

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 305 Dr. Peter Ray
Elementary School K305

344 MONROE STREET
BROOKLYN
NY 11216

Principal: Julia Mortley

Dates of review: May 31- June 1, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 305 Dr. Peter Ray is an elementary school with 350 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 74% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% White, 2% Asian students and 9% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 13% 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 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a shared belief about how students learn and utilizes differentiated teaching strategies and questioning so that all learners engage in the curriculum. (1.2)
 - o The school believes that its students learn best when they are “faced with a rigorous academic program including the arts, character education, technology and opportunities to learn by interest and need.” Across classrooms, students work in ability groups based on need with differentiated activities, resulting in meaningful student work products. For example, an observed math class required students to work on the concept of volume. Students worked in three different ability groups on the concept with different tiered tasks that were shared as a whole class, enabling the teacher to provide a more individualized program for each student including students with disabilities.
 - o The school focuses on student writing. Most classrooms worked on tasks that required students to express themselves and their learning process in writing. Questions posed to students by the teachers usually were open-ended and students were encouraged to work in small groups, pairs or individually to respond, increasing students’ engagement and participation. The focus on writing and the improved questioning has resulted in an increased number of students attaining proficiency levels as measured by customized rubrics.
- The school utilizes its resources towards instructional goals and extending school time, leading to improved instruction and students being challenged. (1.3)
 - o Grade teams have the opportunity to meet four times per week through scheduled common planning time. The time is used to plan common assessments, review student work and data to evaluate teaching practices. A restructured extended day program provides additional supports for primary grade students as well as students at-risk of not meeting proficiency standards. Technology supports are provided for accelerated students, allowing them to research topics through multi-media approaches. Through strategic scheduling all students are receiving additional supports, ensuring they are moving to their next steps of learning, as evidenced by a review of student work products.
 - o With the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), the school allocated resources to provide the support of a full time literacy coach to assist with professional development and data analysis. The school has also invested in replenishing materials in existing academic programs, including additions to classroom libraries, ensuring teachers have adequate materials and support to increase teacher effectiveness as well as student engagement and challenge in the classroom.
- School leaders have established a coherent vision based on a theory of action linked to teacher and student needs that is data driven, informing school level goals. (3.1)
 - o The school has developed goals focused on writing with the theory, “if they all are supported then the students will be supported.” Staff is supported by external consultants and an on-site literacy coach to enable teachers to increase the effectiveness of their practice and to provide actionable feedback to students, thereby increasing the quality of student work.

- o After a review of summative state data, an analysis of the types of questions and skills students had difficulty with and an analysis of needs of particular cohorts of students, school goals were devised. This information is shared by the school leadership team with grade teams and parent groups. They are discussed during grade meetings including information about target subgroups such as students with disabilities and over aged students. This focused approach has enabled the staff to revisit specific parts of the curriculum and revise rubrics and criteria for judging student work.
- The school communicates high expectations to all stakeholders in the community and put supports in place to support students to meet those expectations. (3.4)
 - o In September, goals were discussed, shared and agreed upon with all stakeholders in the community. Conversations on the most strategic way to attain these goals focused on the support and structures needed. Teachers also worked with the research based rubric and its language and the citywide expectations on performance tasks, inquiry work and looking at students work. Through follow-up conversations, teacher inquiry work and monthly meetings were used to remind everyone of the expectations of performance and behavior, resulting in a climate and culture that ensures that teaching and learning can occur at high levels.
 - o Teacher teams and staff communicate a unified set of high expectation for all students. Grade team goals are derived from school goals and embed high expectations for student performance, attendance and behavior. Community based organizations working with the school also know the school's goals and support them through afterschool and day programs. Counselors and other support personnel assist in providing additional support for students who need assistance in meeting school expectations, allowing all students the opportunity to achieve at high levels in all aspects of their school experience.
- School leaders use observations to support teacher growth and to provide feedback that offers trends and next steps using a research based framework. (4.1)
 - o The literacy coach is instrumental in the development of staff. Through classroom walkthroughs, grade meetings and professional development, information is collected to inform future levels and strategies of support. New personnel are supported by the literacy coach in a mentor system. In class support, one to one conferences and demonstration lessons are provided for additional assistance. School leaders use short, frequent cycles of observation to provide actionable feedback centered on questioning and student engagement. They are also used to provide checks on learning environments to ensure that the culture and climate across classrooms reflect their belief on how students' best learn.
 - o School leaders use a research-based rubric as a foundation for all feedback from observations. They have chosen to focus on questioning and student engagement. Professional development plans are devised to support all staff including leadership, coaches and teachers, and are monitored and revised to reflect the capacity building with the staff. The school believes that this approach will continue strengthen the classroom practice leading to producing more significant work products.
- The school is engaged in structured professional collaborations that influence curricula, teaching and learning. (4.2)
 - o All staff participate in inquiry teams using a school wide protocol. Grade teams meeting twice per week, review grade specific curricula, interim and classroom

