

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Floyd Bennett School

Elementary School 203

**5101 Avenue M
Brooklyn
New York 11234**

Principal: Lisa Esposito

Dates of review: January 9 - 10, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Floyd Bennett is an elementary school with 952 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 82% Black, 9% Hispanic, 6% White, 2% Asian students, and 1% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and school leaders make informed and effective budgetary and organizational decisions that support school-wide goals and promote improvements in learning outcomes. (1.3)
 - Monies that are utilized to fund human resources include an assistant principal, a data specialist, and a SAVE room teacher, who support the professional growth of teachers and the academic and social emotional needs of students. Thus teachers feel well supported as noted by increases on the engagement and safety and respect sections of the Learning Environment Survey, as well as a decrease in student related incidents. Additionally, an additional educational paraprofessional staffs the library and collaborates with teachers around their needs in planning lessons, and assists students in their developing research and independent reading skills necessary for academic success. Funds provide per-diem coverage for teachers to attend professional development opportunities relative to increasing staffs' understanding of citywide initiatives such as Common Core Learning Standards. Software and licenses purchased for use in conjunction with computers purchased through Reso A funds and Mimios enable students to utilize technology and develop skills for the 21st century. Strategic structuring of student-teacher time such as integrated co-teaching classes, utilizing the "pull-out" service model for English language learners, increasing time allotted for literacy and math blocks, and providing four days (200 minutes) of extended day services, results in improved staffing ratio and increased time on task and individualized attention to students' needs. Thus, students are making gains as evidenced by Fountas and Pinnell reading growth charts, running records, and conference notes.
- The school provides a safe, inclusive environment that successfully supports students' academic and social emotional needs. (1.4)
 - In response to previous Learning Environment Surveys and incident reports the school implemented Character Education and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The PBIS team's creation of the SOAR Program (Show Self Control, On Task, Act Kindly, Respectful and Responsible) utilizes contracts in all classrooms, and incentives such as green and gold tickets are used to make purchases. Daily announcements over the public announcement system, dances, monthly assemblies, and breakout sessions, foster positive behaviors, and further enhance a cohesive, calm school tone that is conducive to learning. The school's administration, classroom teachers, support personnel, school assessment team, and pupil personnel team, interact with students on a regular basis thus students and their needs are well known. Students shared with this reviewer that there are many staff members they would "seek out" for guidance and support. Parents concur with their children's sentiments as noted by high scores on the Learning Environment survey. To provide for student voice, candidates for student government engage in campaign speeches as part of the election process. Students also participate in decision making through input on service projects and fundraising for agencies such as the Food Pantry. Consequently, students feel that their

ideas are listened to and they are learning leadership skills that will benefit them in the future.

- The school has a very strong communication system for ensuring that parents are fully informed of their children's progress and are prepared to effectively support their learning. (2.4)
 - The school utilizes letters from teachers outlining long-term and interim goals to identify weaknesses in English and math, messages from the principal and support personnel, e-mails, and telephone calls from teachers and via school messenger, to keep parents informed about academic, behavior, and attendance issues. Teacher and peer feedback, report cards, periodic assessment reports, progress reports, Fall and Spring school conferences, and performance tasks, provide an opportunity for students and families to gauge progress towards meeting standards. Parents reported that the principal's open door policy; and prompt response to parent concerns, plus the use of a response form, allows for the exchange of valuable information. Consequently, students and parents are able to identify academic and personal goals and strategies to improve skills. Workshops on ARIS, Common Core, Acuity, and accessing of websites including Skills Tutor, Book Flix, Smart Math, and ps203.com, help parents understand performance levels and offer strategies to support learning. Parents are invited to activities like Literacy Family Night, Bedtime, Bears and Books, Hot Coco in the Library and Ooey Goey Night, to experience learning with their children. Thus, parents feel more confident supporting their children at home with homework, as evidenced by feedback forms and the submission of more parent/guardian workshop surveys.
- The school collects and systematically analyzes a wide range of summative and formative data to create a clear picture of trends, in order to make adjustments necessary to promote teaching and learning. (2.1)
 - The school successfully utilizes a wide range of data such as; student/teacher attendance, suspension rates, student scholarship, performance on State exams, periodic assessments, and parent/teacher survey responses, to identify trends and patterns and implement appropriate strategies. Hence, there is a .7% increase in student attendance from 94.8% to 95.5%, a decrease in teacher absences, a decrease in Superintendent's suspensions from 17 last year to four this year. Additionally, there was a 4% increase in student performance for all grades in both English and math, and scores for each of the four components of the Learning Environment Survey improved over last year. Furthermore, teachers utilize running records, conferencing notes, Acuity, pre- and post-tests to identify areas of strength and concern. Students receive appropriate targeted classroom assistance and additional academic intervention services to meet their needs resulting in the majority of sub-groups showing increases in math proficiency levels and in performance levels in English as noted by the most recent State Exam results, thus, decreasing the achievement gap.
 - School leaders work collaboratively to establish a short list of focused goals and action plans which serve to accelerate student growth and support student achievement. (3.1)

