

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Hale A. Woodruff Elementary School

Elementary School K224

**757 Wortman Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: George Andrews

Dates of review: May 8-9, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 224 is an elementary school with 854 students from pre-kindergarten through grade six. The school population comprises 74% Black, 24% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 13% 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 89.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students benefit from curricula that is standards based with multiple resources that support learning. (1.1)
 - The school has made specific decisions around their work in English language arts as they have focused on the shift to informational and persuasive reading and writing. Students were exposed to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned tasks as teachers adapted the CCLS tasks provided in the Department of Education's Common Core Library to meet the needs of the scope and sequence of their science and social studies curricula. In math, the practice around constructing a viable argument is consistent throughout the schools' math curricula as well as the use of technology in modeling mathematical practices as supports for students. Students problem solve, analyze and interpret and work on tasks that provide rigor that is present now in the school's curricula. In both subject areas, supports for students with disabilities and English language learners are indicated on curriculum maps through differentiated texts and activities developed by teacher teams. Consequently, with this exposure to Common Core aligned tasks, students are moving towards and meeting the CCLS.
- School leaders make informed organizational decisions and, through the use of resources, support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - To support the school's instructional goals, two dedicated coaches, one in literacy and one in math, support teachers in their instructional practices and serve as curriculum resources for teachers as they work on aligning curricula to meet the expectations of the CCLS. In addition, the principal received funding from local elected officials to create a science lab, a technology lab and support for the school's library. A dedicated technology intern from the City University of New York was hired to ensure that technology is functioning on a daily basis. This has resulted in students completing persuasive and informational writing integrating science topics as well as math problem solving at all grade levels aligned to the CCLS expectations. This work has also led to updated unit and curricula plans that are CCLS aligned.
 - Weekly meeting time has been programmed into teachers' schedules during the school day so that they may meet and focus on student work, the sharing of teaching strategies and instructional adjustments. Teachers have designed English language arts units that incorporate science content and math units across all grades that provide more engaging tasks for students. As a result, there has been an improvement in teacher practice and student engagement as evidenced in a review of observation records and CCLS aligned student work.
- School leaders conduct frequent cycles of observation with a specific focus, resulting in improved teaching practices. (4.1)

- School leaders have utilized the Danielson framework in giving teachers feedback and made expectations clear through professional development around the competencies of focus including establishing a culture for learning, engaging students and questioning and discussion as well as the rubrics utilized for particular months of the school year. New and untenured teachers receive additional support from one of the two coaches, who serve as mentors and work with teachers on next steps as a result of the feedback received. Teachers spoke of appreciating the support they receive from supervisors around their practices and the opportunity to have reciprocal conversations. They set professional goals in conjunction with supervisors at the start of the school year infusing the work around the citywide instructional expectations. Trends that arise from observations determine the professional development given by the school's staff and the network. In addition, supervisors review student portfolios periodically to monitor student work and progress. Shifts in planning instruction have resulted from this work. Students now experience English language arts tasks grounded in informational text and writing as well as additional opportunities for problem solving in math. Thus, teacher practice and student work product has improved.
- Teachers use a comprehensive range of classroom level assessments along with rubrics and periodic assessments that measure student outcomes and help guide targeted instructional decisions. (2.2)
 - Work around the development, implementation and revision of CCLS-aligned assessments is a major focus of teacher team meetings. Supported by the coach, teachers have focused on adjustments to English language arts units to reflect the shift to informational text and writing with rubrics to reflect the tasks. Adjustments are made to tasks and rubrics to ensure that expectations to students are clear and attainable. Student work, aligned to the CCLS, was evident in classrooms and corridors with child-friendly rubrics. Teachers bring student work to meetings to discuss implications to future instructional moves. Students reported that they receive feedback through conferencing and feedback on their work and know their next steps. This has resulted in teachers being able to see what students have mastered and to make adjustments to lesson and unit plans with this data in mind.
 - Teachers administer benchmark assessments three times yearly in English language arts and mathematics and examine the coherence across classrooms at scheduled meetings. In addition, they plan and study the results from classrooms tasks used in the Envision Math program as well as from the Harcourt Reading First program looking at results from specific groups of students. The data from these assessments informs revisions in instructional strategies as well as of units of study and curricula. This work has resulted in teachers having more of an ownership of the connection of assessment to curricula and instruction, as evidenced by discussion at inquiry team meetings.
- The tracking of student progress is well organized, accessible and used to adjust instructional decisions. (2.3)
 - Teachers aggregate and organize data through the use of data binders with expectations from school leaders as to what is collected and studied

