

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 226 Alfred De B.Mason
K-8 school K226

6006 23 AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11204

Principal: SHERRY TANNENBAUM

Dates of review: December 12, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 226 Alfred De B.Mason is a K-8 school with 889 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 29% Hispanic, 42% White, 26% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support efforts toward improved student learning. (1.3)
 - Organizational decisions align to school-wide goals and provide students and student sub-groups with opportunities to accelerate progress across all content areas. As the school's new immigrant population grows, there is an increase in the number of students with limited English proficiency. A New Comers Academy builds the foundation of basic language skills for beginning English language learners. Students in this academy are demonstrating accelerated progress in class participation and assessments, specifically in their verbal and written communication skills. To support the transition of students from elementary to middle school, a middle school model of programming provides for content area classes for fifth grade students. Teachers meet vertically across grades to align curricula and advance opportunities for students to engage in rigorous activities and tasks that promote high order thinking. Access to content based instruction from teachers in specialty license areas allows students to demonstrate advanced critical thinking and communication skills and student work products indicate improving research, writing and reasoning skills of students across the grade.
- The principal creates an environment that is safe and promotes collaboration and respect across all constituencies resulting in strong character development and high levels of engagement of all students. (1.4)
 - School leaders ensure that the school environment is safe and that all community members hold high expectations for students. In response to concerns from parents and students regarding the large age range of students in this kindergarten through grade eight school, a Positive Behavior Intervention System was put into place to hold students accountable for their behavior and to reward acts of kindness, honesty and actions that support other students. This program supports young students in developing good habits and setting a foundation that focuses students on reaching their academic and social goals. Older students feel a sense of responsibility in setting the right examples for their younger peers. An eighth grader states, "It is up to us to show them how to act, how to behave so they can focus on learning and doing what's right." Consequently, increasing attendance and declining behavioral occurrences allow leaders to develop specific, individual interventions for students that are struggling to ensure that they make progress toward their individual goals and that the school maintains a culture that is positive and supportive of all students and families.
 - Students feel connected to the faculty and parents report, "The school is harmonious, we as parents and our children know we can speak to anyone if there is a problem and that it will get resolved." Data in the Learning Environment Survey shows that students and families feel safe and supported and that the school culture is conducive to high expectations and achievement for all students. Homeroom teachers are the conduit that ensures that student social emotional needs are recognized and addressed. A guidance counselor provides support to students in building their social skills to prepare for high school. As a result, students that are potentially at risk are identified early and provided the supports necessary resulting in improvement in academic performance as evidenced in work product and periodic assessment outcomes.

- School leaders effectively gather and analyze a wide range of data to understand school-wide strengths and areas of need to guide interventions. (2.1)
 - School leaders use comprehensive systems to regularly analyze and disaggregate an extensive range of data from a multitude of sources including Acuity, ARIS, formative and summative assessments, student work products, low inference data from classroom observations and occurrence and attendance reports to understand school wide achievement and the progress of students and groups of students across the school. In addition, school leaders regularly collect writing portfolios to disaggregate specific aspects of the writing process to measure student growth in several areas, including mechanics, organization and voice. In organizing and analyzing the plethora of data, there is a deep understanding by the principal and faculty of the school's strengths, the impact of instructional decisions on student performance and areas where the school needs to focus to fully support student achievement. For example, analysis of student writing, horizontally and vertically across the school and correlated to extended responses on summative assessments brought forth recognition that student writing is an area of concern. As a result, the implementation of a school-wide writing program is part of the school's action plan in attaining its overall writing goals and initial data indicates students are making progress.

- School leaders and faculty are supportive of the social and emotional growth of students and families, resulting in increasing student engagement and outcomes. (4.4)
 - School leaders have a strong commitment to the social emotional growth of all students and support families and the community to ensure that children within this ethnically diverse school remain focused on their academic pursuits. Faculty continually engages in professional learning, through workshops with community-based organizations, guidance counselors and school leaders to build their capacity in identifying and addressing the needs of students and parents. New immigrant students with parents that have language and literacy issues receive translation services and attend workshops to help them acclimate to the school and build strategies to support their children's academic progress toward becoming career and college ready. The guidance counselor works with middle school parents and students to assist in making appropriate high school choices that align with academic needs as well as career interest so they are ready for higher education and the work place upon graduation. As a result, there is an increase in the number of students attending high schools of choice and there is also an increase in the number of students making progress toward reaching and exceeding grade level standards ensuring they have the skills necessary to be successful at the next level of education.