- The effective utilization and analysis of a wide range of data by the administration, faculty, teacher teams, and school leadership team (SLT) translate into a thoughtful Comprehensive Educational Plan that drives instruction. The school's clear and concise goals that link literacy with a focus on writing across the content areas, address math problem solving, focus on integration of technology, the delivery of professional development, and student behavior, are carefully designed to promote changes to accelerate student performance and progress. Consequently, there was a 4.9% and 6% increase in the number of students achieving proficiency levels in math and English respectively as noted by the most recent State Examination results. School leadership team members participate in the development of goals and action plans, which results in members feeling that their input is appreciated and that they are engaged in shared leadership and the decision-making process. Effective methods used to share goals with the entire school community, include on-line copies for the SLT, faculty conference discussions, parent meetings, and individual conversations with the parent coordinator, and hard copies are maintained in the office, leading to a broad base of understanding, sharing, and support for the school's vision.
- Effective student support services and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially. (4.4)
 - Professional development on Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, character education, Respect for All, and Anti-Bullying, allows staff to focus pre-kindergarten to grade 5 students on thinking about choices, consequences, and developing positive character traits. Participation in monthly assemblies and breakout sessions with a focus on the universal tenets of "good character" also enable students to self-reflect about their learning and commitment to the community. The principal's strategic plan of internal support services ensures that counselors, the social worker, and substance abuse prevention specialist, conduct individual and group counseling sessions on various topics including coping and life skills strategies along with checks-in and check outs daily for students in need of social-emotional and behavioral help. Additionally, the school nurse provides small group sessions one to three times a year for students on topics such as asthma. Therefore, students' social-emotional, behavioral, and medical needs are met. A long-standing and very effective partnership with Bergen Beach, a community based organization, provides homework help, and after school activities to assist students in their learning and results in the completion of homework assignments and higher scores on class assessments are evident. Linkages with various theater, and music programs such Midori and Friends provide the opportunity for students to learn and play instruments (drums) and participate in theater arts instruction and perform a modified version of Shakespeare's play, Cymbeline. Students' interaction with professionals outside the school help them learn about New York City's cultural institutions while developing their artistic talents and increasing their confidence and self-esteem.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop rigorous curricula and tasks that will promote students higher-level thinking and problem solving skills. (1.1)

- School leaders and faculty members utilize Making Meaning, Units of Study for Primary Writing, and Teaching the Qualities of Writing. Teachers employ Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Hess' Rigor Matrix to create curriculum maps, units of study, and lessons, which align to the Common Core Learning and key standards in math so that students can engage in critical thinking and problem solving. However, presently, the level of rigor and challenge varies from class to class precluding some students from being cognitively challenged.
- Differentiate activities and student work sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. (1.2)
 - The school and its faculty share the belief that students learn best when they are engaged, that their different learning styles and instructional needs are being met, and have an opportunity to practice to achieve mastery and produce meaningful work. While teachers engage students in lessons and activities that reflect flexible grouping based on performance and skill level, many teachers utilize the same reading material, teaching modalities, and literal level questioning. Thus, varying application activities are not strategically tiered or differentiated across all grades and subjects. As a result, some students are not challenged sufficiently, and learning needs are not being met, thus limiting potential for academic growth.
- Ensure that the inquiry approach is consistently utilized to improve teacher practice and student outcomes. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams meet once a month to analyze data and student work samples, create differentiated goals, and develop strategies and revise practice for student improvement. However, their work is hampered by not having sufficient time to consistently employ an inquiry approach to research and identify educationally appropriate strategies to meet the needs of targeted individuals and groups of students. Additionally, reflection on learning practices is not consistent, thus minimizing the measurement of success of selected strategies. Consequently, goals and teacher practice are not sufficiently impacting student learning outcomes and some students are not meeting benchmarks nor making necessary gains to achieve full proficiency.
- Refine the evaluation of curricular and organizational decisions in order to make adjustments and increase coherence across the school with particular attention to CCLS. (5.1)
 - Teacher teams review curricula on an on-going basis and make curricular and instructional adjustments as needed in response to the Common Core Learning Standards and students' needs. However, the system does not presently consistently evaluate the quality of the adjustments. Consequently, application activities, tasks, and assessments, are not in alignment or sufficiently rigorous, therefore, limiting instructional coherence and further student progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Floyd Bennett School	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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