

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Public School 065
Elementary school K065

696 Jamaica Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208

Principal: Daysi Garcia

Dates of review: April 23 - 24, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 065 is an elementary school with 687 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 20% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, 7% Asian students and 2% other students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A rigorous and engaging curriculum across subjects supports an instructional program that fosters learning experiences promoting high levels of achievement. (1.1)
 - School leaders and faculty have immersed themselves in understanding all aspects and implications of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Their efforts are manifested in refined units of study targeting writing and math reasoning that are aligned to CCLS expectations in all subjects. Grade level teams are ambitious in curriculum mapping that include units of study with rigorous guiding questions, benchmark skills, lesson alignment, and assessment evidence. Vocabulary, differentiated instructional strategies through tiered tasks, and resources are added features to ensure attention to the needs of the large population of English language learners (ELL), special education students, and those challenged by specific skill deficits. Daily "Problem of the Day" and "Dilemma of the Day" reinforces and/or introduces cognitive tasks in mathematics for students to demonstrate deep thinking. As a *Core Knowledge* school, planning guides and pacing calendars integrate Social Studies, Science and literacy. As a result, interim assessments reveal that all grade levels show improved reading levels including subgroups. For example, in grade 3 independent reading levels have increased by 36% in levels 3 and 4 putting them on track for achieving an annual school goal to increase levels 3 and 4 on the State English language arts assessment to close the achievement gap.
 - Maps are complemented by rigorous task-specific rubrics that are developed by teams first in order to determine what students should know and be able to do and how good is good enough. This is followed by thoughtful and rigorous task development that are grounded in real world situations and matched to Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels to ensure that students are performing at DOK levels 3 and 4. In turn, teams reliably review student work to consistently refine tasks that ensure cognitive demand and alignment to targeted domain. Furthermore, to make certain that all learners are highly engaged, tasks are further differentiated to serve higher achieving students in addition to targeted students with skill deficits. For example, higher achievers are further challenged by project-based tasks, such as, writing resumes, navigating several websites to research chosen topics online including college and career opportunities. Also, ELL students are equally cognitively engaged through rigorous tasks which enable them to demonstrate deep thinking. One student was navigating Google Earth to research information as he mapped out his graphic organizer leading to an essay about P.S. 65's former school landmark building referred to as "The Little Red Schoolhouse". As a result, when comparing Acuity predictive results over last year, ELLs are making significant progress. In addition, Interim Targeted Assessments (ITA) reveal gains, and benchmark independent reading levels assessed every five weeks are increasing across grades.
- The principal is an analytical thinker who makes strategic, data-driven organizational and instructional decisions that support instructional goals and long-term improvement plans. (1.3)
 - In response to an extensive data analysis the principal ensures that resources are well aligned to instructional goals and long-range action plans. Both students and teachers are proficient at using the SMARTboard located in every classroom. Students are quite familiar with research on the web across multiple sources to cull for information that supports CCLS tasks. As a result, student work is of high quality and reflects the cognitive demand expected of the Common Core as well as expanding the core knowledge of all learners.

- In response to last year's Progress Report revealing a drop in math scores the principal mobilized grade level teacher teams by ensuring they are able to meet more often, on a daily basis, to develop and refine curriculum and rigorous tasks, analyze student work, track student progress, and refine teacher practice. A vertical, cross-graded team works on a weekly team newsletter that provides all teams with a weekly focus such as research exemplars in math and writing, and "Book of the Month" planning. New teacher team meetings provide additional time for professional literature studies and other supports to these teachers to help them learn their craft. Consequently, instruction is of high quality and students are engaged in challenging tasks, resulting in progress on math unit tests.
- Team and classroom assessment practices effectively ensure ongoing identification of students' specific learning needs in order to improve learning outcomes. (2.2)
 - In response to last year's State exam results teams refine curriculum and lesson planning to teach for mastery especially in math. As teams examine weekly learning objectives connected to specific CCLS content domains and unit topics, rigorous rubric development in the core subjects are developed to set indicators for mastery for specific tasks throughout each unit of study. Furthermore, student work is analyzed using a specific protocol that enables teachers to reach consensus on what work is proficient, achieves mastery, or demonstrates a need, and what instructional next steps are necessary. For example, the fourth grade team concluded from analyzing student work that they would reteach specific strategies since students did not master the concept necessary to tackle a performance task that required extended thinking. Also, using additional interim data, an ELL Action Plan was developed which includes ongoing learning goals for each student. As a result, ongoing assessments are precisely aligned to curriculum and instruction and lead to improved student work especially for ELL students.
- The observation of classroom teaching and the continuous analysis of student learning outcomes are systematic and effective in promoting professional growth and teacher reflection that result in improved instruction. (4.1)
 - The Danielson research-based rubric is collaboratively used by faculty and school leaders to norm best practices and teacher effectiveness. As models of instructional leadership the principal and assistant principal clearly articulate consistent and highly effective expectations for teacher practice through immediate and individualized teacher feedback, both verbally and written. In turn, written, rubric-based goals for professional growth detail tiered levels of support and are documented using an online tool. Furthermore, formal observation reports accurately identify strengths and challenges directly aligned to individual teacher goals and broader school wide instructional goals. In turn, administrators and teacher leaders support teachers in areas in need of improvement. Focused work with individual teachers on a weekly basis includes discussions of concrete teaching strategies to practice and a series of inter-visitations to share feedback. This constant cycle of observation, targeted support, and feedback nurtures a continuous reflective culture whereby each teacher meets with the principal and/or assistant principal to determine progress toward goal achievement through a review of student progress monitoring and benchmark achievement, work products, inclusive of feedback in observations to date. Goal adjustments and next steps are clearly delineated. This embedded process for supporting teacher development is used to adjust professional development plans and teacher tenure, retention, and reassignment. Impact in improved student performance is evident in continued mastery in student writing and benchmark reading achievement.

