

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 108 Sal Abbracciamento
Elementary school K108**

**200 LINWOOD STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11208**

Principal: CONSTANCE HAHN

**Dates of review: December 05, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Rose Marie Mills**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 108 Sal Abbracciamento is an Elementary school with 901 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 66% Hispanic, 8% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff analyze a comprehensive array of student data, including subgroup performance, to successfully identify strengths and needs and align interventions to positively impact school performance.
 - o The instructional cabinet identifies sub-group needs and school-wide trends by analyzing an extensive amount of data. This includes performance on curriculum-aligned assessments, item analysis from summative and formative assessments, conferencing records, Fountas and Pinnell reading level data, and English language arts writing tasks. Additionally, data around classroom discipline and student progress is disaggregated to determine the effectiveness of individual teachers and professional development needs. For example, the performance of English language learners (ELL's) and students with disabilities (SWD) is keenly monitored via daily classroom visits to ensure that these subgroups make adequate yearly progress. Experienced staff, familiar with the needs of these targeted subgroups, push in to provide multiple interventions such as small group and individualized literacy instruction. As a result, in the past year students have shown an average increase of three levels on the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment while overall school performance on the New York State English language arts assessment reflects a 3% increase.
- Highly effective teacher development support and classroom observation protocols, along with differentiated professional development facilitate teacher growth and student performance.
 - o Teacher development is entrenched across the school. The coaches, consultant, Network staff, and Teacher Center staff all provide targeted group and individualized workshops for teachers. Staff support each other via cycles of focused interclass visitations, study groups, videotaped lessons, and analysis of student work. New teachers attend weekly Friday morning workshops led by their peers. Administrators work as a unified team to visit the classrooms of struggling and new staff on a daily basis and provide succinct feedback on pedagogical practices and student work. This results in strong support that advance teacher and student growth.
 - o Individualized professional development plans, collaboratively created by teachers and administrators, guide evaluation and support for each staff member. The instructional cabinet tactfully aligns teacher observation assignment with the expertise of team members and collectively discusses the results, ensuring coherence across the school. In addition, binders with spreadsheets record the ratings and feedback of observations and charts reflect targeted support and follow up with specific timeframes. Teachers' yearly performance ratings are guided by self-evaluations, exit conference with administrators, along with formal observation data. These transparent practices nurture the strong cadre of teachers who have directly improved student achievement.
- The safe, respectful and caring school culture strongly supports all aspects of student development resulting in increased engagement and student performance.
 - o Over the last three years the school has consistently received a grade of "A" on the citywide Learning Environment Survey (LES). In order to maintain a high

- level of respect and safety to ensure an orderly school environment to promote positive learning outcomes, a detailed analysis of the result is conducted as soon as the data is available. Data analysis revealed a slight decrease in the score for safety and respect and this prompted the design of a focused plan to improve this area. At the beginning of the year, the school conducted safety assemblies for students and training for staff as well as anti-bullying workshops for students and families. The guidance counselor conducts ongoing class presentations that target safety improvements. These strategies, as well as the continuation of the daily successful attendance tracking strategies, and the regular review of safety data result in a supportive learning environment that students and families rave about and describe as "just right".
- o The overall student to teacher ratio of 13:1, along with the use of student teachers for group support, facilitates more attention for all students and allows the needs of each student to be well known by the staff. A small group of students who exhibit socio-emotional problems are matched with faculty who serve as mentors. Mentors check-in with students on a daily basis and help to guide their development with coping strategies such as anger management techniques, group discussions, and peer mediation. Additionally, the guidance counselor provides at-risk support for targeted students and their families. These interventions allow students to be constantly engaged in academic tasks in their classrooms thus supporting their progress.
 - The school's curriculum, aligned to key State standards, the arts, and the development of higher-order thinking enables all learners to be engaged in cognitively demanding tasks.
 - o Realizing the need to raise the level of academic rigor in order to align the Core Knowledge curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the school has broadened its non-fiction libraries. Beginning last school year teacher teams continue to engage in revising curriculum maps, performance tasks, benchmark assessments, rubrics, and on demand writing tasks to infuse the rigor of the Common Core Learning Standards. On a weekly basis, teams utilize a rubric to examine student work products and identify gaps and next teaching steps in order to ensure that all learners are on the path for meeting the demands of the State standards. Based on an analysis of students' work, academic tasks are either revised or complemented with modified rubrics, which focus on the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. There is a strong emphasis on writing across the curriculum; hence, students' writing products on display throughout the school, particularly in grades three, four, and five reflect the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and higher levels of cognitive engagement.
 - School leaders focus all academic and organizational decisions on achieving school-wide instructional goals to improve student performance outcomes.
 - o Using a school based option; the principal has gained the use of the sixth period prep for teacher team meetings and an additional fifty minutes for inquiry work. In addition, strategic scheduling allows teachers on all grade levels to have daily common preps before or after their lunch breaks. Consequently, classroom and support teachers are able to collaborate to deepen reflection on student data, modify curriculum maps, create common assessments, and hone instructional practices. Thus, student-writing portfolios reflect scaffolding, the use of rubrics tailored to tasks, student reflection, and all students completing challenging and engaging academic tasks.

