

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 213 New Lots
Elementary school K213

580 HEGEMAN AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11207

Principal: Anne Lee Bernard

Dates of review: January 10 - 11, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Rose Marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 213 New Lots is an Elementary school with 484 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 79% Black, 17% Hispanic, 2% White, 1% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The Principal and her team gather and analyze a wide range of data thus creating a clear understanding of students' need in order to determine academic and organizational supports.
 - o The review of data from the Progress Report, New York Start, and the Learning Environment Survey (LES) by school leaders, ensure the correct understanding of the schools' strengths and areas of needs. The Progress Report indicates that students are not making adequate progress in both English language arts (ELA) and math. Hence, plans are in place to conduct three evaluations of students' reading levels and summative math assessments during the school year to gauge progress. Classroom libraries now have a wide array of non-fiction and leveled texts resulting in students having broader choices of reading materials as the school pushes to improve reading skills.
 - o The instructional cabinet analyzes the results of Periodic Assessments as soon as the data is available. Student performance is examined by class and the skills mastered, with attention given to skills that have been taught. There is a focus on the progress of the Students With Disabilities (SWD) sub-group, to ensure that they continue to meet adequate yearly progress. The analysis of this data guides school improvement efforts.
- The school uses a variety of tools to share student progress with families at key intervals during the school year, and provides training to support families in understanding students' strengths and weaknesses to improve success.
 - o At the beginning of the school year, the school hosts an "Open House" for all families. Parents' participation in this event facilitates the sharing of information on what students will learn during the school year. Monthly grade newsletters provide information on what students are learning as well as tips for helping students at home. In addition, parents receive mid-term progress reports that clearly articulate student performance in all subject areas, as well as behavior, and attendance data. These structures ensure that parents are aware of the progress of their children thereby allowing them to be involved in the education process to support their children's success.
 - o Parents articulate that the parent coordinator provides Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) workshops several times during the school year so that they can easily gain access to their child's performance. Most of the trainings are held via collaborative events between the Parent Teachers Association and the school, resulting in celebrating students' achievement and providing training for a wider audience, thereby reaching more parents to engage them in a better understanding of student performance.
- School leaders have developed data-driven goals that serve as an anchor for school planning documents thereby guiding school-improvement plans.
 - o School planning documents including the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) and the Principal's Performance Review (PPR) clearly delineate the goals of improving the learning environment of the school, students' performance in English language arts, math, and staff pedagogical practices. These goals are a result of a detailed review of the overall performance of the school. For example,

the school is implementing the Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program school-wide, in order to address the social and emotional needs of students and foster student behavior improvement. Students indicate that the school is quieter this school year, thus allowing them to better focus on their work.

- The school has begun to implement a research-based rubric that administrators use to evaluate teachers, resulting in the provision of feedback that is beginning to guide staff next steps.
 - o This school year, school leaders have begun using the Danielson framework, a research-based rubric, to provide short observations to teachers and guide their next steps. The literacy coach provides some individualized support to the two new teachers and conducts intermittent classroom visits to support staff with improving teaching methodologies. The principal and assistant principal conduct formal and informal observations of all staff and provide suggestions for improvement to teachers in an effort to enhance their pedagogical practices and guide student improvement.
- Organizational decisions around programming and hiring decisions are key steps in supporting the school's instructional goals thereby strengthening student and teacher work.
 - o The school utilizes the one hundred and fifty minutes for students to receive intervention three times per week and staff meets in inquiry teams on a weekly basis. In addition, teachers also meet once weekly in grade teams. The meetings engage staff in examining student work, creating and/or choosing tasks, and designing curriculum maps. As a result, some students are beginning to engage in rigorous literacy tasks.
 - o The principal recently hired a literacy coach to enhance improvement of students' literacy skill. In addition, an assistant principal, with an understanding of the student population, is now on staff. His primary focus is to improve student discipline and the supervise math. Also, shifts in teacher assignments are intended to better match students' needs with the strengths of staff. These efforts are helping to improve the alignment of resources with the instructional needs of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Create systems to evaluate the effectiveness of curricular and instructional decisions so that timely modifications result in improvements in adult learning and student performance.
 - o While school leaders review overall school performance on an annual basis and set appropriate goals, there are no clear systems in place to discern if the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity. For example, observations of math instruction and student interviews reveal that many teachers do not use the school-created pacing calendar or curriculum maps. Evidence observed in classrooms indicates that the school substitutes the New York State Coach test prep book for the curriculum, and that all students complete the same tasks in math. Likewise, in other subject areas, monitoring systems are not evident. Therefore, the school has not yet established systems to gauge the effectiveness of instructional practices across curriculum for student progress.

