

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Crown
Elementary – Middle School161

330 CROWN STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11225

Principal: Michael Johnson

Dates of review: May 1-2, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Yasmine Lugo Hernandez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Crown is an elementary-middle school with 875 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 77% Black, 10% Hispanic, 2% White, 8% Asian students, and 1% other students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make deliberate organizational decisions to meet instructional school wide goals. (1.3)
 - o School leaders ensure that all teachers meet at least twice weekly in teacher teams by structuring double preparation time for teachers in the upper grades and one common prep for the lower grades, in addition to an extended day period. Teachers use this time to look at student work collaboratively, analyze data, and plan learning tasks and activities that will accelerate learning. From the analysis of the student data at the team level, school leaders and teachers regrouped students for extended day. Teachers were selected to instruct the groups based on their expertise in the area, their interests, and rapport with targeted students in order to maximize support. Recent Fountas and Pinnell assessments showed an increase in the reading levels of most students.
- School leaders use the process of observation to capture strengths and weaknesses in teacher practice to improve instruction. (4.1)
 - o School leaders who consistently visit classrooms provide teachers with written or verbal feedback in a timely manner, and engage staff members in conversation around next steps and support needed to reach personal instructional goals. The school has adopted the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching, and school leaders provide teachers with professional development to help in understanding the rubric and competencies suggested by the Department of Education in their instructional expectations. This has resulted in school leaders meeting with individual teachers to generate goals that improve classroom instruction and student performance based on the targeted competencies. One teacher shared that not only did she receive meaningful feedback from her immediate supervisor, she also received immediate support in the form of professional development and an intersitation to a colleague's class. This support led to an increase in teacher expertise in the targeted skill as evidenced by follow up observations.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams use different data to make adjustments to instructional practices to improve student performance. (2.2)
 - o Teachers use and develop different forms of assessments, based on their curriculum and on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, (CCLS), to measure student learning. The use of grade-wide rubrics aligns teacher conversations for improvement of student performance and teacher pedagogy by allowing staff to find grade level, individual, and class level student strengths and needs. Furthermore, grade teams meet two to three times weekly to look at student work with the use of grade wide CCLS aligned rubrics and engage in discussions around student needs against required standards and curriculum. After reviewing the writing based on the NYC DOE bundles, teachers found that most students had difficulties entering or understanding the task. As a result, teachers discussed and created CCLS aligned tasks. In addition, the tasks had multiple entry points and various scaffolds to allow all learners to be successful with the task.

- Across the schoolteachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations with a focus on analysis of student work so that there is increased student performance and teacher practice. (4.2)
 - o All teachers participate in collaborative teacher teams at least two periods per week during which time they analyze assessments, review student work products, plan additional lessons based on needs, and create tasks to meet the needs of all groups. After analyzing student baseline writing using the consultancy protocol, teachers noticed that most students struggled with nonfiction writing. As a result of the analysis, teachers' planning of different lessons based on student needs include embedding nonfiction writing tasks and independent reading activities into their Journeys Reading program to ensure students were receiving meaningful supports in this genre. Teachers also created a common assessment through Acuity to measure the impact on student performance of the targeted skill instruction of nonfiction writing and reading. As a result, the majority of the students' performance on the targeted skill increased.
- The school leaders and staff communicate high expectations to students and families that support achievement of school wide goals. (3.4)
 - o School leaders consistently communicate a set of high expectations and responsibilities for all staff, families, and students. Teachers received professional development and training in the New York City Instructional Expectations and the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards with curricula. The principal stated that he leads by example and as such he attends professional development sessions with his staff and he is attuned with the current educational shifts to serve as a leader and facilitator for them. There is an expectation that the learning from professional development is immediately implemented in the classroom, and serves as look-fors during formal and informal observations. The continuous effort on the part of administration to hold all community members to the highest expectations has created a culture of high accountability and cohesiveness as stated at one of the teacher teams.
 - o Students from kindergarten to grade 5 all shared their knowledge of rubrics, assessments, and the implications of not acquiring a high grade on a task, leading to their being well aware of the levels needed to succeed. Teachers constantly discuss with students the role of the new Common Core Learning Standards and how students can achieve if they follow a path of career and college readiness. Students are expected to work towards Levels 3 and 4 instead of a "passing grade," and teacher's model for students what the expectations for this work looks and sounds like. Students and parents stated that expectations are higher this year. Parents shared that school leaders and staff make every effort to always keep them informed through workshops, the parent teacher association website and "quick" conversations at dismissal.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the curriculum maps that emphasize key Common Core Learning Standards and rigorous tasks to ensure that students are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - o The school leaders and staff work together to align the curriculum to chosen key standards and follow the NYC DOE instructional expectations chosen standards. The school also chose additional standards they felt their students needed school wide based on summative data. Though school leaders and faculty are arduously planning and discussing alignment of curriculum to standards and they are creating rigorous tasks, the process of creating grade wide curricular maps

with the embedded changes has recently started. As a result, there is inconsistent evidence across classrooms that most students are cognitively engaged in demanding cognitive thinking through rigorous tasks.

- Further develop strategies to ensure a safe environment for the school community while fostering emotional and academic success. (1.4)
 - o School staff and parents share that the school's tone and safety has improved very much this year. The number of incidents during dismissal outside the school has decreased and more parents are involved in maintaining order at this time. The school has created the PRIDE committee to discuss and improve the safety and discipline of the school. Although many strategic changes have taken place, the school does not yet have sufficient additional supervision during dismissal time and the school day, thus hindering maintaining a calm, orderly environment.
 - o Students share that they know they are learning because their teachers show them in different ways the material they have to learn. One student stated that after being taught about character traits, the teacher then shared a rubric with the class so that they would know "how to get a Level 4" on their writing task. Students shared they were very pleased with the way the "new" principal walked the hallways and was always visible. This makes them feel safe. Though students shared they felt they "learned many things this year" not all students were able to express in specific details how the school supported their learning and how they were engaged in their learning. Thus, disconnects for some students in how and what they learn, and in gaining a full understanding, hinder all students from maximizing their academic performance.
- Extend the process of creating and refining curricular maps to ensure that adjustments are based on student learning needs, and Common Core Learning Standards are embedded. (5.1)
 - o As a response to information gathered from data analysis, school leaders and faculty acquired a new reading program for grades 3 through 5 that brings many resources to assist teachers with differentiation. The school leaders and teacher teams are creating curriculum maps that encompass the Journeys expected lessons as well as the needed targeted skills. Teachers are beginning to identify needs of students and embedding them into the maps. The rationale is that these needs will be targeted in future curricular units to support students' mastery. Though this process has produced a few curricular maps that support different learners, align the CCLS to the Journeys curriculum, and are living documents, the process is still at an early stage. Furthermore, there is not yet sufficient evidence that there is an impact on building alignment between what is taught and the learning needs of students to accelerate student learning.
- Strengthen teacher practice so that pedagogical strategies, questioning, and routines, are strategically planned to meet the needs of all learners so that students can produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms teaching practices are aligned to the curriculum and set on the belief that students learn best in a student friendly environment where their needs are met. Teachers across classrooms use different resources to meet the needs of most students in their classrooms. The school uses both the Open Court and Journeys reading programs in English language arts, and Everyday Math. Currently, both programs afford teachers different resources to meet the needs of all students and teachers create a risk free environment for students to

be able communicate and share their learning. Additionally, teachers actively use data to differentiate their lessons and activities. However, it is not evident that this process has been granular enough to meet student's individual needs, therefore impacting individual student success and performance.

- Refine the process of capturing and organizing data to support a more cohesive alignment of curricular and instructional decisions. (2.3)
 - o School leaders, teacher teams, and individual teachers, consistently use a variety of tools such as Acuity, ARIS, a variety of school and teacher created excel sheets, and benchmark data, to capture student needs and strengths across the grades. School leaders also share school wide data during teacher team meetings. The information gleaned from this analysis is used during teacher team meetings to align overall student needs and strengths with the supports and resources needed to improve academic success. It is evident teachers are aware of the general needs of the students in their class. They are also able to facilitate different activities based on those group needs. However, there is limited evidence on how teachers and school leaders are organizing, consistently tracking, and using the collected data in a cohesive manner to inform school and classroom level curricular decisions that are aligned with the school wide goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 161 The Crown	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
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