

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

K 109

Elementary-Middle School 109

1001 East 45th Street

**Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Dwight Chase

Dates of review: May 7 - 8, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 109 is an elementary-middle school with 600 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 76% Black, 21% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 21% 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 92.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal uses the budget effectively to make organizational decisions to support the learning needs of teachers and students. 1.3
 - The new principal is working diligently to re-establish the school's focus on technology as part of its theme and curriculum offerings. The effective use of the budget, Reso A grants, and donorships, support the school in its present use of SmartBoards, laptops, I-Pads, and computers. As a result students engage in content related research and are developing technology skills necessary for the 21st century. The decision to purchase a literature program for use across the grades provides coherency and consistency of practice, which is resulting in improved scores as per running records and conferencing notes. Additionally, the principal utilizes funds to purchase the services of literacy and math consultants to provide profession development opportunities for teachers on grades kindergarten through grade 5 in English language arts, and with middle school teachers in English language arts and math. Also, the purchase of professional books including Teach Like a Champion and How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms are being utilized by focus groups to guide their classroom practice and extend their learning. Therefore, teachers feel that their professional needs, especially in the areas of content and instructional strategies, as noted in the Learning Environment Survey, are now well supported by the principal, assistant principals, and their colleagues. The principal's restructuring of teacher time at the middle school level by decreasing teaching periods from 25 to 24 periods a week provides common planning time for English language arts and math teachers. This structural change, coupled with the use of 'lunch and learns' results in teachers having the additional time to collaborate, share best practices, and develop curriculum maps. All of which are having a positive impact on student learning as noted by scholarship reports. The principal also utilizes various assessment data to determine teacher assignments. The instructional strengths of a second grade teacher served as the basis for the decision to loop to grade 3 where test grades had significantly decreased from the previous year. As a result, teacher strengths and students' needs are becoming aligned and students are making behavioral and academic progress.
- School leaders and faculty utilize a comprehensive range of data to create a picture of the school's strengths and areas of need to improve student performance and progress. 2.1
 - The school uses a wide range of data to identify trends and patterns in attendance, suspension, scholarship, State exams, periodic assessments, classroom level tests, referrals, and decertification. As a result it was able to note a 1.8% increase in attendance, a 15% decrease in principal suspensions, 1.5 additional credits for at risk students moving to less restrictive environments and self-contained and integrated co-teaching (ICT) classes, and students attaining proficiency levels as per internal data reports and the Progress Report. Furthermore, teachers utilize running records, conferencing notes, Acuity, pre- and post-tests to identify areas of strength and concern. As a result, administrators and teachers use the data to ensure students receive academic intervention services to meet their needs.

- School leaders utilize data to create long-term goals and action plans and to develop a Comprehensive Education Plan to accelerate learning. 3.1
 - The principal's clear vision for the students and school coupled with his collaborative spirit is responsible for the development of a viable school leadership team. The principal and data specialist engage its members by using monthly meetings to analyze and discuss school-wide data in the development of goals and action plans. Therefore, the Comprehensive Educational Plan contains concise goals linking professional development, performance tasks in literacy and math, and teacher effectiveness, to promote changes necessary to accelerate student performance and progress. Hence, members are actively engaged as key stakeholders in shared leadership and the decision-making process, and goals align to school and student needs. The principal shares goals and action plans through school-wide communication systems including on-line and hard copies of information that are distributed to the team members and parents' association, messages from the principal and parent coordinator, as well as faculty and parent conferences. Consequently, there is a broad base of support for the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan and the new principal.
- The school engages families in decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information, to promote accountability and learning. 2.4
 - School leaders schedule and utilize a 25-minute homeroom period in the morning to provide time for students to focus on silent independent reading and sharing of information, concerns, and attendance taking. The use of Engrade, an electronic grading system, permits on-going communication with parents and students about lateness, class work, homework, tests, performance tasks, and projects. This, coupled with the principal's open door policy, report cards and fall/spring parent /teacher conferences, e-mails and telephone calls, and parent in-take forms, provide an opportunity for the school, students and families to share relevant information, discuss progress towards meeting learning expectations, and address concerns. Hence, students and parents are able to identify and articulate strengths, weaknesses, and next steps necessary for academic success. The school conducts workshops on Homework Help, Common Core Learning Standards, Test Prep and ARIS to help families better understand their children's performance, which allows parents to support their children's learning. Consequently, more students are attending extended day, academic intervention services such as scheduled tutorials with specific content area teachers, and after-school programs necessary to improve their learning outcomes.
- The school maintains a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports student-learning outcomes. 1.4
 - The school is bright, clean, and well maintained. The principal and his assistant principals meet and greet students as they enter the building in the morning and check in with students during lunch periods. Thus, students feel welcomed, cared for, and safe. Teachers and support staff attend professional conferences on Classroom Management, Respect for All, and bullying. In turn, students attend assemblies on character development and anti-bullying. The principal and dean visit classes to review the Discipline Code and explain consequences to students. Additionally, the school requires parents and students to sign behavioral expectation contracts. Consequently, the number

of incidents and suspensions are down from last year. Motivational adages regarding attitude and learning line the hallways and cover clocks, this along with bulletin board displays of exemplary student work and teacher feedback, perfect attendance, principal's honor and merit roles, and recognition of students of the month provide an opportunity for reflection and a personal commitment by students to meet the high expectations on a daily basis.

