

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 140

Elementary – Middle School K140

**985 Rockaway Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Roderick Palton

Dates of review: May 23 - 25, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Eileen Waters

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 140 is an elementary-middle school with 290 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 70% Black, 24% Hispanic, 4% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 81% of the students enrolled and girls account for 19%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 84.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides students with real world learning experiences and guidance that supports their social and emotional growth and prepares them for their next educational stage. (4.4)
 - The school communicates with students and parents the criteria for promotion and shares programs the school offers. During the high school application process, guidance counselors work towards matching students with programs best suited for their needs and keep parents informed on how to assist their children during the application process and transition. Alternate assessment students take trips to various occupational schools to help them make the most appropriate choice. From these high school visits, students gain an understanding of the expectations and are exposed to relevant learning environments. Approximately 30 students have been accepted to their first or second choice school and 10 students are in the process of transitioning into a least restricted environment, better suited for their needs.
 - Based on School Survey data, the school has been addressing bullying issues and links with IDEAS, an organization that works with teachers and students on anti-bullying strategies and has been working directly with 4 specific classes. The principal has noted a decline in referrals from one of the classes, and feels students are more comfortable sharing their issues with adults. Guidance counselors take groups of students to local restaurants or a movie to work on social skills and monitor students' ability to incorporate socialization strategies taught into real life situations. The school works with the PAL (Police Athletic League) coordinator to continue to support the ongoing needs of students' when they are outside of the school. As the school provides students with skills to function in society, they are learning that students are experiencing success in various social situations.
- The principal's vision for the school has begun to create a shift towards an instructional focus and involvement of parents to support student growth. (3.1)
 - The principal continues to work towards the goals set by his predecessor, as he refines his vision for the school based on his instructional beliefs and the performance of the school community. By continuously gathering evidence during walkthroughs and reviewing bulletin boards, the principal is beginning to transfer the vision of the school to be centered on effective pedagogy that provides students with skills and strategies to be academically and socially successful. As the principal continues to build the foundational beliefs on effective instruction at the school, parents recognize a stronger shift towards instruction. The principal's goal to increase parental involvement has resulted in the hiring of a parent coordinator, monthly workshops, creation of both a parent teacher association and school leadership team, and some parents attending school trips and district events. Parents appreciate the hands-on, role-play experiences at workshops that have supported them in addressing common issues with their children.
- The administration provides staff with feedback that captures some pedagogical practices along with next steps in order to advance teacher effectiveness so that instructional expectations are reinforced. (4.1)

- The principal partakes in an observation process that asks teachers to be reflective prior to and following the observation in order to set the stage for a productive conversation. Teachers share their thoughts around the effectiveness of the lesson and whether students attained the goal. The principal's formal report captures effective and ineffective instructional strategies supported by observational evidence, which is memorialized so that a common understanding is shared. The administrative team is moving towards a structure that allows them to encapsulate evidence around a common rubric as part of the feedback process with teachers. These practices are setting the foundation of the administration's expectations around effective pedagogical practices.
- Some teacher teams have adopted protocols to guide their collaborative work with peers so that discussions around student performance influence instructional decisions. (4.2)
 - Teams of teachers meet across the multiple sites and some have adopted a protocol for looking at student work to drive their choices around instructional decisions. One team has evolved over the course of the school year from sharing ideas that improve instruction to focusing in on a common class shared by each of the cluster teachers. Using classroom level data, the team decided to build students' content vocabulary in math and science. Gathering pre-assessment data to identify what students knew teachers incorporate visuals, technology, and manipulatives, into their instructional practices to support students' attainment and ownership of new vocabulary. The collaboration across teachers allows for a more comprehensive understanding of trends in students' strengths and needs so that teachers are able to make adjustments to their instruction.
- School leaders monitor the effectiveness of teacher teams and leadership development so that adjustments are made to strengthen practices. (5.4)
 - By reviewing student work and interim assessment data, the administration learned that the work of all teacher teams was not moving in the direction expected. As a result, protocols were instituted and/or refined to guide teachers while looking at student work. School leaders meet with coaches to discuss the work of teachers and teacher teams in order to gauge the effectiveness of teacher collaborations and initiate refinements. Instructional specialists submit debriefing logs that capture their work along with next steps for staff members, which are reviewed by the administration. These structures are supporting school leaders with the monitoring process and are beginning to lead to adjustments in protocols.

