

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

PS 11 Thomas Dongan School

Elementary School R011

**50 Jefferson Street
Staten Island
NY 10304**

Principal: Erica Mattera

Dates of review: November 16-17, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Thomas Dongan is an elementary school with 296 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 16.7% Black, 32.3% Hispanic, 44.8% White, and 3.5% Asian students. The student body includes 6.3% English language learners and 23.6% special education students. Boys account for 51.4% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48.6%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across classrooms lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, students are challenged, tasks accommodate different learning styles and questioning extends thinking to maximize student learning.
 - Teachers across grade levels consistently provide independent and collaborative work that is differentiated for 3 levels of learners based on unit pre tests, reading levels, and post test results. As a result students are assigned challenging work that is aligned to their particular needs resulting in increased engagement of low level learners. This is evidenced by improvements of the school's lowest third students of state exams.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions to respond to the learning needs of students and the professional needs of teachers.
 - Teachers programs are strategically designed to provide 3-5 common planning preps for teachers on the same grade level each week. A full time coach is available for guidance with teacher team inquiry work and lesson modeling and an outside consultant helps drive the school wide writing and conferencing initiatives. As a result, teachers feel supported in their work to meet the needs of their students.
 - Students are scheduled for TIE (Targeted Intervention and Enrichment) during the schools day. This time is used to target level 1 students for differentiated interventions such as re-teaching, specific skill development and the Wilson program, as well as for enrichment opportunities for high performing students such as band and book clubs. Teachers are therefore able to respond to the individual learning needs of groups of students resulting in targeted gains for level 1 learners.
- The school is a safe, well maintained place where students are engaged in learning and they appreciate the high level of support they receive for their personal and academic development.
 - The principal greets students and families each morning outside the school building. She makes herself available to parents. Parents explained that, "I don't worry about my child's education." Students explained that they can go to the principal, their teachers or counselor with any concerns they have. As a result students arrive to classrooms ready to focus on their learning.
 - Students are routinely engaged in workshops and activities that support their social emotional learning. Students play an active role in their school community through the student ambassador program, newspaper, and help make school wide decisions such as voting on a school mascot and implementing book clubs. This engagement empowers students to own their educational experience and fosters their connection with the school.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, develop tools to analyze data, and plan curriculum and instruction.
 - Teachers work in teams to share student writing that is focused on an identified school wide trend. Teachers look closely at the writing of black

boys to identify places where they use emotional and feeling and brainstorm strategies to help them further expand their use of voice in their writing. As a result teachers share a deeper understanding of the writing expectations of boys in their grade and are more prepared to meet their needs as a sub-group.

- The school has hired Carl Anderson to help develop a school wide writing assessment tool to support the school's focus on writing as a key standard. As a result teachers are able to develop rubrics aligned to the tool, identify specific targeted needs for individual students and have begun to measure student growth over time. They have also been able modify instruction by adding units of study based on the needs of the students.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices.
 - The principal and assistant principal use formal and informal observations as well as teacher and class goals that are aligned to the school's goals to make strategic teacher placement decisions. Teachers are provided specific feedback towards their goals and are offered a range of supports including coaching, mentoring, and targeted professional development activities. As a result teachers know what is expected of them and feel supported in their work.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the strategic alignment of the various instructional programs used to ensure that there is a clear rationale for choices being made by teachers that drives student achievement and works to close the achievement gap.
 - The school successfully closed the achievement gap that existed with their ELL population by using Text Talk. Based on data from June, they have identified an achievement gap among white, black and Hispanic students. However, there is not yet an identified plan for fully addressing this achievement gap through revision of curricula. Currently teachers are focusing efforts on the writing of black boys. Consequently, valuable instruction time is passing without specific and measured interventions for all of these students.
- Deepen the schools practice of gathering and analyzing information on student learning outcomes for particular subgroups and cohorts of students in order to create an overview of the schools strengths and areas of need.
 - Individual teachers examine a range of data including student writing, conference notes and assessment data on a regular basis in order to create strategic student groupings and differentiate lessons. Teacher teams they do not regularly examine a comprehensive range of data. As a result teacher teams are not able to create a clear portrait of the specific strengths and areas of need beyond writing and social and emotional needs for the students they work closest with. Teacher teams wait for the administration to identify global trends and are not able to make more proactive adjustments to curriculum and instruction for subgroups and miss opportunities for targeting particular groups of students.
- Consistently include precise short-term and long-term measurable outcomes to monitor students' progress at all levels, in order to identify and address trends in subgroups and to reinforce ownership and accountability.

- Teachers use pre assessments, conferencing, unit tests and classroom observations to monitor students' progress in their classrooms. Teacher teams use a common writing assessment tool to track student writing and adjust curriculum. For example a second narrative unit was added based on the results of the first unit. However, all teacher teams do not regularly come together to share assessment results in order to identify trends on the grade level or plan for particular subgroups. Consequently, teacher teams are not able to expand their goal setting and benchmarking work to include identifying learning goals for specific sub groups of students.
- Expand the approach to adult capacity building by providing more opportunities for teachers and teacher teams to take on leadership roles that develop their skills for strategic and informed decision making to impact student outcomes
 - Teachers have 3-5 common prep periods per week. One formal meeting a month organized by the coach is dedicated to inquiry work and looking at student writing. There are not currently consistent meetings facilitated by team members to provide more time to deeply examine student writing across the team, monitor interventions and prepare next steps, while creating more leadership opportunities for teacher to lead and drive the work on their teams.
- Establish a transparent, collaborative system for sharing and measuring progress toward long term and short term goals in order to more systematically align the work of teacher teams to school goals in order to maximize student achievement.
 - The school outlines goals with benchmarks in their CEP. However, these goals are not known by teachers, families or students. As a result teacher teams do not have SMART goals aligned to the CEP goals and are not able to measure or track their progress. Therefore, they are not able to closely monitor their work and understand its impact on the larger school goals in order to make strategic and timely instructional decisions which would result in improved student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name:	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
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>	UD	D	P	WD			
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				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed