

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston  
Elementary School K241

976 PRESIDENT STREET  
BROOKLYN  
NY 11225

Principal: Frantz Lucius

Dates of review: May 2-3, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Laura Colavecchio

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston is an Elementary school with 614 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 81% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, 0% Asian students and 8% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school effectively engages families in reciprocal communication and provides supports to understand expectations for student performance that results in parental involvement to ensure student achievement. (2.4)
  - Three times per year an academic and behavioral progress report goes home combined with planners in grades 1-5 for ongoing communication and workshops on using ARIS. This provides support to parents in understanding and monitoring their children's progress toward meeting academic, attendance, and behavior expectations of the school. Parents receive phone calls and written communication regarding their children's academic and behavioral strengths and weaknesses, and follow up meetings requested through the communications section of the classroom progress report allow parents and teacher to discuss clear next steps to support learning at home. This open exchange of specific information between parents and school is greatly appreciated as evidenced by the communication section of the school's Learning Environment Survey (LES), reflecting an increase in parental capacity to help support their children's achievement.
- Teachers are working independently and in teams, utilizing a range of assessments that support differentiation and instructional adjustments. (2.2)
  - Administrators and teachers are involved in an on-going process of analyzing data from city, State, and Periodic Assessments, as well as some classroom level data. The information from this data analysis is used in determining the strengths and needs of subgroups and to inform curricular and instructional adjustments for this population. The school has developed data binders with systems to organize students' assessments, progress notes and needs, including special education students. Teachers use their binders to inform flexible grouping across classrooms including integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) classes and make adjustments to curriculum maps to allow for re-teaching and differentiation of assignments. In addition to the data binders, teachers consistently use conference note taking to check for students' understanding of content. Administrators and teachers report that these supplemental supports help them ensure that the data is actionable and that students are on track for meeting their learning needs and results in increased student progress.
- Leadership and staff use data tools to organize student performance and inform curricular decisions in order to accelerate student outcomes. (2.3)
  - School leaders aggregate and organize data, including ARIS and Acuity predicative assessments and have established quality data trails to demonstrate student progress and pinpoint where further work is needed. One of the school's goals is to increase the number of students scoring at level 4 on the English language arts (ELA) by 10% and to further accelerate the gains made this past year in student progress on the standardized exams in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. The leadership team is keeping track of the progress of students in levels 3 and 4 which informs their instructional decisions in providing targeted support across the school to ensure that their performance will continue to grow.

- Benchmark assessments and running records are used throughout the year so that teachers can track student progress based on established expectations for each reading level. Teachers report that this is a useful system which allows them to keep track of reading data for all of their students and enables them to adjust their teaching strategies and share progress with students, families and administrators.
- Organizational decisions support the alignment of school wide instructional goals to increase instructional capacity in order to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
  - The principal has allocated school funds to support the development of curriculum maps, online supplements for Everyday Math, bi-weekly teacher team meetings in addition to technology support in order to increase the use of SMART boards. These decisions have begun to impact building teacher capacity for increasing the use of differentiated teaching practices to increase students' academic performance as evidenced by classroom instruction and some learning experiences within classrooms. The leadership made strategic decisions that include the new practice of instructional rounds to support teachers in looking at student work within grade levels. Teachers and administrators refer to this practice as a primary force behind increasing collaboration, reflective practice and focusing staff on student achievement as evidenced by student and teacher work products.
- The school has defined processes in place to gather and analyze formative, summative, and diagnostic data, in order to track student progress and identify school wide areas of need. (3.3)
  - School protocols provide for all teachers maintaining a comprehensive range of assessment data for each student that includes benchmark assessments, unit tests, running records, authentic student work, and checklists. These systems provide a clear picture of student's strengths and areas in need of improvement thus allowing teachers to provide suitable support over time. As a result, student progress has improved as evidenced by in class writing samples as well as growth in assessment outcomes.
  - Individual teachers , teams and administrators effectively use a range of assessment data to monitor school-wide goals including increasing the number of students scoring at level 4 in ELA by 10% and increasing overall performance on ELA and Mathematics Standardized tests by 10%, including sub groups. In addition, the school continues to reinforce its goals around school regulations and procedures to ensure the safety of all students and all school personnel by implementing a non-negotiable list for the school community that is referenced to during daily morning announcements. Families have received the 2011 Citywide Standards of Discipline and Intervention Measures and two copies of a behavioral contract that provides a summary of the behaviors that are expected in school. The school continues to monitor the progress of student behavior throughout the school and identifies trends and supports with systems and personnel including a partnership that provides conflict resolution sessions with students.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Revise curriculum maps to incorporate key State standards and rigorous Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) tasks, which provide students with consistent opportunities for critical thinking. (1.1)