to have consistency throughout the school. Data utilized includes information from Acuity, Envision Math and Fountas and Pinnel benchmarking. This is so that teachers all have the same information to bring to the table at team meetings to conduct discussion and analysis. By having consistent practices, school leaders and teachers have been able to identify trends arising from these periodic assessments. Particular areas focused on include students with disabilities and math for all students. Results from periodic assessments are used to monitor if students' Individual Education Plan goals are being met. Adjustments to specific instructional supports for students are made. This item analysis results in a focus on students' individual learning needs.

- Teacher teams engage in shared leadership through inquiry based collaborations, resulting in reflection on instructional practices and improvements in student learning. (4.2)
 - All teachers serve on inquiry teams. Much of the work of the school this year has been in the inquiry team structure with professional development provided by the school and the Children First Network. Teams analyze student work and data spending significant time on modifications to the CCLS aligned tasks and units of study that students will be exposed to next school year as well as sharing best practices. Teams function through the use of protocols and have dedicated facilitators. Norming exercises have taken place. This is one way in which school leaders are distributing leadership responsibilities, helping teams to assume ownership of their work. Selected teachers also have had the opportunity to attend network-level professional development and turnkey the information to colleagues as they are becoming more informed of the citywide instructional expectations. Also, after viewing results from the School Survey, teachers have been given a voice in making instructional decisions including the selection of the Envision math program as well as professional development opportunities. Teachers take surveys helping to craft future opportunities and the revisiting of particular areas. All of these efforts have resulted in increased voice for teachers around their work as well as opportunities to grow in their roles.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop teacher skills that align differentiated strategies within classroom tasks to curricular expectations and student need in order to provide appropriate challenge for all students. (1.2)
 - While the school has provided professional development in curricula, assessment and instructional areas, the transition from theory to practice in classrooms is inconsistent across the school. In some classrooms, students worked in differentiated groups, reading text or performing tasks that were planned using of data from an exit slip or from conferencing the day before. In other classrooms, instruction was not differentiated as students were either reading the same text or working on the same assignment. This inconsistency does not allow all students to be met at their entry point, allowing for support or enrichment as needed.

- Track student progress toward their goals across content areas while communicating progress and next steps to all constituents in a formalized way in order to build positive impacts for all students. (3.3)
 - While common assessments are administered to students and goals are set for students by teachers, there does not seem to be consistency in teachers checking in with students and tracking the progress toward their goals across classrooms. In addition, there is an inconsistency in the way goals are reported to parents with some parents receiving information on goals and their progress and other families not being informed. These inconsistencies do not allow teachers to adjust plans for specific groups of students to meet their needs or enable parents to assist their children at home with a targeted focus.

- Improve the practice of measuring progress toward interim and long-term goals and make transparent adjustments throughout the year, implementing new strategies and plans as needed. (5.3)
 - While school leaders study periodic and unit assessment data as well as attendance and behavioral data during the school year, there does not appear to be a formal examination of interim school level goals and their status at particular intervals during the year. Not having a formalized system in place results in a lack of strategic adjustments to the school's plans during the course of the school year.
 - While teachers study and analyze data for individual students and group them for instruction, there does not seem to be consistent practices taking place among teachers or teacher teams to look at subgroups of students' progress towards the interim goals and identify specific interventions for them. As a result, the progress of subgroups of students as well as adjustments to the supports in meeting those goals are not addressed consistently by teachers to meet those students' learning needs.

- Identify ways of creating additional partnerships and community links to support students' personal and academic growth. (4.4)
 - While the school has a full time guidance counselor who coordinates an annual career day for students and students who are articulating to middle school have the opportunity to visit potential options, there are limited opportunities for students to experience real world learning opportunities through community partnerships. This missing opportunity does not provide students with the sufficient supports they need, academically and socially, to be prepared for the next levels of their education.
 - There is an active attendance committee and teachers are provided with data weekly on attendance and punctuality. Even so, the school has significant issues around daily attendance with attendance from the 2010-11 school year at 89.3%. While attendance data has shown an increase this school year, it is still not at an acceptable rate. This situation results in students missing valuable instructional time and impacts on students' academic and social and emotional development.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Hale A. Woodruff/ K224	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