What the school needs to improve

- Create rigorous curricula with embedded academic tasks that provide a foundation of content and learning strategies so that students' cognitive thinking is continuously challenged in order to enhance students' knowledge. (1.1)
 - The school utilizes a variation of programs to provide instruction but has not yet established a curriculum that targets the identified needs of its students. Through the use of scripted programs and lessons, daily instruction struggles to meet the unique learning needs and styles of the student population, thus hindering students' cognitive engagement in learning new information and strategies. The writing instruction relies heavily on grammar and punctuation leaving students without a strong foundation for the elements of specific writing genres. Some lesson plans take into account students' abilities while others are

vague and incomplete in the academic focus and procedures to attain mastery. Some academic tasks require students to complete low-level worksheets, correct capitalization and punctuation, and copy notes, leaving students feeling bored and under-challenged. In the absence of a focused curriculum, that provides content knowledge along with skills and strategies, academic tasks struggle to engage students in rigorous thinking that is captured in thought provoking conversations and aptly demanding work products.

- Further develop pedagogical practices with the utilization of effective instructional strategies that best meet the needs of all learners and engage them in thought provoking learning experiences. (1.2)
 - Although the school believes that the workshop model is an instructional routine necessary to best meet the needs of their student population, its utilization is inconsistent across the school. Some teachers model reading strategies and the gathering of thoughts on a graphic organizer while other classes provide a teacher dominated setting with little account for students' learning needs and styles. Few teachers effectively engage students in tasks that are a repetition of previously taught writing genres along with the continuation of a current learning task. Some students work within a group to collectively record pros and cons to a topic that led to a discussion where students take on the perspective of another person in order to persuade someone. Other teachers engage students' thinking in content area discussions where students comfortably embed content vocabulary while expressing their beliefs. However, in other classrooms there was an ineffective utilization of paraprofessionals to support learning, a lack of hands-on materials and manipulatives to target students learning styles, low levels of thinking required in academic tasks, and ineffective use of instructional time. Consequently, these choices contribute to students' disengagement in their learning and places limitations on enhancing their learning potential.
- Expand teachers' capacity to utilize rigorous assessments and perform in depth data analysis that accurately captures student performance trends so that instructional decisions are adjusted to meet all students' needs. (2.2)
 - Most teachers utilize common writing rubrics that gather information around student's punctuation abilities or the inclusion of facts and details in a paragraph. However, these rubrics lack an alignment to the writing standards specific to the genre of focus and the students' grade level, providing a limited understanding to students' writing capacity. In addition, the ongoing use of punctuation rubrics to gather evidence of students' writing leaves teachers continuously focusing on grammar and punctuation as the central writing focus without adjusting the curriculum and instruction to teach students the various elements embedded within a writing genre.
 - Although teachers gather data from various sources throughout the year, the analysis of this data to identify students' strengths, needs, and gaps, is not an effective practice. Review of teacher's data overview sheets sourced various misalignments and resulted in students being paired with materials not at their independent level. Though some teachers have students self-reflect on their work and incorporate checks for student understanding within their instructional lesson, this practice is not common across teachers. Without these assessment practices embedded in daily instruction, teachers have a partial understanding of students' learning and miss opportunities to make timely instructional adjustments that would accelerate student learning.

- Strategize the staff's professional development through learning opportunities that specifically address data informed areas of growth and offer effective strategies that improve students' social emotional and academic learning. (4.3)
 - In alignment with the principal's vision for the school, staff members receive general support and professional development to strengthen instructional routines, the design of rubrics, and the implementation of instructional and online programs. Guidance counselors and staff are provided opportunities to attend district and citywide trainings related to their field of work. However, professional development that targets the identified needs of groups of teachers is not yet occurring. With some teachers demonstrating pockets of effective instructional techniques, the school has not yet taken full advantage of those teachers' strengths to develop instructional leaders that strengthen the work of their colleagues, subsequently impacting on a larger number of students.
- Make purposeful organizational decisions with the use of resources and placement of staff in order to support the long-term plan of the school and the advancement of student learning. (1.3)
 - With the principal joining the school community mid-school year, many resource and organizational decisions were already in place. Without disturbing those choices, the principal has shaped his work around them, making minor adjustments as needed. Technology resources are evident in classrooms however, they are not often used to support learning. While in some classrooms, teachers display the objective or procedure of the lesson, the use of technology in an interactive fashion to support student learning is not yet a common practice. Although instructional programs have been acquired to support teachers' daily lesson delivery, these programs are not meeting the needs of students and play a role in limiting students' potential to produce high quality work. Even though time has been structured for teams of teachers to work together around student work on a regular basis, the outcome of these collaborations have not yet yielded changes to instructional practices that result in students being engaged in challenging and suitable academic work.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 140	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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