

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Juan Morel Campos
Elementary school K290

135 SCHENCK AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11207

Principal: WILLENA GEORGE

Dates of review: April 2-3, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Rose Marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 290 Juan Morel Campos is an Elementary school with 585 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 69% Hispanic, 2% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 9% 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 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Strong organizational skills are reflected in the strategic use of time, teacher assignments, and use of budget resulting in students engaged in challenging academic tasks. (1.3)
 - o The principal consistently focuses on student achievement in all of the instructional and organizational decisions. End-of-year planning results in the matching of student needs with the identified strengths of teachers in order to push student advancement. Despite budgetary constraints, the school priority in improving instruction is supported by three full time coaches, academic intervention instructors, as well as a technology/library teacher. These support staff regularly visit classrooms, organize interclass visitations, conduct demonstration lessons, guide the refining of curriculum maps along with the development of rigorous tasks aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). They guide teachers in understanding assessment trends. In addition, each teacher receives written feedback with an action plan from the coaches three times per year. This focused support and guidance results in all students completing rigorous grade-wide portfolios pieces, in literacy, math, science, and social studies, aligned to the curricula and CCLS thereby fostering the school's instructional goals.
 - o Working collaboratively with the chapter chairperson of United Federation of Teachers (UFT), school leaders have gained an additional period for teachers to formally meet, resulting in two, weekly structured meetings that focus on looking at student data, examining students' tasks, and refining curriculum maps. In addition, strategic programming results in daily common planning meetings in which teachers plan instruction, discuss performance data, and make requisite adjustments. For example, the fourth grade team identified academic gaps in curriculum units by analyzing student work based on a performance task. Consequently, the team decided to regroup students in the extended day program according to their needs and the pedagogical strengths of the staff. Teachers scaffold instruction and provide more independent practice in skills that students struggle with. This structured and focused use of staff time resulted in improvements in students' performance as indicated by the growth of 9% on the New York State (NYS) English language arts assessment and consistent gains on interim assessments.
- Strategic use of observations guides differentiated professional learning thereby ensuring improvements in teaching practices that result in increased student outcomes. (4.1)
 - o Strong professional development practice is the hallmark of this school. Teachers and administrators collaboratively set goals that result in individualized plans for all teachers. Short frequent observations, using the Danielson's framework, are undertaken by the administrators and focus on strengthening identified skills of the teacher by providing succinct feedback and next steps leading to teacher growth. For example, some teachers received feedback that guided them to "facilitate more student to student questioning" in order to raise the level of engagement and foster the development of higher-order thinking skills. Subsequent observations document teachers' ability to act on the feedback they are provided, such as planning lessons that include higher order thinking questions. More teachers build in increased time for students to respond to questions and explain their answers. Coaches, teacher team leaders, administrators, and network staff provide interclass visitations and coaching support that is formalized with logs of assistance. New teachers are assigned mentors with expertise in needed skills to support their development. Collegial, experienced teachers assist new staff to the school as well as those new to the grade level, thus ensuring that teacher capacity building is aligned to identified needs and results in improvements in pedagogy and

student outcomes. Teachers speak highly of support the school provides, and as aptly stated by teachers “we have few vacancies because teachers know that the support here is hard to find in other schools”.

- The safe, respectful, and caring school culture strongly supports students’ academic and personal progress and result in high levels of engagement and improvement in students’ performance. (1.4)
 - o The average class size of 13:1 ensures that teachers engage with each students, get to know their academic and personal needs, and coordinate supports to assure those needs are appropriately addressed. Despite the schools’ score of A on the Learning Environment Survey (LES), the administrative cabinet scrutinizes the data, identify trends, and create an action plan to target areas of concern. The recent data showed a decline in the area of safety and respect. As a result, the Pupil Personnel Team (PPT) identified students who exhibit social-emotional challenges and focus on supporting these students with at-risk services, such as counseling and academic interventions services, and discuss their progress during weekly meetings with their parents and teachers. Based on these wrap-around support services students are displaying less disciplinary problems and attend school more often. In addition, the school’s informal survey, conducted to gauge progress, reflect improvement in teachers’ rating of safety and respect in the school. Student attendance and lateness data is reviewed on a daily basis by the family worker and strong protocols are in place for follow up. The newly implemented pre-kindergarten class showed lower attendance than the other grade bands resulting in aggressive monitoring and outreach to parents. These on-going efforts result in the present attendance average of 95.5%, an increase above the 94% rate for last school year.
- The in-depth analysis of a wide array of student data is used to understand the comprehensive needs of the school resulting in the requisite adjustments that positively propel academic growth. (2.1)
 - o End of the school year and summer planning includes a detailed analysis of all summative student data. This includes Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, performance on portfolio pieces, end-of-unit assessments, attendance, and online occurrence reporting system (OORS) data. Teachers’ performance on observations and their impact on student achievement are also analyzed. School leaders, along with the extended cabinet, identify trends and create action plans to target areas of concern. For example, data analysis showed that although the school showed a growth of 3% on the New York State mathematics assessment, student performance in mathematics on the fifth grade band showed a decline. Consequently, there have been changes in teacher placement and the math block has been extended, thus, students now receive longer periods for math instruction by effective teachers with expertise in mathematics.
 - o The assessment team (A team), including the data specialist, frequently gather assessment, attendance, and safety information and meet with the administrative team to discuss trends and needed adjustments. There is a strong focus on the sub-groups of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD) to ensure that they continue to make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Based on students’ performance on the school designed mid-year assessments, academic intervention teachers and coaches revise their schedules to provide in-class support for students and teachers whose data do not show favorable trends. As a result, students’ performance on subsequent unit tests and classroom assessments has shown progress.
- The principal and her team work with the school community to create succinct, data-driven, focused goals resulting in a shared commitment to raise students’ academic and socio-emotional development. (3.1)

