

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 156 Waverly
Elementary school K156

104 SUTTER AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11212

Principal: BEVERLY LOGAN

Dates of review: November 9-10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Nadya Awadallah

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 156 Waverly is an Elementary school with 827 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 15% Hispanic, 0% White, 1% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 11% 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 91.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teaching practices align to the curriculum, - promote high levels of cognitive engagement and produce meaningful student work products. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms, teachers' instructional practices represent the understanding of the school belief that students need modeling, independent practice, and collaborative engagement. Teaching strategies related to high level questions and engaging students in meaningful peer discussions are apparent in all classrooms. In one classroom, a teacher used modeling to engage students in creating a written analysis of informational text. In another classroom, the teacher used accountable talk to engage students in discussion. As a result, teaching practices align to the curriculum, teacher questioning strategies and classroom routines help close the achievement gap and promote postsecondary readiness in all grades.
 - o Across classrooms, teachers use data to plan lessons and develop differentiated activities. Varying questioning strategies and literacy based activities are developed to help all learners meet their goals. For example, students in grade K-2 are creating a written response to informational texts and students in grade 3-5 are providing a written analysis of informational texts. In math, all grades are presenting reasonable arguments to arrive at an answer. As an outgrowth of this work, students have increased their literacy skills and math skills and improved student learning as evidenced in student work products posted on bulletin boards and portfolios.
- Administration makes effective organizational decisions aligned closely to school goals to support teaching and learning. (1.3)
 - o The principal organizes the school so that teachers have opportunities to meet as grade teams once a week and have scheduled time every other week for professional development or additional teacher meetings. This has allowed teachers to focus on looking at student work to determine strengths and areas of need relating to key standards and the development of learning tasks that appropriately measure student outcomes aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As a result, teachers and teacher teams are embedding key skills revealed from student data within lessons and learning tasks to meet the needs of all learners.
 - o Teachers and instructional specialists work with cohorts of students on a weekly basis to hone in on the skills in need of improvement. Student groupings are cycled every 4-6 weeks based on the assessment outcomes. This has increased shared accountability for student progress and performance as teachers share practices during their collaborative meetings.
- Teacher teams regularly analyze data and use it to guide needed adjustments to instructional and organizational decisions. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams collaborate to use data from Acuity, DIBELS, ECLAS, math units, teacher assessments and portfolios to set, monitor and adjust student grouping and goals, and to plan instruction. Review of student data has led teachers to implement instructional shifts such as greater use of graphic organizers to help

- students organize facts and details of non-fiction reading and pre-teaching of key vocabulary. In addition to summative data, teacher teams use reading levels, interim assessments and baseline assessments in math to inform curricular decisions leading to enhanced student engagement.
- o Students self-assess, review and modify their goals based on data and plan next steps while conferencing with teachers. There is evidence in student portfolios that teachers consistently provide effective feedback to students regarding their progress. In the upper grades, as a result of adjustments to lessons based on data from Acuity, DIBELS, and ECLAS, small group conferencing and graphic organizers has led to 70% of students in grades three to five advancing one or more reading levels.
 - School leaders use an effective system for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional techniques. (4.1)
 - o Teachers receive frequent and timely feedback from building administrators with a focus on teacher effectiveness. Teachers have received written feedback from administrators on the identified component of practice and are working on implementing recommendations. Intervisitations have been scheduled to enable teachers to view the implementation of effective practices by colleagues. Teachers also report that instructional team leaders provide feedback on their progress based on the identified domain from research based teaching framework. Student progress data, feedback forms from teacher team meetings, as well as informal and formal observations are used to make decisions regarding teacher assignment and to plan professional development. As a result of the school's focused feedback and the gathering of data about teacher effectiveness, across classrooms there is evidence that teachers are progressing in the implementation of a coherent curriculum and thoughtful grouping of students based on student work.
 - The school's highly developed communication system keeps parents and students fully informed of students' academic and behavioral progress. (2.4)
 - o The school has increased communication of expectations using letters, phone contact, and personal contact during teacher parent meetings to update families regarding attendance, school events and student progress. Parents speak highly of the myriad of ways that school personnel communicate progress with them. These resources provide parents with a steady stream of information, resulting in clear expectations regarding attendance, behavior, and academic performance, and their ability to support students in next steps.
 - o Parents are active members of the School Leadership Team and Parent Teacher Association. Serving the school in this capacity, parents directly influence school goals, action plans and parent involvement activities. Parents report that the school staff has been instrumental in helping them understand their children's performance in school. They report that they have received workshops and training sessions on how to access ARIS, allowing them to provide targeted support to their children and to effectively extend the schools efforts to further the academic achievement of all students.
 - Teachers benefit from their participation in collaborative inquiry and use this work to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes. (4.2)
 - o Teachers appreciate the highly collaborative environment at the school, and the principal who serves as an invaluable resource having practical expertise in

