inviting related service providers into their newly created cross-service category teams to build better coherence of student services.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish school-wide systems to evaluate overall assessment and data practices to insure cohesion and rigorous alignment with school goals.
 - o School-wide data practices are not thorough enough to provide succinct data on effectiveness of assessment practices and tools in highlighting student-learning needs and in aggregating information for comparative school-wide analysis to ensure building alignment and coherence. Teacher team evaluation of assessment tools is a new and developing practice. Behavior data tracks frequency and location of incidents, but lacks classroom and individual student specificity needed for interventions and policy adjustments.
- Refine inquiry work to study problems of practice more closely through an on-going cycle of analysis of student work and teacher practice.
 - o The school's central data inquiry team identifies strategies, conducts interventions and tracks progress of target students through on-going assessments. However, they rely on tutoring and the use of web tools and programs and there is less reflection on a particular problem of practice and teacher pedagogy as it affects learning.
 - o Numerous school teams plan common goals, review student work and share best practices. Nevertheless, a majority of teachers are still learning what structured collaborative inquiry is in terms of sustained cyclical analysis of pedagogical practice.
- Adjust current tools and develop new ones to better illuminate school-wide and classroom achievement data so that key trends are more visible for making strategic interventions to support student-learning needs.
 - o Teachers use research based assessment tools and develop their own tools to track progress and group students. However, data collection emphasizes individualized tracking, is labor intensive and is not sufficient to clearly and easily aggregate data to identify longitudinal progress and trends of groups quickly.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Public School 188	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed