

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Space Shuttle Columbia School

Elementary School 058

**77 Marsh Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10314**

Principal: RoseAnn Mezzacappa

Dates of review: October 18 - 19, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Sheryl L. Watkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Space Shuttle Columbia School is an elementary school with 767 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 5% Black, 21% Hispanic, 55% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Professional collaboration is very a high priority and faculty profit from varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community.
 - Artful and astute programming provides grade level teachers with the opportunity to meet in order to evaluate student work and plan together at least three times per week. In addition, a cross-grade instructional team assures the vertical alignment of instruction. This promotes the focus on student achievement and the collaborative development of cohesive pedagogical practices. As a result, teachers state that they are “the strongest we have ever been because we have each other.”
 - Recognizing the need for the acceleration of their students, the grade 5 team was responsible for a change last year to a departmentalized program for their students. This allowed for certain teachers to dedicate themselves to becoming masters of teaching specific core subject areas. The success of this initiative for students, both academically and socially, supported the extension of this practice to grade 4.
- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support improvements in learning.
 - As a result of the analysis of New York State assessment data, an assistant principal is assigned the additional role of supporting math instruction across the school. The reinstating of pacing calendars and additional programs now support the Everyday Math curriculum. The school is already noting improvements of students’ results on unit tests across all grades.
 - The school’s dedicated literacy coach, in addition to facilitating teacher team meetings, supports the new initiative of C.A.F.É; structured learning groups focused on comprehension, accuracy, fluency and extended vocabulary. Data driven groupings of students is providing focused instruction for students in improving reading abilities leading to notable improvement in formative assessments. Interim benchmarks indicate this new initiative is producing increased student achievement in literacy.
- The school conveys high expectations to students and families through multiple pathways, enabling families to be active partners in their children’s learning.
 - Collaborative analysis by school leaders and parents of the Learning Environment Survey and New York State performance data resulted in the empowerment of the parent association to purchase an on-line communication tool. This enables the school staff and parent association to regularly communicate clear academic expectations and parent leadership and participation activities with families via e mail so that parents are valuable partners in school events. Information related to specific content area instruction, workshops such as preventing bullying, as well as school events are frequently posted and updated thus supporting a shared commitment in promoting academic and social growth.

- Relationships across the school are warm, supportive and inclusive of students, teachers, and parents, who feel valued and take pride in being part of the school community.
 - The exceptional structures and systems created by administration enable the assistant principals and principal to greet students and parents by name at the school bus and at morning arrival, respectively. This ensures that all students and families are known by key members of the school community, and promotes effective student and adult experiences in the school. This practice also sets the tone for ongoing mutually respectful relationships between all members of the school community, allowing for a focus on learning.
- The school's strong systems and partnerships support students and families in continual learning and promote students' growth and development.
 - The inclusion of the school's guidance department on the core leadership team assures that the academic and personal needs of each child are very quickly addressed. The school's peer mediation and anti-bullying campaign are among the proactive measures in place to assure a strong and direct focus on accelerating academic achievement. Students and parents report that the school environment makes it "easy to learn".
- Through regular use of a range of relevant data, the school has an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of groups of students, which informs instruction and organizational decisions.
 - Administration and staff frequently review State, school and supplemental classroom data to determine students' academic and developmental needs. This allows for literacy and math grouping of students based on overarching strengths and areas of need. Administrators and teachers are better equipped to track student progress and move students, whether in groups or to higher-level classes, based on accomplishments and need.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the systems for monitoring teaching practices to ensure a clearer focus on improving student learning outcomes.
 - The instructional leadership provides structured pedagogical and content area support for teachers across the continuum of experience, and teachers work collaboratively in order to support each other. However, professional learning experiences are not consistently differentiated to meet specific needs identified through formal and informal teacher performance data. This prevents some teachers from further developing instructional practices, allowing for the acceleration of their own progress.
 - Systems and structures are in place that allow for teacher collaboration and learning around the school's goals and instructional focus. Leadership engages in formal and informal visits to classrooms. However, feedback to teachers on implementation of collective learning and instructional practices is not always adequate. Therefore, teachers are limited in their ability to provide greater levels of classroom academic rigor for all students.

- Deepen the analysis and application of student data within classrooms to provide more targeted differentiation of instruction across all classrooms.
 - Teacher teams disaggregate end of unit assessment information in order to identify groupings of students for small group instruction in classrooms. However, the groups developed do not represent the attention to specific skill deficits within academic competency areas. This prevents students from receiving targeted differentiated instruction based on individual need, impacting on their overall achievement.
 - Analysis of student summative data prompted the school in the identification of content area vocabulary development through non-fiction text as a key focus for the school year. Cohesive unit and on-demand assessments across the grade, identify student growth and areas of need within literacy and math. However, there is little attention directed at the alignment of learning tasks to include this identified key area. This hampers the acceleration of progress in identified areas of need for students.
- Ensure that all goal setting includes interim benchmarks for individuals and groups of students in order to provide higher levels of challenge to accelerate progress.
 - The school has identified a clear and focused list of annual school-wide goals based on the analysis of student data and teacher expectations. These goals are intended to accelerate progress. However, teachers have not yet consistently set interim benchmark goals for their students towards meeting annual expectations.
 - Teacher teams use content area units of study as interim goals for students in order to assure that students are on path to meet the school-wide goals of increasing proficiency in literacy and math. However, these global end-of-unit goals do not target individual and groups of students' skill deficit areas. This prevents teachers from identifying and instructionally supporting groups or individual student's learning challenges.
- Promote greater differentiation of instruction to assure that all students are challenged and questioning elicits increased levels of higher order thinking skills that extends learning.
 - Teachers' curriculum and instructional practices are standards based and include strategies such as tiered questioning and student tasks that engage individual and groups of students. However, classroom practices do not consistently lead to higher levels of student thinking, as evidenced in the observation of little differentiation of student work products.
 - Teachers have established strong routines and structures in their classrooms, allowing students to engage in multiple activities. However, there is little opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning based on individual learning styles or choice, thus preventing greater engagement, and limiting student ownership of their own learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Space Shuttle Columbia	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