

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Dr. Marjorie H Dunbar

P.S. 126

175 West 166 Street

Bronx

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Principal: Nadine Kee-Foster

Dates of review: April 27-28, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 126 is an Elementary school with 773 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 28% Black, 70% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school designs curricula to emphasize key standards resulting in student progress.
 - Teachers, coaches and administrators collaborate effectively to ensure that the curriculum is rigorous and aligned to address learning gaps. For example, the school is focused on project based learning in social studies, and literacy skills across the content areas in tasks that emphasize reading and writing strategies and ensure the alignment across the grades. As a result, the school's bottom third cohort has made improvements in the area of literacy.
 - Student tasks that were shared during teacher meetings include higher order thinking skills. These academic tasks also improved the quality of student writing skills in non-fiction, as measured by a common rubric. As a result, there are more focused conversations about curriculum development during formal and informal meetings and greater collegiality amongst staff.
- Resources are well aligned to the school goals enabling teacher teams to have meaningful opportunities to share practices and plan collaboratively.
 - The leadership provides weekly opportunities for teachers to meet with their colleagues to review data and share practices. Many teachers welcome the structured time to meet and develop their pedagogy. For example, the third grade teachers were trained on the use of the cueing systems to understand student misconceptions during reading instruction. As a result effective conferences meet the needs of the students.
 - After a careful review of formative and summative data in mathematics including state assessments and acuity, the staff decided to change their math program from Every Day Math to EnVision. "We are able to provide a stronger foundation and structure for developing number sense", stated many staff members during the teacher meetings and interviews.
- The school gathers data to create an overview of the schools strengths and areas of need.
 - Teachers, coaches and leaders gather and review a wide range of data including state, Acuity and interim assessments to identify general strengths and areas for improvement. The school's Comprehensive Education Plan reflects that reading data indicated a need to focus on reading comprehension. As a result, teachers understand and articulate school goals, emphasizing non-fiction reading strategies across the content areas.
 - Teachers and school leaders gather and review periodic assessments and classroom level data such as Developmental Reading Assessments to better understand the progress of students. Weekly grade meetings focus on targeted students and review of assessments and progress. As a result, teachers share effective instructional strategies and have focused conversations about the progress of their subgroups. Staff members state, "We find these meetings useful".

- School leaders and staff communicate high expectations to students and families to strengthen home and school partnerships.
 - School leaders and staff consistently communicate and encourage parents to support the school's high expectations for academics, instruction, discipline and attendance that are clearly understood by all. The school has strong partnerships with the United Parents of Highbridge and Woody Crest organizations, which engage parents in academic and social events. As a result, parent participation in school leadership, parent conferences and concerts has improved. This year there was a significant increase in parents completing the Learning Environment Survey. Parents have a greater voice in the academic decisions that guide the school.

- Teacher teams have various opportunities to share practices and plan curricula with an eye towards improvement.
 - Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to review data sources and plan instruction to meet the various needs of students weekly. For example, the upper grade teachers have developed tools and protocols to monitor student comprehension, using an inquiry approach. Consequently, the teacher meetings are targeted and foster collaboration amongst teachers. In addition, student work being reviewed demonstrates progress.
 - The fifth grade teachers have focused inquiry meetings to study reading comprehension strategies and look at student work for a targeted group of students. Based on a review of student work and formative assessments, there is progress that is being tracked. As a result, teachers share and implement more effective strategies in the classroom to support thinking skills. This was evident during classroom visits and in lesson plans.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop opportunities for students to engage in data driven rigorous tasks in order improve student outcomes.
 - There is a clear curriculum that aims at key standards, but instructional strategies and student tasks are not rigorous across classrooms or content areas, as evidenced during classroom visits. Some of the teachers engaged students in meaningful tasks during literacy, but this was not a consistent practice across the school. As a result, there is a lack of rigor in data based instruction with differentiated opportunities to support student learning.
 - Teachers do not consistently incorporate effective instructional strategies or rigorous student tasks with multiple points of entry for various learners. As a result, there are varying levels of student engagement and inconsistent teaching practices observed during classroom visits.

- Consistently develop assessments that are aligned to the curriculum in order to effectively differentiate instructional strategies and increase learning.
 - The school has focused goals around reading comprehension and has invested in resources for including reading kits for every teacher to use in support of this goal. These offer some opportunities for differentiation but the school is not able to align all of their assessments in reading to effectively

- target individual student needs. Thus there are missed opportunities to align assessments and limited understanding of how these inform instruction.
- The teachers are implementing the new math program EnVision which includes a variety of assessments. However, teachers are still learning how to implement all of its components and have not yet developed a strong understanding of utilizing those assessments to better target instruction for students. As a result, planning for student subgroups is inconsistent which impacts on the lack of progress with proficiency levels in mathematics.
 - Consistently use data to set goals for individual students and subgroups to leverage greater progress.
 - Teachers set goals for their classes but do not yet set specific or measurable goals for groups of students that are consistently based on data patterns and trends. As a result, there is not sufficient progress evident in reading and math based on the 2010 progress report and formative assessments that were shared during meetings.
 - General skills and strategies are referenced in curriculum maps and lesson plans. However, they are not utilized strategically in classrooms. Teachers need support in understanding how to set targeted goals that meet individual student needs effectively to improve student learning. Consequently, classroom practices vary in the levels of rigor and progress.
 - Provide consistent and targeted feedback for teachers with an eye towards the growth of content knowledge that improves student outcomes.
 - Although teachers get feedback from administration, the quality and frequency varies greatly across the grades. Some teachers receive focused guidance from administration in terms of conferencing and guided reading. However, this is unclear across grades and inconsistent with school's stated goals. Therefore there is an uneven level of expectations across the school.
 - The school has a common instructional focus that is supported by the majority of staff. However, the feedback that teachers receive from administration and support staff may not be as timely and as rigorous as the school goals preventing the development of a cohesive culture.
 - Develop data tracking protocol for in order to effectively monitor progress towards benchmarks and performance goals for all students and subgroups.
 - The administration has set clear goals for school improvement but lacks the cohesive systems and structures to consistently provide meaningful feedback in a timely manner so that progress of student and staff goals can be monitored effectively and consistently.
 - Teachers have developed general goals for students in their classrooms. For example, there is a school wide focus to read more informational text across the subjects. However, they lack specificity needed for students to track their growth and monitor their learning. As a result, the leadership is unable to monitor and track the progress of students, which limits their ability to guide the staff to monitor the progress of individual students and subgroups.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Dr. Marjorie H Dunbar, P.S. 126	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
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