

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 256 Benjamin Banneker
Elementary school K256

114 KOSCIUSKO STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11216

Principal: SHARYN HEMPHILL

Dates of review: November 16-17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Denise Sontag

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 256 Benjamin Banneker is an Elementary school with 391 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 70% Black, 21% Hispanic, 1% Asian students and 6% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a safe and respectful culture that meets students' social and emotional needs and ensures that the learning environment supports all members of the school community. (1.4)
 - o Administrators and all school staff serve as a model of respect and courtesy that is the standard of behavior for all student interaction. In addition, the school presents targeted anti-bullying programs as part of their assembly sessions, protocols are clearly behavior delineated in the school's handbook for teachers. Similarly, the Children Are Reason Enough (C.A.R.E.) and School Based Support Team (S.B.S.T) conduct frequent conversations with parents that focus on maintaining a safe learning environment; and grade 5 students work with kindergarteners and model behaviors of "good citizenship" during lunchtime. As a result, students are respectful of their teachers and of each other, positively impacting the social-emotional development and time on task.
 - o The school's register includes a fair amount of students in temporary housing therefore prompting an emphasis on the importance of punctuality and attendance. Students shared their eagerness to have their photo proudly displayed on the bulletin board that showcases the school's progress toward exceeding a rate of more than 90% attendance daily. This year long focus, culminating with a trip to Broadway for students and their parents, has led to an increase in the school's overall daily attendance rate from 89% to 92.8%.
- The principal's organizational decisions help to keep the school's instructional focus, on increasing student work, effort and outcomes on track. (1.3)
 - o The goal of increasing teacher and students use of technology is supported by the recent purchase of Smart Boards. Teachers are beginning to incorporate the use of the technology in their lessons as evidenced by the development of Power Point presentations by some grade 4 and 5 students. Consequently, some student work products have shown an improvement in quality and depth of learning.
 - o The AIS teacher services approximately 45 grade 3-5 students in her READ 180 program. The principal and assistant principal review student achievement data and identify groups of students to include in this intervention. A strategic decision was made to program the AIS teacher to work with the Grade 4 team. This information is also used to share student progress relating to student weaknesses and directly influence teacher planning in support of the goals to improve academic vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Power Push Saturdays and the extended day Junior Great Books programs are additional opportunities provided to students to improve reading skills, thus promoting increased student achievement.
- Teacher development is guided by a commonly understood and adopted research-based framework, ensuring that teacher practices lead to improved student outcomes. (4.1)
 - o The administration has completed baseline informal observations of classroom teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching and has initiated individual and grade level professional development pathways aimed at

impacting student achievement. Teachers find feedback to be helpful in guiding their next steps and have begun to implement recommendations in working with students. Therefore, teacher practice is beginning to improve and positively address student needs.

- o The principal engages teachers in one-to-one conversations to establish individual goals as part of the school's process of managing professional development. Written feedback includes a summary of class/individual goals as well as teacher goals for practice and professional growth, such as focusing on improving conferencing and improving guided reading practice, among other things. The teachers have been divided into four developmental categories: high, medium, low and new. This system is used to inform decision-making about the continuum of professional development. As a result professional development is now differentiated and specifically targeting identified teacher needs.
- Communication with students and families establishes expectations for learning, and ensures that students understand how to reach higher levels of achievement. (3.4)
 - o Throughout the year the parent coordinator and teacher teams host learning opportunities for parents where they share the type of work that children need to produce in order to meet the high academic demands of the Common Core Learning Standards. The administration has purchased three calendar days for parents as part of their curriculum work with the Teachers College Reading/Writing Project so parents can attend workshops to learn about strategies to support their children. Every 4-6 weeks students and their parents receive a progress monitoring report that reflects the individual student's standing *that is aligned to the levels delineated by the standardized requirements of the New York State English Language Arts, Writing and Math assessments.* n meeting state standardized grade level requirements for English Language Arts, Writing and Mathematics. As a result of this communication students and their families know their specific academic and behavioral targets along with the next steps to achieve them.
- The school's partnerships support students and families in continual learning resulting in increased personal and socio-emotional growth. (4.4)
 - o The school conducts weekly Town Hall meetings to celebrate student and teacher successes. The guidance team in collaboration with the assistant principal convenes quarterly Anti-Bullying assemblies to train students and staff how to read and report student bullying. The school's partnership with the YMCA provides after-school and counseling services for students. Parents attend training sessions at Teacher's College, paid for by the school, to learn more about the school's literacy curriculum and learn reading and writing strategies to support their children at home. These practices and partnerships arm staff and parents with strategies to better support student academic and social needs in order to increase student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that long and short-term goals are precise and measurable in order to monitoring student progress and promote higher student outcomes. (3.3)
 - o School leaders and teacher teams analyze a variety of student data. Although teachers are aware of the overarching goals of improving students' academic

vocabulary, fluency and comprehension, goal-setting is very limited as it is not targeted to specific individual student learning needs. As a result, the use of summative and formative data analysis does not yet lead to the adjustment of school-wide and sub-group learning goals.

- Refine the standards-based curriculum to ensure that academic tasks challenge all students and develop critical thinking skills. (1.1)
 - o The recently adopted curriculum units are aligned to state standards and are beginning to integrate the Common Core Learning Standards across the school. However, academic tasks and classroom learning experiences do not consistently incorporate scaffolds and extensions to ensure rigorous learning for individual and student sub-groups across grades and subject areas. As a result, student development of higher order thinking skills is limited.
- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that there are multiple entry points to learning for all students, especially subgroups. (1.2)
 - o The school believes in small and large group learning experiences that promote student to student conversation and a gradual release of responsibility for all students. Teachers are making an effort to plan learning activities to support this philosophy which holds all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities to the same curricula. However, the work around identifying specific strategies and instructional practices to address the needs of all learners, including those with Individualized Education Plans, English Language Learners and those at the highest and lowest ends of the performance spectrum is just developing. As a result, classroom instruction and student learning opportunities are limited and the needs of all students are not being addressed. Thus improved academic achievement is hindered.
- Ensure that individual and team of teachers gather and analyze meaningful periodic and formative data in order to adjust instructional decisions and target the needs of all students, including key subgroups. (2.2)
 - o Teachers and the administration gather a variety of data which informs them of student performance. While the entire staff engages in collaborative team work on a weekly basis, the analysis of student data is limited in that it does not yet ensure implementation of instructional initiatives by teachers, scaffolded to meet the individual needs of all students, including key sub-groups, in order to close the achievement gap. Teachers continue to “wrap their heads around the effective use of formative data” and on-going checks for understanding are not yet consistently seen. Therefore, data does not routinely drive instruction and student growth is limited.
- Strengthen the system to monitor long and short-term goals at the school and team level in order to assess progress and assure interim corrections occur, as needed. (5.3)
 - o While key members of the instructional team meet after-school on a weekly basis to discuss instructional and organizational decisions, the school has not yet leveraged these meetings to include a process for evaluating and monitoring the school’s short- and long-term goals connected to these decisions. As a result, the school’s ability to evaluate and monitor goals in order to make adjustments, as needed, and ensure progress for individual and groups of students is hampered.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 256 Benjamin Banneker	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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