- The school has recently begun the process of aligning the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with their existing ELA and math curriculum maps, and has made some progress in designing and implementing literacy tasks aligned to the CCLS. These learning experiences however, do not consistently call for students to engage in rigorous thinking and/or use higher order thinking skills to produce meaningful work. For example, although the curriculum maps reflect initial inclusion of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), learning tasks are not refined using student work products so that the level of cognitive engagement can be assessed and supported for lower achieving students, as well as students at proficiency levels 3 and 4, through adjustments and increased scaffolds. Consequently, in the absence of supports for all learners, there are missed opportunities to maximize students' engagement and leverage the curricular revision process for increased outcomes for all students.
- Further develop consistency in teaching strategies to ensure that questions and routines across grades are differentiated and engage all students in high levels of thinking in order to support increased learned outcomes. (1.2)
  - Although there is evidence that many teachers plan lessons using summative and formative data that allow for differentiation through appropriate student groupings. However, purposeful differentiation that meets students' needs is not consistent across grades and content areas. For example, In a fourth grade class the teacher was engaged in a lesson about constructing and measuring angles (acute, obtuse and right) using a protractor. She taught an explicit lesson and asked individual students to come to the overhead to demonstrate and provided support. She provided strategies for lining up the protractor and spoke about the need for accuracy. She modeled measuring inaccurately, purposely, and asked for support from the class. The lesson culminated in three differentiated activities based on student data and students were sitting within their table groups for the lesson. The teacher did several checks for understanding within the lesson and followed up with each table group. Nonetheless, in a kindergarten class students were gathered on the carpet with the teacher delivering a math lesson focused on counting from 1-12 backwards and forwards with the support of a clock (as it had numerals on it). The teacher explained that the standard they were learning was to classify objects and used letters, numbers and some students to teach that categories are groups of objects. She was also discussing attributes and sorting with her students. The lesson did not have time allocated for the students to work independently or in groups. Questioning used was not connected to the lesson as the teacher asked about using numbers on a clock in different ways. The teacher then used activities that taught attributes and sorting which didn't have alignment to the Every Day Math curriculum. As a result, across grades some students are engaged in uneven thinking while some are producing work that reflects the rigorous instruction, high expectations and skillful facilitation of the teacher, and others simply respond to simple prompts that only require them to recall, repeat or circle the right answer.
- Strengthen data based student goal setting systems and increase teacher capacity to set curricula aligned goals with actionable next steps for increased student outcomes. (3.2)
  - Some teacher teams and individual teachers are using data to set goals for individual or groups of students. For example, the third grade teacher team discussed strengthening mathematical communication, vocabulary, and modeling think alouds in solving math problems as a way to support students in

mathematical reasoning. In addition, some teachers and teams use data to inform the setting of goals and instructional changes; however this is not an embedded practice across classes and grades. As a result, in the absence of a school wide system that utilizes data to set learning goals for individual and groups of students, there are missed opportunities to maximize student engagement and inform instructional adjustments, in order to leverage changes in practices across classrooms and grades to support improvements for all students.

- Build upon current practice to provide high quality feedback to teachers and promote professional reflection resulting in improved instructional practices. (4.1)
  - School leaders have started the process of engaging in brief, bi-monthly, informal visits to classrooms to observe lessons and provide feedback to support teachers' development. Classroom observation comments are connected to a research-based rubric with a focus on questioning strategies. However, recommendations for improvement are not aligned to student data and feedback does not consistently capture challenges or specify the adjustments needed in teacher practice. Written comments on walkthrough checklists, the 360 observation template along with informal and formal observations, reflect inconsistent levels of providing feedback that captures best instructional practices and the use of student data to support teachers' professional growth. Consequently, this hinders the continual development of their teaching skills to improve classroom instruction and accelerate student learning as evidenced in classroom observation tools and infrequent classroom visits.
- Strengthen and diversify professional development opportunities and provide better alignment with the school's goals, enabling teachers to reflect upon and build their practice and make timely, critical adjustments that improve student outcomes. (4.3)
  - The classroom learning environments reflect the communicated expectations of the administration including the use of differentiation and increased informal visits. However, professional learning opportunities are not consistently purposeful and aligned to school goals for all teachers. Administration has provided initial training on the "Instructional Rounds Protocol" that have provided beginning structures for examining student work across grades however, teachers have expressed a need for additional and ongoing support to be effective in this practice. As a result, there are missed opportunities for deep levels of efficiency, collaboration and collegiality amongst staff during meetings.
  - The administration articulates a belief in cultivating leadership through professional opportunities that allow for capacity building. However, while teachers are encouraged to share best practices, there are not many who participate in formal leadership training or are guided to professional learning to strengthen capacity to be successful in school based learning opportunities. In addition, although teacher teams discussed the importance of having time to meet as a grade level they state that they need additional training and structured sessions to fully engage in the practice of instructional rounds. As a result, not all teachers and administrators are sufficiently prepared and supported with leadership tools to practice effective leadership in order to support capacity building.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 241 Emma L. Johnston	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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	
<b>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.</b>				
<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	
<b>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.</b>				
<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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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