

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 326**

**Early Childhood school K326**

**1800 UTICA AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, NY 11234**

**Principal: Colleen M. Ducey**

**Dates of review: May 7-8, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Maria Robustelli**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 326 is an Early Childhood school with 203 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 1. The school population comprises 70% Black, 13% Hispanic, 3% White, 11% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well-developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school strategically aligns curricula to key State standards so that all learners have a wide range of learning experiences that effectively support student learning in order to close the achievement gap. (1.1 )
  - Teachers work in collaboration to create and refine curricula and academic tasks that align to the rigor of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and accentuate higher order thinking across classrooms and content areas, including the Arts, via inquiry-based learning. Authentic, student-centered performance tasks embedded in thematic units of study engaged all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners, in applying concepts and standards based skills to real world applications. For example, during a unit on rain forests, students used facts from a variety of informational texts to write a persuasive letter to President Obama discussing the importance of rain forests and why he should help to preserve them. Teachers meet weekly to develop units of study and common rubrics and analyze performance tasks to ensure tasks are engaging and challenging. During the first grade inquiry team meeting, teachers conducted an analysis of data, including assessments and student work, to create flexible groups to address individual student needs, adjust planning and provide resources and interventions in order to close the achievement gap for all learners. Data from all grade level inquiry teams is shared in horizontal and vertical collaborative inquiry team meetings to discuss identified trends and patterns in data as well as identified resources and supports to ensure coherency across grades and content for all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs). As a result of these decisions, the students have achieved an overall growth between pre and post assessments for CCLS units of study, including one rubric rating for literacy and two rubric ratings for math.
- The school provides a warm and nurturing environment embedded in trust and respect that ensures student engagement and success. (1.4)
  - Across classrooms, teachers consistently model appropriate behaviors and use a variety of routines that contribute to high levels of effective classroom management and support student emotional growth and academic success. The school uses the Assertive Discipline approach where students participate in the creation of rules and co-construct rewards and consequences. For example, “good deed grams” are used to celebrate behaviors such as being polite or helping a classmate. Student of the month awards are used to recognize students doing well academically or socially or demonstrating significant improvement. Parents commented that each adult in the school knows their child well and support efforts that impact their child’s social-emotional and academic learning. During classroom observations, students were motivated, on task and engaged in their learning. They also reported enjoying participation in school-wide decisions, such as collecting money for the “Penny Harvest” and having a voice in choosing “a charity for people who don’t have money.” Based on an analysis of attendance data, strategies were implemented this year, including monthly Attendance Committee meetings and home visits that led to an increase of 3.7% from 92.46% last year to 96.17% this school year. As a result, school-wide practices positively impact student academic and social growth.
- The school consistently uses a variety of assessments and data sources to analyze and adjust instructional decisions that improve pedagogy and accelerate student performance. (2.2)

- Teacher teams and individual teachers consistently analyze a wide range of summative and formative data, including Rigby benchmarks, Terra Nova pre and post English language arts (ELA) and math levels, end of unit test grades, CCLS tasks, the Receptive and Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test (R-OWPVT, E-OWPVT), student goals and daily observations to identify strengths and areas for growth, track progress and adjust instructional practices for individual and subgroups of students. For example, based on data gleaned from assessments, students were entering Kindergarten approximately one year below grade level in expressive language skills and approximately nine months below grade level in receptive language skills. The school established a focus on increasing student vocabulary skills through various strategies, including graphic organizers, hands on manipulatives and multi-sensory language activities in small flexible groups. Based on current data, receptive and expressive vocabulary scores both increased an average of 17% from Fall 2011 to Spring 2012. ELLs demonstrated significant growth from a one year delay in receptive language skills and a two year delay in expressive language skills at the start of Kindergarten and scored on grade level by the end of first grade. Across classrooms, students are involved in assessment of their learning through the development of student friendly rubrics and ongoing descriptive feedback regarding next steps as evidenced by portfolios and work samples. Students expressed an understanding of what they were doing well in their classrooms and identified next steps to move their learning forward. Consequently, the use of assessments and rubrics help teachers provide targeted support and ensure the progress of individual and subgroups of students.
- The school uses a wide range of data tools to identify trends in progress and performance to elevate instructional practices and make purposeful school level decisions. (2.3)
  - The school uses a broad range of data that is organized and dissected by the school leader and teachers to identify trends and patterns in performance of individual and groups of students, including ELLs and students with disabilities (SWDs), in order to set clear goals for improvement. The school-wide focus on vocabulary development is supported through interim benchmarks and yearly goals that are communicated to the entire school community. Teachers use a variety of tools, including ARIS, Google docs and Excel to organize data and provide access to staff across the school in order to guide curricular and instructional decisions and meetings regarding student performance and next steps. Student progress is monitored and interventions are modified as necessary every six weeks. For example, due to availability of data for ongoing analysis, the school implemented a looping initiative. Based on results from 2009-2011, looping students scored higher overall in Terra Nova math and ELA assessments as well as exceeding non-looping classes by 3.7 levels on the Rigby Benchmark Assessments. As a result, individual teachers, teacher teams and school leaders are able to clearly articulate how aggregated data is used to identify trends and determine next steps for students as evidenced by student goals and revisions to units of study, CCLS tasks, rubrics and assessments.
- The school collaboratively developed targeted, data driven goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community and ensure increased student achievement. (3.1)
  - Formative and summative data, including ARIS, the Learning Environment Survey (LES), school leadership team (SLT) survey, student assessment results, inquiry team research and budget expenditures, has been used to construct a comprehensive needs assessment that power school level goals and action plans. This is communicated to the entire school community at the beginning of the year to provide cohesiveness throughout classrooms and generate support. School-wide goals as well as teacher and student goals clearly align to citywide initiatives as well as the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and principal's performance goals as evidenced by teacher lesson plans and classroom observations. All members of the school community,