data and work with the integration of the CCLS revising rubrics and looking at student work to unearth skills and concepts students need in order to master more rigorous tasks. An additional school CCLS inquiry team examines the integration of the CCLS across grades with representatives from each grade, focusing on the alignment of key concepts throughout the school. The math team examines performance tasks to ensure they meet the standard of rigorous and addressed specific key standards throughout the grades. These teams ensure that there is consistency within teams and individual teachers on the inquiry approach as well as promising teacher practices that are resulting in improved student performance.

- o Grade leaders and subject facilitators provide additional opportunities for staff to development leadership capacities. The implementation of Response to Invention (RTI) and the incorporation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) provide additional opportunities for teachers to lead school initiatives, allowing them to make key decisions that affect the supports students receive academically, socially and behaviorally.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the design of a rigorous curriculum that is engaging which is aligned to selected key standards that lead to rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. (1.1)
 - o The school has identified specific key standards to address the needs of students. Curriculum maps were created in order to support lesson development with a focus on writing. Students have been exposed to personal narratives, research investigations and note taking and literary essays. Skills have been identified in other core subjects such as math and reading however, social studies and science are not as developed, limiting the ability to promote post-secondary readiness in all grades and subjects.
 - o Performance tasks in English language arts and math were completed by all students. The tasks began the integration of the CCLS and exposed students to work that required critical thinking and recorded their thought processes through writing. Across classrooms there were inconsistencies with the level of rigor of classroom tasks, limiting students' ability to be engaged and challenged with the work.
- Continue to align periodic assessments and their analysis to targeted subgroups and the improvement of teacher practice in classrooms. (2.2)
 - o Across classrooms, students are grouped predominately by ability levels. Several classrooms had additional support personnel such as paraprofessionals and student teachers monitoring student performance within the groups. However, there were limited opportunities for students to assess their own learning as well as places during the lessons where teachers were checking students' understanding of the taught concept, thus teachers were prohibited from making accurate, strategic adjustments throughout the lessons.
 - o Teacher teams have adopted performance tasks from the CCLS task bundles. They have also created grade assessments and rubrics that are aligned to identified key writing standards. Teams use a school-wide protocol to discuss student work, the task and the next steps for the teacher and students. However, teams are not discussing what mastery of the task looks like, especially for students with disabilities and those who have been retained multiple times. They are also not exploring the prerequisite skills that students need before attempting

the tasks and the meaningful feedback that students need in order to make their pieces better, thereby lessening the schools ability to determine the effectiveness of instructional decisions throughout the building.

- Strengthen parental engagement and involvement in order to foster reciprocal conversations about tracking student progress throughout the year. (2.4)
 - o Parent teacher conferences, curriculum teas and informal teacher conversations are ways in which students and families receive information on how students are progressing. Targeted students receive letters for improvement in their attendance monthly. Other personnel provide family outreach to those families whose attendance has not improved but there are no formal structures for the school to receive information from families promoting ongoing discussions about their child's progress and the next steps in their learning, thus limiting opportunities for families to be partners in helping students to make achievement gains.
 - o The parent coordinator has supported parents in utilizing ARIS Parent Link. Several parents stated they "have checked it once or twice" and have noted that the information is limited for younger students but they are notified if their child is not doing well. The usage is approximately 30% and there is no other electronic based system available to parents, limiting parents' ability to obtain student performance information in a timely manner.
- Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams in building capacity among staff and leadership development regarding staffing decisions, support and tenure decisions. (5.4)
 - o Teacher teams meet regularly each week and the schools' CCLS inquiry teams meet monthly. Through a school-wide protocol, student work and teacher next steps are discussed at these meetings. However, there is no identified student population that the teams are studying, such as identified students with disabilities or students who have been retained, limiting the school's ability to make instructional decisions impacting large numbers of students or building coherence between the curriculum and instructional practices.
 - o Through the use of teacher observations and class profile sheets that capture student performance after interim assessments, school leaders evaluate the effectiveness of teacher placement and the development of new staff. Conversations and targeted professional development throughout the year provide valuable information to evaluate systems in building capacity within the staff. However, across classrooms inconsistencies exist in teacher practice within the two areas of focus, questioning and student engagement, which limits opportunities for the school to achieve its goals and support improved student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 305 Dr. Peter Ray	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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