- School leaders strategically guide the identification of overall school strengths and areas in need of improvement that result in the development of long term and annual improvement plans. (2.1)
 - School leaders are very savvy in their comprehensive and ongoing analysis of various data streams. Commencing with a thorough interpretation of Progress Report results, detailed data sheets underscore which students fall in the lowest third, disaggregated by subgroups, for English language arts and math and identifies students who dropped from levels 3 and 4. This is coupled with New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test (NYSESLAT) data that is used to inform an ESL action plan and Language Allocation Policy. Acuity, running records, pre- and post- unit assessments, and other interim data are also analyzed. Daily math blocks were moved to the morning, workstations and classroom center activities were restructured, progress monitoring result are recorded to update action plans, math tutorials and Acuity assignments are planned. This results in information to track progress, and adjust school practices to support increased student achievement.
- Yearlong professional development plans with long-term impact are tightly aligned to instructional goals that build adult capacity with special attention to new teachers. (4.3)
 - A cohesive distributed leadership model enhances the reflective culture that exists at P.S. 65 and is evident in a continuous cycle of professional development. Last June, planning goals and expectations were forecasted based on student data for the current school year. A summer retreat set the stage for rubric revision, curriculum vetting, assessment alignment and goal-setting for the upcoming year. Throughout the year weekly school wide professional development sessions and dedicated staff development days are calendared to address school wide goals and Common Core initiatives. Support to teachers is further differentiated through feedback from frequent, short cycles of classroom observations by school leaders and coaches. School leaders and team members support individual teachers to achieve differentiated professional goals. New teacher teams and grade teams provide another forum for professional growth and include peer observation rounds and study groups around common instructional themes. This tiered approach builds adult capacity and leadership that improves instruction across classrooms. The high quality of professional development is one of the school's trademarks resulting in improved effectiveness for teachers and administrators that increase student outcomes as measured in student work products.
- Data-driven systems to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams lead to revisions and refinements in curriculum development and teacher capacity, with continued improvement in student work products. (5.4)
 - A coherent cycle of monitoring for results is embedded in all aspects for continuous school improvement. As grade level teacher teams refine curriculum maps and units of study, examine student work and rethink classroom strategies the principal is continuously assessing their decisions for effectiveness. Each grade level team receives written, detailed feedback following the development and implementation of each unit of study that includes commendations, items for further consideration, and next steps. The principal further measures the efficacy of teamwork through constant analysis of student work and classroom observation of unit activities that engage students across classrooms. Principal feedback is welcomed by team members and results in support for growing teacher leaders and shared decision making regarding curricular, instructional, and assessment practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher capacity to plan lessons that are sufficiently challenging to elicit higher order thinking that leads to coherence in teaching and learning for all students. (1.2)
 - Differentiated tasks for strategic and flexible groups of students and accountable talk and discussion are the hallmarks for learning across classrooms in this school. Students are very comfortable in a dialogue with their peers, during turn and talk opportunities or when responding to the whole class. They use conversation stems that are explicitly taught so that they might be accountable and accurate in their expressions of their thinking and tasks. Furthermore, several samples of authentic work on display and in portfolios are derived from high levels of active student engagement and critical thinking. Detailed lesson plans include explicit learning objectives, academic vocabulary, scripted mini lessons, differentiated tasks based on student data, and frequent checks for understanding and evaluation that culminate in differentiated homework assignments. Focused attention is provided to English language learners (ELL) to ensure that they are also active participants in learning. Lessons are frontloaded with appropriate vocabulary and are planned with four modalities in mind, i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Additionally, the school's reading program includes an explicit ELL component utilized efficiently by classroom teachers. However, in a few classrooms pacing and levels of questioning do not always engage students in these rigorous learning experiences to the extent possible. As a result, high levels of student thinking and participation are not always sustained across all classrooms.
- Continue to explore ways to build relationships with parents that strengthen lines of communication and engagement to help their children reach their potential. (2.4)
 - The school is working diligently to continually improve lines of communication with families and engage them in the academic and personal growth of their children. Workshops are planned to educate parents regarding the CCLS and rigorous tasks that students are tackling to extend their thinking. The CCLS has been translated into Spanish at the parents' request along with other valuable information in the form of weekly newsletters from grade level teacher teams and school wide Home-School Connections newsletter. Additionally, parent requests resulted in afterschool providers offering homework help for all students. The school is building a school website for parents to access to keep them current on several topics and maintain an ongoing resource of valuable information. However, the majority of families do not yet make use of this tool thus hampering opportunities to support their children.
- Deepen practices that support students in understanding and using actionable feedback from teachers and peers to improve their work and progress. (3.3)
 - The principal has highly effectively systems in place to track progress through multiple data streams. In turn, there is ongoing communication to the school community regarding specific adjustments to be made in response to this data. Additionally, teacher teams and individual teachers accurately utilize several periodic and blended classroom assessments to track progress and make precise adjustments to lesson plans and student learning goals for all students especially the targeted lowest third and highest third in response to the school's instructional goals. However, although feedback to students and families is deliberate and frequent, students do not always precisely understand and internalize their next steps in order to improve their work as evidenced in student samples and participation in one fifth grade integrated team teaching class where the volume and stamina of writing and attention to next learning goals lacked sufficient enough supports to result in significantly rigorous improvements in their writing as measured against progress of students in other classrooms.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 065	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?				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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?				X
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				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
1..4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?				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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