

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Performing Arts School

Elementary School 315

2310 Glenwood Road

Brooklyn

New York 11210

Principal: Judith Ranft-Quartana

Dates of review: March 19 - 20, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Performing Arts School is an elementary school with 801 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 73% Black, 16% Hispanic, 3% White, 7% Asian students, and 1% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal utilizes the budget to effectively support learning needs of faculty and students. (1.3)
 - Allocations funded the purchase of a new reading and writing program in use across all grades, which promotes consistency of policy and practices. Additionally the budget supports positions such as a data specialist, math and literacy coaches, Save-Room teacher, and an English language learner coordinator, all of whom provide either teacher support and/or academic intervention services for students. Consequently, the budget is aligned closely to school goals. A school-based option provides common planning time for teachers to meet four days a week during which time staff work on developing and curriculum, assessments, and share best practices, resulting in strengthening teacher pedagogy as evidenced by observation reports, teachers' reflections, and the Learning Environment Survey. Strategic structuring of student-teacher time such as: integrated co-teaching classes on all but the fifth grade, increasing time allotted for literacy and math blocks, and after school and Saturday programs for at-risk and English language learners, increases staffing ratio and time-on-task, and provides for greater individualized attention to students. Thus, English language learners and students with disabilities across all grades demonstrated a 6.1% and 9.2% increase respectively in achieving proficiency in English language arts (ELA) as compared to last year, therefore decreasing the achievement gap. Additionally, data is used to carefully assign teachers to meet students' needs. Movement inter- and intra-grades between self-contained, integrated, and Eagle programs, resulted in a 5% increase in ELA and a 3% in the math interim assessments as a result of reassigning a grade 4 teacher to grade 5.
- The school provides a very safe and inclusive environment that successfully supports students' academic and social emotional needs. (1.4)
 - Each morning a class is selected to say the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the national anthem, recite the Peace Pledge, identify the virtue of the day, and make school announcements. Additionally, the principal highlights students' accomplishments and celebrates classes having perfect attendance. To address the results of the Learning Environment Survey the school is implementing community service so that older students now support their younger peers, and teachers utilize accommodation cards to acknowledge good behavior in the lunchroom and distribute senior bucks as a positive behavior reward system, all leading to fewer incidents. Consequently, the environment is warm, welcoming, safe, and conducive to learning. The principal, classroom, and academic intervention teachers, mandated counselors, dean, nurse, parent coordinator meet, greet, and interact with students on a daily basis concerning academic, behavioral needs and medical concerns. Hence, students shared that they felt well known to many adults in the school, that they were comfortable discussing personal and academic issues, and feel their

teachers support their learning. This is also evidenced by the 94% response given by parents concerning their children's safety and the high rate of parents who feel there is at least one staff member who knows and is trusted by their child. Students also shared that they have voice in school decisions including after school activities, fund raising, and the launching of the new school newspaper, leading to them feeling that their ideas are valued.

- The school has a strong communication system that provides for an exchange of information supportive of student learning. (2.4)
 - The school utilizes newsletters, messages from the principal, calendars, e-mails from the parent coordinator, and school messenger, to keep parents informed concerning academic and behavioral expectations. Report cards with detailed comments, periodic assessment reports, Fall and Spring school conferences, students' work with attached rubrics, 'glows and grows', and the monitoring of students' goals, provide an opportunity for students and families to assess progress towards meeting standards and expectations. Parents report an open door policy; prompt responses to parent e-mails and telephone calls as well as parent surveys conducted by the school that allow them to interface with the school and exchange pertinent information that positively impacts their children's learning. Hence, students and parents are able to clearly articulate next steps such as academic intervention services and strategies that promote academic and social-emotional progress. Parents are invited to school sponsored workshops on topics such as; ARIS, Common Core, Acuity, improving reading and math skills, and information relative to State exams, all which offer strategies to support learning. Thus, parents feel more confident in helping their children at home, as evidenced by improved attendance at meetings, and by both school generated, and citywide Learning Environment Surveys.
- The school collects and systematically analyzes a large range of summative and formative data to create a clear picture of trends in order to make adjustments necessary to promote teaching and learning. (2.1)
 - The school's uses of a wide range of data allows it to identify trends and patterns in attendance, suspension, scholarship, State exams, periodic assessments, and referral rates. As a result there is an 1.0% increase in attendance from 94% to 95%, a single digit number of principal and superintendent suspensions combined, more general education students being supported in integrated co-teaching classes, and the school earning three additional credits for "at-risk students", (Black, Hispanic males in the lowest third citywide, students with disabilities and English language learners) at the 75th percentile or higher in English and math. Furthermore, teachers utilize running records, conferencing notes, Acuity, and pre- and post-tests to identify areas of strength and concern. As a result, students receive appropriate targeted classroom assistance and additional academic intervention services that meet their needs.
- Effective student support services and partnership provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially. (4.4)

