

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. K141

K-12 all grades school K141

655 PARKSIDE AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11226

Principal: MICHELE THORNTON MANNIX

Dates of review: February 7- 9, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Joseph

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. K141 is a K-12 all grades school with 376 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 56% Black, 30% Hispanic, 11% White, 1% Asian students and 2% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 83.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across classrooms teachers share a common set of beliefs on how students learn best; there is consistent differentiation of instruction, material and routines to meet students' functional, academic and behavioral needs. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms serving different populations of students, teachers implement practices that are aligned to the standards-based curriculum. School leaders consistently express expectations that faculty work collaboratively to unpack the Common Core Library Bundles and have developed a series of unique, school-based units of study aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in reading, writing, social studies and science with an emphasis on integrating the Citywide Instructional Expectations in literacy. Administration and staff collaborate to create meaningful, functional and academic individual education plan goals. These then inform curricular development so that instruction serves students needs and is aligned to the CCLS. Both school leaders and staff articulate their beliefs around the importance of collaborating with related service providers to integrate therapy, saying this collaboration helps to support instruction, provide students with multiple opportunities to express themselves, improve communication and generalize skills, establish routines in a structured teaching environment and identify clear, skill-based objectives. There is a school-wide focus to appropriately fade prompting for students in alternate assessment so that, over time, they might develop skills more independently. Staff consistently differentiates instruction and provides the appropriate supports and assistive technologies across all classrooms. This consistency amongst staff on how students learn best and the differentiation across all classrooms and student populations result in increased student outcomes as measured by a documented increase of spontaneous communication by students using voice output devices.
- Resources are used thoughtfully and strategically to support instructional goals and meet the diverse learning needs and styles of the student body. (1.3)
 - o The school has strategically assigned its assistant principals to work with specific ratios of students across the school's sites to improve consistency of differentiated instruction and support improved classroom practices. Each assistant principal conducts a monthly "Team Day" with the staff and funds are utilized to cover classes so there is continuity in instruction. Team Day provides the opportunity for teams, including paraprofessionals and related service providers, to discuss a variety of topics such as aligning instruction to the CCLS, Depth of Knowledge, data collection strategies and the development of rubrics. This practice ensures that all staff is supported in meeting the school goals and the implementation of programs to increase skill development. As a result, student portfolios across the school evidence work products that demonstrate higher levels of challenge and improved progress towards meeting goals.
 - o Teacher teams meet weekly and are facilitated by lead teachers. Teams include the participation of related service providers and are engaged in an inquiry approach looking at student work and data. This results in data-informed instructional decisions. For example, data analysis led teachers to use flash cards and highlighting to increase site word vocabulary and improve fluency skills for students which is improving student outcomes across classrooms.
- Teacher teams use a variety of formative, periodic and low inference data and student work to understand student needs and adjust instruction accordingly. (2.2)

- o Groups of teachers and individual teachers use a variety of formative data for students in alternate and standardized assessment to make instructional decisions. The Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) and Assessment Basic Language Learning Survey (ABLLS) are used as formative assessments to identify IEP goals, assign student groupings and plan for the differentiation of instruction. Other programmatic data such as Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Joint Action Response (JARs), verbal-behavior data as well as other behavioral data, i.e. Functional Behavioral Assessments and Get Ready to Learn (GRTL) data, are used systematically to determine appropriate academic and functional needs of students. Teachers, serving students both in standardized and alternate assessment, analyze periodic assessment data as well as supplemental data from Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI-4), reading surveys and the writing continuum to identify strengths and needs for individual and groups of students. Consequently, teachers make and adjust instructional decisions effectively, resulting in increasing student performance.
- o Teachers, with administration, have created and use assessments and rubrics that align with the school-developed curricula to make informed instructional decisions. A variety of teacher-made assessments, such as the Student Portfolio Checklist, have been developed to document monthly progress monitoring towards the mastery of IEP goals. Students' cumulative progress portfolio within the ABLLS has been developed to capture student progress three times a year. Both primary and secondary reading rubrics are being used this year to assess student work and assist students in monitoring their own progress. Teachers use these tools to make adjustments to curricula and units of study to identify what skills need to be re-taught and to inform student groupings. Teachers report that these tools help to ensure that the data is authentic and actionable and inform instructional decisions, resulting in improved student outcomes.
- Administration has established effective observation and feedback practices that articulate next steps to improve teacher practice (4.1)
 - o Administration uses a data collection tool from TEACHSCAPE to capture frequent, informal classroom observation data and give feedback to teachers using selected competencies from the Danielson Framework for Teaching, a research-based rubric to strengthen teacher practice, with a primary focus on improving rigorous coherent instruction. The TEACHSCAPE tool has been extended to include the school's own Classroom Walkthrough Observation Tool which includes a brief description of the observation as well as specific actionable next steps and a timeline for implementation. One teacher reported that she has benefited greatly from the frequent feedback and feels it has improved her pedagogy so much that this feels more like her first year of teaching even though she has been teaching for eight years. The ongoing focused observation practice and follow-up supports lead to teachers implementing the articulated next steps as evidenced by improved classroom practice, student outcomes and recursive feedback outcomes.
- Teacher teams collaborate regularly, examine student work and share instructional strategies and teacher practices in order to positively impact student progress. (4.2)
 - o Administration, teachers and related service providers are involved in ratio and grade level inquiry teams that utilize a variety of data and student work to make instructional decisions. Coaches and administration rotate across the teams to support and offer guidance. For example, the 12:1:4 Early Childhood team uses

SANDI data to identify the general skills that need to be addressed and one skill in particular to improve student outcomes. Teachers use teacher-made data collection sheets on a weekly basis to measure student progress. Data analysis led one team to identify the use of music and signing to teach concepts as most effective in increasing attention to tasks. Now all 12:1:4 teachers use music and signing more consistently, resulting in an increase in attending skills. As a result of this school-wide inquiry there is a clear trajectory for this work to inform instructional revisions and improve student achievement.