- o School leaders have provided some professional development for staff on unwrapping the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and a consultant works with teachers on curriculum mapping. However, conversations with staff and evidence in students' work products indicate that many teachers have limited understanding of the integration of CCLS into the curriculum and there is no monitoring structure in place. This results in a lack of coherence between the policies and practices across the school to improve student outcomes.
- Establish benchmark periods for evaluating and modifying interim goals so that adjustments are timely, thus accelerating student progress.
 - o Whereas school leaders work with the support organization and School Leadership team (SLT) to set data driven goals for the school, a system to progress monitor the goals is not in place. In addition, teacher teams set broad-based goals for targeted students without establishing a tracking system. Consequently, the school is unable to correctly gauge goal attainment and make strategic adjustments during the school year.
- Bolster the development of curriculum maps and challenging academic tasks aligned to key standards in order to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills.
 - o The school has some curriculum maps in literacy along with pacing calendars. In math, there are pacing calendars. Teachers are in the process of creating new curriculum maps and integrating the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Presently, the emphasis is on English language arts; however the work has not yet influenced the other core subjects. Therefore, curricula aligned to key standards across grades and subject areas to support all students in meeting State standards, is not evident across the school.
 - o Classroom observations and student work products reveal inconsistencies in engaging students in rigorous tasks. For example, in a fourth grade literacy class students worked in groups reading parts of a novel, writing questions as they read, discussing the questions and answers with partners or group members, and finding evidence in the text to support their response. Conversely, in a fifth grade math class, all students completed the same questions even though they sat in groups based on their achievement on the pretest. These inconsistent practices hinder student achievement across grades and subjects.
- Deepen instructional practices, so that lessons appropriately differentiate instruction and effective questioning elicits higher-order thinking skills resulting in students producing meaningful work products.
 - o The school promotes the use of the workshop model of instruction and a majority of teachers implement this method. Students sit in groups for instruction, and some teachers have students use color-coded cups to indicate their understanding of concepts. A red cup means that the students do not understand, a yellow cup means that students are not sure or have questions, and a green cup means that students understand and have correct responses. However, pushing students thinking through appropriate questioning is "a work in progress", as stated by the principal. Accordingly, these limited classroom practices do not push high levels of thinking or support students in producing meaningful work products.
- Ensure the use of assessments that align to curricula so that teachers can accurately identify students' strengths and needs resulting in targeted instructional supports at the team and classroom level.

- o The school utilizes baseline assessments in mathematics and English language arts and teacher teams have developed some common pre and post assessments along with rubrics that align to units of study. While teachers are required to conduct regular conferences with students to check for understanding, there is little evidence of adherence to this guideline. Teacher assessment binders reflect few conference notes and students indicate that this practice is seldom implemented in their classrooms. Pre-classroom visit discussions with teachers reveal that most teachers use classroom observations, questioning, and student performance on assigned tasks to gauge student understanding. However, observed teacher questioning for understanding was below par and tasks assigned to students lacked rigor. These uneven assessment practices result in administrators and teachers capturing flawed data on students' performance. Consequently, the school is restricted in making targeted adjustments in curriculum and instructional practices in order to accelerate students' growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: New Lots	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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