- Teachers, counselors, and deans, receive professional development on Respect for All, Anti-Bullying and Cyber-bullying, and conduct information sessions and assemblies for students and staff, leading to a culture of respect in the school. Additionally, the counselors, along with the social worker and psychologist, all collaborate to effectively provide individual and group counseling to students experiencing academic, emotional, and personal difficulties. As a result, students receive the necessary supports to promote personal and academic growth. Furthermore, the parent coordinator conducts workshops on the middle school application process and informs parents concerning middle school fairs and open houses. Consequently, parents and students make informed choices concerning their next educational experience. The school also engages students in science fairs, library, and computer research, to support project-based learning and essay writing. The school's 'Career Day' allows students to design costumes that reflect their career choice and share related information with their classmates, while parents are invited to participate in the event by sharing stories about their careers, thus promoting post-secondary and career readiness.
- The school enjoys many partnerships such as, Dancing Classrooms, New York City Ballet, New York City Opera, Chinese Cultural Dance, Brooklyn Arts Council, and Dancewave. Additionally, the school partners with Brooklyn College in implementing a visual arts program utilizing college interns. A Casa Arts Grant enables the school to utilize the talents and skills of a theater residency so that students produce and perform a Broadway Review. Consequently, students engage in the arts both in and outside the school environment, develop their talents, and are exposed to various cultural institutions and real life experiences that positively impact their performing arts, build upon their talents, and support an academic curriculum around improving learning outcomes.
- School leaders and faculty consistently communicate high expectations to staff, students and families and provide supports necessary for achievement. (3.4)
 - A school handbook, presentations on the Common Core Learning Standards, instructional initiatives, and sharing annual school goals with teachers, promote clear expectations and teacher accountability for student learning. Teachers set high expectations for students through goal setting, utilizing rubrics and teacher feedback, and student self-reflection. Thus, students take ownership for their performance and growth. In turn, school leaders and faculty members utilize Orientation Sessions, curriculum parent conferences, school leadership team meetings, parent association meetings, and parent letters, to communicate high attendance, behavior, and academic expectations to families. These meetings, along with, a uniform grading policy and highly relevant workshops, provide tools for parents to support their children's learning at home.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop further rigorous curricula and tasks to promote students' higher-level thinking and problem solving skills. (1.1)

- School leaders and teachers use various data sources including English language arts and math State exams, Acuity assessments, unit tests, and running records, and work with consultants from the Center for Teaching Education to analyze data and align curriculum to Common Core and key State standards. Webb's Depth of Knowledge wheel is utilized to create rigorous tasks, and probing and clarifying questions are used to extend discussion and promote higher order thinking skills to engage all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. However, this is not yet a consistent practice across grades and subject areas, therefore, limiting further improvement of learning outcomes for some students.
- Enhance activities and ensure that student work products are differentiated sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. (1.2)
 - While some teachers utilize Webb's Depth of Knowledge to create higher order tasks, differentiate questions, and utilize accountable stems as a practice for students to respond to questioning, it is not yet a consistent practice across all grades and subject areas. Thus, there is a general level of student thinking as evidenced by the level of discussion and work produced by students within various learning groups.
- Refine the system for evaluating the quality of curricular and organizational decisions so that adjustments are made that increase coherence across the school with particular attention to CCLS. (5.1)
 - Grade level teacher teams led by team leaders and assisted by coaches are responsible for reviewing, adjusting curricula, and sharing decisions with other grade level teams on a regular basis. However, the structure does not presently evaluate the effectiveness of the adjustments. Additionally, while resources such as the purchase of a new reading and writing program and the structuring of time on task (literacy and math blocks) are assessed periodically, their effectiveness is not fully measured until the end of the year. Therefore, the benefits of adjustments, resources, and time on task are not fully translated into improved student performance.
- Refine structures for measuring progress for interim and long-term goals. and making adjustments over time to promote success. (5.3)
 - Presently, the school periodically utilizes various data sources such as interim-assessments, attendance, and suspension reports, to measure the effectiveness and alignment of instructional and organizational decisions/initiatives, and school wide goals. However, the system is not sufficiently formalized to measure progress on a regular basis. As a result, modifications and adjustments to action plans are not always timely thus hampering the realization and revision of goals when needed. Additionally, while teachers and students establish learning goals, they are not consistently measurable and time bound. As a result, some students are not making suitable progress necessary to reach proficiency levels.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Performing Arts School	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