- The administration provides professional development opportunities that enable teachers to evaluate and revise their practices to improve student outcomes. (4.3)
 - Professional development is differentiated for staff based on their individual learning goals and on the needs of their students. The curriculum committee develops units of study for students in alternate and standardized assessment that are aligned to the CCLS in order to design rigorous tasks connected to each student's IEP. This practice helps to develop teaching strategies that align instruction to standards and that also connect to each student's functioning and academic levels. The monthly Team Days, the support of two school coaches and the professional learning communities that include all staff provide the opportunity for staff to deepen their own learning and improve their practice to positively impact student growth. In addition, the integration of related service providers into classrooms has enabled therapeutic strategies to be implemented throughout the day to support instruction and build capacity to improve student outcomes. The GRTL program, the Everyday Art for Special Education (EASE) program and JARS instructional routines are examples of integrated approaches to instruction that have positively impacted student progress. The consistent use of these data-driven research programs has led to an increase in students' communication, socialization, functional and coping skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the systems at the administrative and teacher team level for measuring progress towards meeting goals so that plans can be adjusted and communicated across the school to impact learning outcomes for all students. (5.3)
 - Administration has identified and aligned annual goal setting to accelerate student progress in this year's Comprehensive Educational Plan and School Self Evaluation Form. This annual planning process is developing based on last year's School Survey and the 2011-12 Citywide Instructional Expectations around the CCLS. Due to the newness of these changed practices the school has not yet engaged in multi-year planning, monitoring, and revising plans based on evidence of student performance, teacher development and the expectations of the CCLS. This limits the school's ability at this time to build capacity and consistency in strategies to strengthen student work and teacher effectiveness.
 - Through the use of the new Student Portfolio Checklist and rubrics, teachers and administration have a variety of data to review in order to measure progress of both students in alternate and standard assessment. However, the school has not yet integrated a systematic, transparent student tracking system that enables school leaders and teachers to collaboratively measure progress towards interim and long-term goals. Without this system, staff is not able to make appropriate instructional adjustments and, therefore, the school's capacity to close the achievement gap is hindered.
- Increase consistency of rigor to ensure that there is a consistent emphasis on habits and higher order thinking skills across all classrooms to challenge all learners (1.1)

- o The administration and curriculum committee work collaboratively to design engaging and coherent curricula aligned to standards and CCLS tasks for students in alternate and standardized assessment. The school emphasizes communication as a key standard leading to higher level literacy skill development. The implementation of the Everyday Arts Special Education Program, GRTL program and JAR activities all support the development and facilitation of language, speech and communication for students with communication disabilities. While the Instructional Cabinet has developed a cross content curriculum map with respective units of study in English language arts, science and social studies, they recently began this work in mathematics and the arts. Although planning for rigorous tasks is taking place in most subject areas, not having aligned curricula in math and the arts at this time is hindering the school's ability to close the achievement gap.
- o Tasks are being aligned to the CCLS to promote functional and academic skill development based on a variety of formative assessments and IEP goals. The curriculum committee is working with teachers to develop rigorous tasks for all student populations across subject areas. Selected students in alternate assessment and all students in standardized instruction are being assessed using Scantron but it is not evident what students' reading levels are and a foundational reading program to develop reading skills is not being used across the school organization. Therefore, there are lost opportunities to promote higher order thinking skills so students can demonstrate their academic potential.
- Unify expectations connected to communications across teachers and sites so that families are fully engaged in conversations regarding behavioral, functional and academic progress and next steps to support student achievement. (2.4)
 - o School leaders and faculty inform families of student progress predominately around behavior as well as school events through communication journals and communication envelopes instituted by the School Leadership Team. Parents are invited to IEP meetings and encouraged to attend Open School Week to discuss student progress, and report cards are distributed four times a year. However, the school has not instituted a school-wide systematic method for reciprocal and ongoing discussions with families regarding student progress, especially around students' academic, functional and behavioral progress towards meeting their goals. As a result, there are missed opportunities to engage families and students on strategies to use at home and in the community to support and impact their functional, academic and social-emotional progress as well as promote the generalization of skills outside the classroom.
- Acquire and/or develop data tools to support the analysis of student performance data in order to inform curricular and instructional decision-making. (2.3)
 - o There are extensive data systems that provide performance and progress information, including multiple sources of individual student performance data. However, administration, due to the vast amount of information, does not have an at-a glance overview of the individual strengths and areas of need for classes or for individual students. As a result, there is no systematic way to use data to measure progress towards meeting interim IEP goals and objectives. The administration also does not warehouse data to efficiently design informed student groupings that could promote higher levels of progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. K141	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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