

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 091 The Albany Avenue School
Elementary school K091**

**532 ALBANY AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11203**

Principal: Tessa Alleyne

Dates of review: December 15, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 091 The Albany Avenue School is an Elementary school with 741 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 94% Black, 5% Hispanic, 1% White, 0% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school leaders use the observation of classroom teaching process to elevate school wide pedagogy and implement practices that promote professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - o School leaders support teachers' development, with short, frequent cycles of verbal and written feedback and student work data on a bi-weekly basis. The feedback accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson teacher development rubric, specifically focused on questioning and student engagement. As a result of this feedback, teachers are beginning to refine their classroom practice. Teachers shared the feedback they received from school leaders and found the reciprocal dialogue between school leaders and teachers to be extremely helpful for professional growth.
 - o School leaders have an effective system for managing staff development and making informed decisions regarding assignments, tenure, retention and professional development for teachers. This year the school has chosen Charlotte Danielson's research-based framework to support pedagogy and to continue making purposeful differentiated professional development opportunities. In the beginning of the year teachers fill out a professional development (PD) survey on survey monkey. The school leaders use the data from the survey to help teachers set professional learning goals and to group teachers for differentiated PD based on teacher needs. These strategic administrative decisions result in thoughtful dialogue among staff to enhance teachers' pedagogical skills with a focus on student achievement, targeted professional development, and teacher reflection to improve practice and refined approaches for more differentiated instruction, resulting in improved teaching and learning outcomes.
- The school provides internal professional development and partners with outside organizations to support students and families with their social and emotional needs. (4.4)
 - o The school based support team has provided a series of workshops for teachers to develop consistent systems of behavior management across grade levels. Classroom rules and school wide expectations for behavior are posted in all classrooms and attendance, compliance with the school uniform policy and positive behavior is celebrated on the hallway bulletin boards. Students indicated that they feel supported by their principal as well as several other caring adults they can go to if they need to talk to someone. There is a full time guidance counselor at PS 91 who works with general education and special education students. Parents, teachers and students are encouraged to reach out to the guidance department when students are struggling socially, emotionally and/or academically from life changing situations such as death, divorce, changes in family routines and income situations, as well as any other situation the child or family needs assistance with. The guidance department then works with the family to offer in-school counseling as well as referral to both in-house and community resources, providing various support services to students that help them find and/or stay on the path to academic readiness and success.
 - o The school offers many supportive social emotional programs during the school day and after school. There are several external partnerships that provide child/youth development support services for students including collaborations with New York City Department for the Aging at PS 91 for a grandparent support group to support grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, Fifth Avenue Committee that offers free GED and English language instruction for parents/caretakers of PS 91 students and NYU Medical Center "Insights" program targeting kindergarten and first grade students

in literacy as well as “HIP POP” program where Grade 4 & 5 students and parents are given a series through discussion, technology and music around preventing stroke. The school also has a partnership with Gary Klinsky Children’s Center, an after school program which provides a supportive, developmentally appropriate, enjoyable environment for children to improve their reading and general academic skills and, in doing so, develop an enhanced sense of self-esteem. The program seeks to increase the reading ability of every child who attends the center on a regular basis across the year and serves students of PS 91 between the ages of 6 and 12. The program has a Parent Advisory Council and encourages parent participation. There is also a hot dinner served to the students on a daily basis. As a result of these partnerships, families have resources in the neighborhood, as well as in their own school to support the academic, social and emotional needs of their children.

- School leaders make strategic use of resources in making organizational decisions that support students’ achievement and school goals. (1.3)
 - o Alignment is developing between the use of resources including budget, space, technology and coaches to support the school's instructional goals. The principal has a three year comprehensive technology plan in place to meet the goal of integrating technology into the everyday academic lives of students and to enhance communication among teachers, staff, administrators, parents and the community. There is a newly hired literacy coach and an art/literacy cluster teacher to provide support to teachers in writing curriculum units in literacy and getting used to the literacy workshop model of teaching. The art cluster teacher also supports students as they infuse art into their work products. These strategic decisions result in the entire faculty including cluster teachers implementing the workshop model and providing small group instruction aligned to a core belief of a balanced literacy approach , resulting in more authentic student work products, particularly in writing and the arts.
 - o The use of staff and student time is structured such that teacher teams meet weekly. In addition, the physical location of classrooms was reorganized in order to allow collaboration among teachers on the same grade level. Since common grades are located in the same hallways teachers are able to meet more conveniently for meetings, preps or to watch another colleague demonstrate a lesson. These structures result in teachers developing goals for narrative writing tasks. Teachers use the Teacher’s College narrative writing continuum to guide setting long and short term goals for each student in their inquiry group and students receive instruction three days a week for 30 minutes. Teachers meet in teacher teams once a week to discuss instructional strategies, collaboratively analyze student work and set short term goals. As a result teachers are learning new strategies for teacher collaboration in writing and there is some improvement in student writing as evidenced by “on demand” pieces, writing in folders and student writing displayed on bulletin boards.
- The principal has communicated high expectations to promote a culture that is focused on student outcomes with a vision to accelerate learning. (3.4)
 - o The principal has worked with the faculty and parents to identify school wide goals aligned to data, as well as identified systems that will improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes in order to meet year long goals. At monthly Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings one student receives a leadership award. In addition, student and citizen of the month and students with perfect attendance are also recognized. A school wide homework plan is in place where classroom teachers are asked to prepare and type student homework in advance and submit to grade leaders. These sheets are reviewed, copied and given to students weekly on Monday mornings. This practice allows for consistency across grades and parents indicated that they like to

know what is going on in their child's class and are better able to support their children's learning at home.