- School leaders and faculty align curricula to State standards emphasizing key strands and opportunities for rigorous engagement for all students. (1.1)
 - Comprehensive curriculum maps align content area instruction to the Common Core Learning Standards. Analysis of data, including summative assessments and student portfolios, provides school leaders and teachers with information to ensure that units of study and class goals align to key standards. In response to data indicating that there is a need for stronger writing in all grades and subjects, teachers are implementing a rigorous writing curriculum that pushes students across all grades and sub-groups to demonstrate their learning through tasks that require communication through the writing process. Unit plans and maps outline high standards for all students and articulate an expectation that all students strive to reach these standards. Clear paths of differentiation exist in the

curricula so that students have opportunities for learning with appropriate entry points and paths that align to their needs, specifically for students with disabilities and English language learners. As a result, there is cohesion of focus across the school and all students are engaging in a curriculum that addresses their critical needs leading to progress toward reaching learning targets.

- School leaders support teacher effectiveness through a comprehensive system that promotes professional growth, reflection and accountability resulting in improving pedagogy. (4.1)
 - o School leaders and faculty demonstrate a commitment to teacher development and building cohesion between pedagogic practice and student outcomes through a system of goal setting, frequent cycles of classroom observation, formal evaluation and professional development. Collaborative goal setting between teachers and supervisors sets the foundation for teacher support and development. Teacher goals align to school-wide goals and a research-based rubric evaluates teacher progress along a continuum. As a result, teachers feel supported in building their pedagogic skills and formal observations show that teachers are improving their practice in specific areas of need leading to student exposure to more effective methods of teaching.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend instructional practice to build consistency in ensuring that all students are engaging in rigorous tasks that promote higher order thinking. (1.2)
 - o Instructional practices across the school are consistent and are demonstrative of the philosophy of school leaders and faculty on how students learn best. A workshop model allows for direct instruction, modeling, group and independent practice. Lessons align to standards and task design allows students multiple entry points into the curricula. Even though there is evidence in many classrooms that students are engaging in rigorous instruction and differentiated tasks, there are some classes where opportunities for higher order thinking are limited by questioning practices that do not consistently motivate critical thinking. As a result, there are missed opportunities for some students to articulate complex ideas and create work product that evidence high levels of cognitive engagement.
- Build the capacity of teachers to align assessments and rubrics to key standards to ensure that evaluation of student work is accurate and defines next teaching steps. (2.2)
 - o A priority of teacher teams is to evaluate work samples to understand student learning and to identify the strengths and areas of need of students and groups of students including those with special needs and English language learners. The use of protocols allows teachers to collect data points from student work products, specifically writing portfolios inclusive of tasks across content areas. Teachers are continually checking for student understanding using exit slips, journals, conference notes and student self-assessments that provide on-going data for teachers to use in daily planning as well as to create intervention plans for individual and groups of students. However, teams are just beginning to check alignment between standards, tasks and rubrics resulting in some instances where the rubrics do not effectively measure student progress on the intended skill or content strand. As a result, it is not clear if all the data collected from student work products are consistently valid in judging student progress toward reaching learning standards.

- Strengthen practices of teacher teams in using student work to evaluate the relationship between pedagogic practice and outcomes to maximize team effectiveness in influencing student performance throughout the school. (4.2)
 - o All teachers engage in the inquiry process and teams study the progress of students in the lowest third across their grade and in individual classes, with a focus on special needs students and English language learners. Teacher leaders sit on the school's central instructional team and core inquiry team. This distributive leadership structures allow teachers to participate in an analysis of school-wide data and to engage in discussions that lead to school-wide instructional decisions. Although the teacher teams as well as the central inquiry team analyze a multitude of assessment data and student work to understand student progress and performance, there is not yet a clear connection between looking at student outcomes and relating those outcomes to teacher practice. Therefore, it is unclear if the work of the teacher teams is resulting in improving pedagogy and ultimately achievement of learning targets.
- Expand methods of setting and measuring progress of interim targets for school and class goals to ensure that adjustments of practice are timely to affect student development and achievement. (5.3)
 - o School leaders use data effectively to create long-term goals and yearly benchmarks for their long-term plans. They continually monitor the progress of students and revise action plans to ensure that students and teachers are receiving the support they need to be successful and achieve school-wide goals. Although goals have clear measurable objectives and on-going data analysis provides information as to where the school is toward reaching goals, the school is just beginning to develop formal structures that identify interim benchmarks for specific goals for the school and student sub-groups with systems to measure progress along those benchmarks. As a result, it is unclear if the progress being made is sufficient and on pace to reach overall goals in a timely manner.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 226 Alfred De B.Mason	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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