- o School leaders, along with the instructional cabinet, analyze a comprehensive range of data to include New York State exam results, NYC Progress Report data, Learning Environment Survey results, attendance trends and student results on benchmark assessments. Analysis of these data are used to create both long and short term goals along with action plans that are explicit in school improvement documents, including the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP). For example, writing was identified as a school-wide deficiency hence common writing assessments are now in place in order to push student growth. Push-in support for students who display behavior problems are in place to ensure that they remain in their classrooms and participate in learning activities. Additionally, parent members of the School Leadership team speak with pride about their involvement in reviewing school data and developing school goals. Accordingly, these data-driven goals are shared with the school community through presentations at parent meetings and letters sent home so that they are clearly understood and supported. As a result, parents, teachers, administration and students echo their shared commitment to the high standards and expectations established by the administration in order to advance student learning.
- An extensive array of forums and partnerships message high expectations to the school community and holds all constituents accountable for students' success. (3.4)
 - o The principal's quest for excellence is embraced by the school community. Clear expectations for instruction, student conduct, and parent engagement are articulated in the student handbook. On-going communication with staff and frequent visits to classrooms by administrators result in all classrooms reflecting environments to accelerate student growth. Small group instruction, in which students are guided to take ownership of their learning through self reflection and peer feedback, is manifested throughout the school. The universal adoption of the red, yellow, green color-coded system to guide differentiated activities for students working in small groups positively impacts students' understanding of their strengths and next steps. Partnership with the Office of Adult and Continuing Education result in daily English as a second language classes for parents. This reinforces the expectation that parents actively engaged in their child's education process by reading to them at home. These structures, orchestrated by the visionary principal, have led to a school culture in which all constituents take ownership for school-wide advancement.
 - o Monthly communication to parents involves "much more than a calendar" of activities. Parents receive strategies for comprehension, standards and skills that will be taught in the following month, vocabulary words with their meanings that students will learn, number facts that are reviewed during daily morning announcements, as well as parent workshops and meetings scheduled. A common grading system, developed by administrators and staff, promote consistency of grading practices across the school. The daily use of the school messenger system to inform parents of non-attendance and lateness, along with reminders about upcoming school events further facilitates the development of parent partnership. Thus, parents voice their pride in being a member of a school community that permeates high expectations for all constituents, and prepares them to meet those expectations.

What the school needs to improve

- Further accelerate the development and implementation of rigorous tasks that emphasize key standards, in all subject areas, so that learning is maximized and students across the continuum continue to demonstrate growth. (1.1)

- o The schools' involvement in pilot work on implementing CCLS has resulted in school leaders and faculty refining and aligning curriculum maps to CCLS, with expectation for the next grade level. Science and social studies content is embedded in performance tasks that students complete as portfolio pieces. While teachers create rigorous academic tasks aligned to key standards for grade bands, consistently scaffolding these tasks in all subject areas so that English language learners and students' with disabilities can demonstrate their learning in a coherently is not yet apparent across the school. As a result, struggling learners are not always fully engaged.
- Bolster the consistency in the level of student engagement through effective instructional practices that builds on students' knowledge thus accelerating the development of higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - o In most classrooms, the schools' belief system that students learn best using the workshop model of instruction is evident. Students receive direct instruction from teachers, participate in small group activities, and then complete individual tasks. Both teacher teams and administrators consistently discuss pedagogical approaches that lead to improvements in students' achievement. Nonetheless, teacher questioning that accelerate students developing higher-order thinking skills through student-to-student discourse is less apparent across the school. For example, some teachers' levels of questioning do not routinely reflect data gleaned from teacher team work. As such, students are not consistently provided with scaffolded questions and prompts that serve as a main entry point into texts or tasks. Similarly, some teachers do not routinely engage high performing students with extension activities and experiences that push their thinking and have most students participating. In a fourth grade math lesson, both the reviewer and principal agreed that while the teacher facilitated some student to student questioning, only a few students were engaged in this exchange and there were missed opportunities to broaden the discourse and push the thinking of more students. Thus, classroom routines do not universally foster students learning from each other through engaging discussions.
- Strengthen the process of gathering ongoing data on student information to facilitate the acceleration of instructional adjustments in order to foster students' learning outcomes. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams, supported by the coaches, create CCLS aligned problems of the day that are used in mathematics across the school. These daily assessments supplement the multiple summative assessments that the school has developed. The school requires teachers to conduct student conferences in order to evaluate mastery of concepts and evaluate reading levels. Teachers' conferencing notes indicate inconsistencies in frequency across grades and subject areas. Additionally, teachers' conferencing notes do not adequately reflect the use of the data to adjust instructional practices, resulting in missed opportunities to propel student learning.
- Enhance the process for evaluating the sharing of students' goals, along with strategies to support attainment, with families so that in-depth understanding fosters student growth. (5.3)
 - o The school engages in both annual and short-term evaluation of the school goals, and then makes needed adjustments based on the review of all available data. While teachers are knowledgeable of and active participants in the goal-setting process, they are not as involved or informed of how school goals are monitored. In addition, teacher teams and individual teachers frequently review students' performance on benchmark assessments, periodic assessments, unit tests, performance tasks, student attendance data, and safety and discipline information. Students are guided to use data to set goals that are reviewed at benchmark periods. However, this practice is not analyzed to determine its impact on student learning habits and outcomes, thus limiting collaborative efforts to improve progress for all students. (b,c)

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 290 Juan Morel Campos	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	
1..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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