- The principal provides professional learning opportunities for her faculty to collaboratively integrate new literacy teaching strategies and the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). (4.3)
 - o Teachers have received professional development in using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy for developing rigorous questions. Curriculum maps have been revised and lesson plans are aligned to the CCLS. Assessment practices are developing across grades as teachers begin to use the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in developing assessments. Teacher teams are looking at student work to plan instruction. In alignment with the school's belief that students learn best through workshop model teaching, there is evidence of the gradual release of instruction allowing students to work in small groups. The teachers have received training in the workshop model in reading and writing workshop that includes a mini-lesson, independent work time and a whole class share. This has been a major shift in instruction and teachers are supported in their learning through ongoing professional development that is tailored to meet staff needs as indicated on the PD survey and teacher pre and post formal observation meetings, resulting in teachers feeling empowered to implement new practices they have learned and have professional conversations around their growth. In addition, there is an increase in teachers taking on leadership roles in their individual teams and at looking at student work products to drive instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the coherence and consistency of curricula aligned task development to involve a diversity of learners in rigorous tasks. (1.1)
 - o The school has revised their curriculum maps to align reading and writing units to key standards and has made some progress in implementing units of study in reading and writing. In addition, they are implementing the Common Core learning tasks. These learning experiences, however, do not consistently call for students to engage in rigorous thinking and/or use higher order skills to produce meaningful work. Although the curriculum maps reflect initial thought to engage a diverse group of learners through basic extension activities, learning tasks are not refined using student work products so that the level of cognitive engagement can be assessed for lower achieving students through curricular revisions and increased scaffolds. This results in missed opportunities to maximize students' engagement and leverage the curricular revision process for increased outcomes, particularly for key student subgroups.
- Develop more consistent and frequent assessment systems to analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions to support student learning on a regular basis. (2.2)
 - o Teams of teachers are creating and beginning to use assessments and rubrics however, these assessments are loosely aligned with key standards and curricular providing a limited evaluation of the effectiveness of classroom level, curricular and instructional decisions.
 - o Teams of teachers are beginning to supplement summative data analysis by administering periodic and classroom level assessments but are not analyzing assessment data to identify strengths and needs of student subgroups. The lack of ongoing and consistent analysis of key formative assessments including instructionally targeted assessments, Early Performance Assessment in Language Arts (E-PAL),

student writing analysis, student conference notes and Everyday Math unit assessments does not allow for the school to gather a clear picture of students. In addition, across classrooms teacher assessment practices do not reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding, analysis of data and student self assessment resulting in some students not having a clear understanding of concepts and skills necessary to support their learning needs.

- Increase the alignment of pedagogy to the curriculum, and continue to build teacher capacity to create engaging and differentiated learning experiences to enable all students to produce meaningful work products (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curriculum and reflective of a set of beliefs about how students learn best as evidenced by the paradigm shift to the workshop model approach to teaching, particularly in literacy classes. However, teaching strategies, questioning and routines inconsistently offer differentiated learning opportunities for students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. While some teachers are using formative assessment data to integrate scaffolds including manipulatives, graphic organizers, small group instruction, and student choice to cognitively engage students of all levels in lessons, other teachers lead teacher dominated lessons or inappropriately modified activities. In addition, across classrooms teacher questioning leads to an uneven levels of student thinking and participation as evidence in student work products and discussion.
- Develop a school wide protocol for sharing student strengths and areas of need with all stakeholders in order to monitor progress and growth and plan for next steps. (2.4)
 - o School leaders and faculty provide students and families with feedback regarding student progress toward meeting school and class expectations and the school is developing structures to support families in using Achievement Reporting Information System (ARIS) parent link to understand student performance. However, the communication tools such as weekly homework, progress reports and letters home do not provide sufficient opportunities for parents to ask questions regarding next learning steps. Parents communicated a desire to be more active partners in the dialogue around their children's progress and other school issues and welcomed the improvement efforts put forth by the school. Limited opportunities for families to participate in school decision making, result in a lack of open exchange of specific information between parents and the school to discuss clear next steps to help learning take place at home.
- Ensure that teachers are utilizing data to measure progress and support adjustments to meet instructional goals. (5.3)
 - o Alignment of the annual planning process including the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and Quality Review School Self Evaluation Form (SSEF) from one year to the next is developing as the plans do take into consideration teacher development needs and the expectation of the CCLS. In addition, school leaders are developing systems for measuring process towards interim goals and identifying where improvement in plans or strategies is needed. However, teachers do not have systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and identifying areas where improvements in plans or strategies are needed, thereby resulting in minimal or no progress of students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 091 The Albany Avenue School	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		
4.4 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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