- o Teacher assignments support collaboration to meet the academic needs of students. Students' class assignment is based on their needs and the competency of the teacher. In addition, students requiring similar interventions are strategically grouped so that intervention providers and English as second language (ESL) teachers push in to provide support during literacy blocks. These teachers collaborate on a weekly basis in teacher teams thereby facilitating planning. Strong programming supports and teacher collaboration, along with interventions for targeted students, aligns to the school's instructional goals and has increased student writing proficiency as evidenced in portfolio work samples.
- Students benefit from differentiated teaching strategies that align with the schools' instructional philosophy and curriculum resulting in students engaged in meaningful work products.
 - o Across the school, classrooms reflect the school's belief to provide instruction using the workshop model and engage students in small group or individualized lessons to support their learning needs. Observations of fifth grade classrooms depicted students across the grade participating in lessons aligned to the curriculum, intervention teachers assisting with instruction, and students completing a variety of engaging tasks. This belief system aligns instruction with the curriculum for increased student engagement.
 - o The analysis of student data to plan instruction across classrooms result in student work products that reflects tiered assignments based on students' instructional levels. For example, across fourth and fifth grade classes with concentrations of English language learners, students use a variety of graphic organizers along with task specific rubrics in simple language, to guide them in creating writing pieces. Students with disabilities are provided with visuals to support their comprehension and vocabulary development. These approaches are implemented across grades in order to push student thinking and is evident in their work products.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish consistency in daily assessment practices thereby ensuring timely adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.
 - o Teacher teams create performance tasks for all grades as well as benchmark assessments aligned to curriculum maps thereby providing consistency in summative assessment practices across the school. While some teachers utilize exit cards and reflection sheets, most teachers use questioning to check for understanding. However, the frequency of checking student understanding varies from teacher to teacher. For example, while a teacher conducted individual student conferences, a group of students engaged in independent reading without being assigned a specific "read for". Students indicated that they were reading their independent book and that the teacher would know if they understood during the weekly conference. This limited check for understanding results in missed opportunities to make timely adjustments that push student achievement and monitor the effectiveness of assigned tasks.
- Develop consistent, school wide protocols, with established timeframes, to share student performance information and next steps with families.
 - o Parents receive training on the use of ARIS and the parent coordinator provides individualized assistance as needed. Additionally, at curriculum night, families receive an overview of the curriculum, and curriculum maps are available on the

schools' website. Monthly "Family Fridays" allow parents to spend time in their child's class to observe instruction. However, the practice of providing parents with written feedback at intervals during the marking period to inform them of their child's progress is inconsistent across the school. This inhibits parents from taking full ownership for their children's learning, as they are not provided with specific next learning steps to support academic growth.

- Broaden parent understanding of school-wide goals and the increased rigor of the Common Core Standards to ensure broad based support and goal attainment.
 - o School leaders have established a short list of data informed goals that are aimed at improving teacher effectiveness, integrating Common Core State Standards, and accelerating student performance. The goals are explicit in the Comprehensive Education Plan as well as the Principal's Performance Review and guide school improvement efforts. Parents on the School Leadership Team (SLT) have a general understanding of these goals and the need to hasten student achievement in order to meet the demands of the CCLS; however, those not involved on the SLT have limited awareness and comprehension of the specific goals. The lack of ongoing communication with the entire school community, including parents, hinders support to raise academic growth.
- Enhance the system for evaluating the grading policy; sharing student information with families, teacher designed tasks aligned to Common Core Learning Standards so that highly effective protocols inform school needs.
 - o The instructional cabinet and teacher teams evaluate school-wide assessment practices and student performance data at regular intervals throughout the school year. Additionally, the school is fully engaged in implementing the Common Core Learning Standards. However, there is limited focus on assessing the grading policy and practices for the sharing of student performance information with families. While there are structures to ensure that tasks designed by teacher teams align to the CCLS, established protocol to ensure that tasks developed by individual teachers are appropriately aligned is not yet fully established. This prevents full understanding of classroom needs to accelerate student performance.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Sal Abbracciamento	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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