classroom instruction. All teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry either on grade or across-grade levels to improve reading comprehension skills of targeted students. Classroom, grade level, and school trends, are discussed at meetings leading to purposeful vertical planning and opportunities to share practices school wide. These structured collaborations ensure that all teachers, across the school, have an opportunity to analyze student outcomes including student work, examine the gaps in the curriculum that need to be filled and reflect on instructional decisions, resulting in improvements in teacher practice and student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop greater consistency across all classrooms in establishing alignment curricula and rigorous academic tasks that supports critical thinking skills that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards for all students. (1.1)
 - o The school is in the process of aligning curriculum maps to the Common Core Learning Standards and is conscious of the instructional moves that are needed to heighten learning. They have hired consultants to work with teachers in planning and designing units of study and performance tasks that promote higher order thinking skills. Teacher teams meet on a regular basis to develop grade level lessons and tasks. However, teachers are still refining their practices and, as a result, rigorous habits are not yet embedded in a coherent way across grades to challenge all students in order to improve student outcomes.
 - o Teacher teams work collaboratively to analyze units and plan tasks that are implemented in the classrooms. These units and tasks are planned based on student work and data. Students are grouped for small group instruction throughout classrooms, yet tasks are not differentiated to engage a variety of learners, resulting in uneven levels of student engagement.
- Refine the structures in place to regularly evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional practices in response to student learning needs. (5.1)
 - o School-wide data is reviewed to identify school and student goals, and identify major trends and barriers to achievement. In addition, school staff is in the initial stages in the use of protocols aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, a system to monitor evaluative practices for data collection, interpretation, and protocols have not yet resulted in significant needed changes or use of resources, limiting opportunities for student academic growth.
 - o Although the school has emphasized teaching higher order thinking skills, thinking maps and questioning techniques, this practice is not evident in all lessons and its effectiveness is not regularly evaluated. In two classrooms, students were engaged in a teacher directed lesson. Teaching techniques and questioning do not yet sufficiently challenge all students. As a result, opportunities for students to engage in critical analysis, creativity and higher order tasks are inconsistent and limited.
- Strengthen the practice of setting goals for groups of students in order to ensure that supports are better aligned to students' needs to maximize learning for all students. (3.2)
 - o Teachers and teacher teams analyze data for subgroups of students and use these data to set short and long term goals for cohorts of students for whom they are collectively responsible. The staff has not yet utilized all of the data systems

consistently to refine and differentiate goals for individual students. Teachers shared various examples of classroom goals which sometimes included short and long term goals for students. These are uneven across the grades in terms of rigor. As a result, teachers are currently unable to consistently set high leverage goals that target specific strategies to enhance student learning, based on grade level standards. This was evident in a classroom with English language learners who need additional support to deepen their language development to enhance their writing skills. As a result, there are missed opportunities to utilize effective instructional strategies that cognitively engage students in the learning process.

- Revise school plans to include targeted long-term goals that focus on school improvement as you move to implement the Common Core Standards. (5.3)
 - o The school successfully measures and monitors performance of individual students over time, especially in literacy. The staff uses a data-informed evaluation process to measure progress towards long-term and short term goals and revise action plans based on ongoing data analysis. However, the leadership team has not yet developed multi-year plans towards measurable interim benchmarks of school and subgroup goals. This results in unclear measures of school performance to date, and limits the ability to measure the efficacy of curricular and programmatic decisions or their progress towards implementation of the Common Core Standards.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 156 Waverly	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	
1..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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------