- At the beginning of the school year, the principal assigned specific grade levels to each of his assistant principals. One of the assistants is responsible for grades, 2, 3, 7 and 8, and the other K, 1, 4, 5, and 6. Thus, this provides for coherency of policy and practice across the grades as well as a structure that allows school leaders to know students both on the elementary and middle school levels. Furthermore, students interact with guidance staff who conduct group and individual counseling sessions while the substance abuse and prevention specialist conducts in class lessons as well as peer mediation and conflict resolution sessions. Consequently, students report that they like coming to school, they are well known by many faculty members on staff, and they feel comfortable seeking and receiving support for personal and academic needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop rigorous curricula and tasks that promote high-level critical thinking and problem solving skills for all students. 1.1
 - Presently, faculty members are at various stages of curriculum development. The grade 4 English language arts team developed curriculum maps which are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and address key components such as essential questions, content, skills, materials, assessment, and several accompanying units, while the seventh grade math team is utilizing pacing guides that align to the CCLS and analyzing performance task results to determine gaps. However, the lack of the development of common subject area curriculum maps across grades and subjects leads to a lack of instructional coherency that impacts the delivery of inter-grade content and skill development for some students. Furthermore, while the written curriculum and performance tasks are challenging, the taught curriculum in some classes is not. Therefore, some students are not developing higher order and problem solving skills necessary for college and career success.
- Ensure that activities and student work products are differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. 1.2
 - The principal adheres to the pedagogical philosophy that students learn best when they are motivated, engaged, and instruction is tailored to meet individual learning needs. Presently, some teachers utilize various data such as conferencing notes and periodic assessments sources to form small flexible learning groups that are based on reading or skill level. Additionally, a few teachers create differentiated tiered tasks. This is especially true in self-contained classes where teachers utilize computers and IPADS and in ICT classes where teachers work with specific groups to address various skill levels and interests to meet students' learning needs. However, most teachers have students work in random groups and all students complete the same worksheet regardless of their performance level. Consequently, many

students are not sufficiently challenged at their instructional or independent levels. Although teachers have been exposed to Webb's Depth of Knowledge, questioning in most classes is at a literal level with teachers phrasing questions with who, what, when, where, and why. As a result, most students do not have the opportunity to think or respond on a critical level, thus, limiting their academic potential.

- Utilize the observation of classroom teaching and student learning outcomes to elevate instructional practices and promote professional growth. 4.1
 - Presently, the principal and assistant principals utilize a research-based framework and rubric as a reference when conducting short frequent cycles of observations. While school leaders provide immediate verbal and written feedback, next steps for improvement are not always clearly communicated. Feedback to a kindergarten teacher that included information relative to a student who could read the title, "Ants on the Apple", but could not read the words out of context, only included next steps around developing vocabulary. Thus, the feedback lacked pertinent information on how to improve student learning and instructional practice. Presently, school leaders use data, frequent short cycled informal and formal observations to plan school wide professional development on topics such as Common Core Learning Standards, Curriculum Mapping, College and Career Readiness, Universal Design for Learning and Response for Intervention (RTI) strategies. However, this information is not yet fully utilized to align professional opportunities to meet the targeted needs of individual and small groups of teachers. As a result, professional growth for some teachers is limited and, the impact on student learning is not maximized.
- Ensure that teachers are analyzing and using on-going assessment data to identify and meet the learning needs of students. 2.2
 - Teachers and teams are utilizing quarterly exams and periodic assessments to identify areas of strength and concern both on a class and individual student level. However, data is not necessarily disaggregated by grade or sub-groups of students, thus limiting the achievement of some groups of students. While many teachers use on-the-spot assessments strategies such as white boards, raised hands, application activities to determine mastery, the information is not consistently used for timely adjusting of instructional strategies. As a result, assessments are not informing teaching and addressing needs of students.
- Engage in professional collaborations using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and improves student-learning outcomes. 4.2
 - A majority of teachers engage in professional collaborations. Although teams meet on a regular basis and utilize agendas and analyze student work not all teams employ an inquiry approach to identify research-based strategies to address students' targeted learning needs, nor do they monitor the conditions of learning. Therefore, some revised teacher practices have limited benefit for some students.

o Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: PS/IS 109	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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