

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Toussaint L'Ouverture

K221

**791 Empire Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Clara Moodie-Kirkland

Dates of review: October 17-18, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 221 is an elementary school with 591 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 10% 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 92.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a safe place where school leaders and teachers work together to create a calm, respectful and orderly environment for learning to take place. (1.4)
 - Students and school staff are proud of the respectful behavior exhibited by students resulting in an atmosphere where learning and good deeds are valued. The school instituted a "caught doing good" program where students are recognized for performing a good deed such as turning in a lost item found somewhere in the school. Students stated that they are recognized with a "shout out" over the public address system and feel good when they make a difference.
 - Student representatives recite the PS 221 motto daily on the public address system, and students reflect during a minute of silence on their goals for the day around academic and/or behavioral improvements they want to make for that day. Parents are encouraged to have conversations with their children at home on what their child will work on for the next day. This home-school connection focuses students on having a positive approach to academics as well as in their behavior leading to a desire to do their best each day.
- The school's external partnership supports students and families in their continual learning and promotes students' personal growth and development through real world learning opportunities. (4.4)
 - The school's partnership with Seeds in the Middle allows the school community to access opportunities for all constituents to take control of their health, enhance the school's physical environment and to experience the arts. One aspect of the program has resulted in a focus on the improved physical health of students through sports such as soccer for students, weekly zumba sessions for parents and by having students, with adult assistance, operate a HIP2b Healthy market. At the market, the students sell nutritious, organic snacks to compete with neighborhood stores selling chips, soda and junk food. Teachers have received professional development in incorporating health and nutrition lessons into literacy, science and math curricula from staff from Seeds in the Middle so that the learning that takes place in the classrooms furthers the importance of this school wide initiative. This program has resulted in opportunities for students to learn about the importance of healthy eating during the instructional day as well as skills necessary to operate the market.
- School leaders have instituted short, frequent cycles of observation providing feedback to teachers in order to improve instructional practices. (4.1)
 - The school has selected the Danielson framework as the research based teacher framework they are using and are focusing on the competency around questioning and discussion after school leaders looked at trends from teacher observations from last school year as well as classroom visits. Teachers have been visited using this as a focus and have

received written feedback. Teachers stated that conversation with supervisors around the visits has taken place as well. In order to further engage teachers in a more active participation in this process, they are asked to complete a self reflection tool after each focused classroom visit to think about their practice around the specific competency observed. Teachers reported that they appreciate the focused feedback. This self reflection tool, in addition to the observations, informs school leaders of needs that then structure professional development resulting in teachers thinking more about and participating in the improvement of their practice.

- The school uses their resources strategically through teacher collaboration and teacher assignments resulting in increased student progress. (1.3)
 - Teacher teams meet twice weekly through common planning time with one meeting a week dedicated to curriculum work. Teachers stated that they share instructional strategies with one another leading to more cohesion in what is being taught as well as when it is being taught as evidenced through their revised curriculum maps, worked on over the past few months.
 - In a school year with financial cutbacks to the school's budget, the principal aligned resources to the school's instructional goals including the strategic assignment of ICT teacher teams as well as assigning math specialists to work with fourth and fifth grade classrooms where students were in need of additional resources and instruction after studying math data. In this way, resources have been allocated in specific ways to meet the instructional needs of the students.
- Through the regular viewing of data, school leaders have an understanding of the performance and progress of students by groups and subjects which informs organizational and instructional decisions. (2.1)
 - The principal and her instructional team study a range of data including New York state test data and item analysis, periodic assessments, classroom walkthroughs, and student behavioral and attendance data. One of the decisions resulting from this work is that students in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 have the services of a reading cluster teacher who works with both targeted students as well as whole classes on reinforcing reading skills taught in the classrooms with a focus on using informational text. This work has resulted in students making progress in ELA as evidenced in running records as well as gaining additional exposure to non-fiction text broadening their knowledge as the school is moving toward having students meet the expectations of the CCLS.
 - School leaders review the results of running records, Everyday Math assessments and Acuity assessments to evaluate the progress students are making. The practice of looking at assessments and the student work resulting from them has informed them of professional development needs of teachers. The school has developed a specific professional development plan for the year to address instructional implications so that teachers may use assessment tools more effectively to meet student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Assure that instruction is differentiated across all classrooms and in all subject areas so that students are afforded instruction to meet their needs. (1.2)
 - In visits to classrooms, differentiated instructional strategies were inconsistently applied. In most classrooms, students sat at tables but were working independently and on the same assignment. In only a few rooms did differentiated grouping with multiple entry points occur. As a result, all students are not able to access learning through multiple entry points.
 - Routines found on classroom visits lacked deep student thinking, questioning and participation. Student work products, on the whole, also lacked higher order thinking as many assignments on display were worksheets, spelling tests and illustrations without a written explanation. Questioning, in most classrooms, was on a literal level. As a result, high levels of student thinking, questioning and participation were not reflected in student work product and discussion.
- Further develop curriculum in all subject areas to be more rigorous so that all students are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - In reviewing current curricula, maps do not consistently reflect tasks that allow for specific entry points for students based on data analysis and that permit students to stretch their thinking through activities that are authentic and cognitively engaging. As a result, the needs of some students are not being met at all times.
 - There is an inconsistency in the curricula with regard to rigor of tasks the students are expected to complete. Many tasks that were viewed do not require students to think deeply, to interpret, analyze and problem solve alone or in teams. This inconsistency does not allow some students to take their thinking to higher levels as expected in the CCLS.
- Embed assessments into curricula in order to use the data generated to provide information to adjust teacher instructional practices. (2.2)
 - In viewing student work products, there was an inconsistency in the use of rubrics with assignments across classrooms. This limits decisions that can be made to adjust instructional practices as well as students gaining a specific knowledge of their next steps so that students will meet the expectations of the CCLS.
 - In visits to classrooms, it was not evident that teachers check for understanding consistently. Students stated that they do not consistently have the opportunity to self assess their work in class. This limits decisions that are made by teachers to meet all student learning needs and to have students aware of their next steps.
- Refine structures in curriculum work to allow teachers to align, monitor and revise curriculum in all subject areas to meet the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. (5.1)

- While teachers have been involved in revising curriculum maps in some subject areas since last school year, systems are not in place to reflect on the effectiveness of newly revised curricula this school year. In addition, there has been no work to date to plan for the CCLS aligned tasks in math. As a result, valuable time and energy is not being spent studying the effectiveness of the curricula teachers are utilizing this school year as well as gauging where students are at in math as measured against the CCLS and developing CCLS aligned tasks in math for students to experience mid year.
- Further expand the present systems for assessing students in order to ensure that the information is used effectively in making instructional decisions as well as to support students and families with next steps. (5.2)
 - While the school sends a progress report home to families between report card cycles, the school is only now looking at the effectiveness of the report as there are no written next steps for students. This omission limits ways families can support children to have better outcomes.
 - While the school has looked at its periodic assessment practices and has added an additional periodic assessment in grades 2 through 5 to inform teachers of student progress, the school has not looked at adjusting its assessment practices in the classrooms to integrate the expectations of the CCLS at this time. As a result, teachers are not informed fully if students are on their way to meeting the expectations of the CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Toussaint L'Ouverture	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