including parents, are able to understand and support current school-wide goals as well as individual student goals. School level goals and action plans are reviewed formally and informally using data and adjusted throughout the school year as needed. Consequently, the school has created a coherent vision using data-based goals that are recognized and sustained by the entire school and drive efforts to support positive student outcomes.

- School leaders and teachers consistently convey high expectations and provide actionable feedback to students and families that ensure parent involvement and successful collaboration toward meeting student goals. (3.4)
  - The school places a high priority on effective communication with parents and keeps them informed of student progress and next steps. Attendance, behavior and academic performance expectations are initially messaged through an orientation and distribution of the parent handbook. Ongoing communication includes monthly calendars, weekly parent notes, daily student behavior logs and conferences. Teachers provide parents with tools to support learning at home, including lending libraries with activities to reinforce targeted strategies. Regular progress reports are distributed every two months to give formal feedback about student progress. Parents state feeling secure that staff is accessible and respond promptly to concerns. According to the most recent LES survey, 99% of parents reported that “the school clearly communicates its expectations for my child’s learning to me and my child” and 100% were satisfied with how well the school helps them “understand what you can do to support your child’s learning needs.” The parent coordinator networks with various organizations to provide services, such as after school programs to address student academic and social emotional needs. The guidance counselor provides professional development in topics such as transitions, homework habits and bullying to ensure that students receive the necessary supports to achieve expectations. Consequently, parents and students understand school expectations and feel supported in achieving them.
- The school leader uses a research based framework to provide strategic, ongoing feedback that supports areas for teacher growth and effective practice resulting in improved academic outcomes. (4.1)
  - The school leader conducts short, frequent cycles of observation everyday that provides actionable feedback on instructional practices and clear expectations for next steps to teachers aligned to a research-based framework. All teachers are deepening their understanding in three areas of focus: managing student behavior, engaging students in learning and questioning techniques. Feedback is communicated through “glow and grow” e-mails and informal meetings to identify next steps to improve practice as well as identify resources and supports available, including peer observations, coaches and professional development opportunities. The school leader also meets formally with teachers three times per year to review teacher goals and objectives and create a professional development plan to meet individual needs and improve practice. Teachers reported feeling supported by everyday walkthroughs and ongoing conversations regarding identified areas of focus. This support has had a positive impact on teacher practice and student engagement as evidenced by student work samples and classroom observations. Consequently, the school provides a coherent and systematic approach to teacher support to leverage their skills and increase their effectiveness to improve student outcomes.

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

- Strengthen the strategic use of questioning strategies so that students at varying developmental levels are challenged and engaged to extend learning and develop higher levels of student thinking. (1.2)
  - A coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best is reflected across classrooms through the implementation of an inquiry based approach that follows student interests and allows for connections to real life experiences. Across classrooms, staff consistently differentiates strategies, routines and levels of questioning in order to provide choices, supports and extensions for a variety of learners. However, based on classroom observations, questioning techniques are not strategically differentiated to support and extend learning for all students and ensure maximized levels of thinking.
- Strengthen the use of technology across classrooms to challenge students and expand opportunities to maximize learning. (1.3)
  - The school's structures and use of resources provide varied opportunities to build instructional practice and improve student outcomes, such as coaches to provide individualized support and partnerships that provide academic and social emotional support to students as well as regular teacher team meetings. However, there is limited use of technology to support interventions to address the needs of various subgroups of students. As a result, the ability of staff to strategically differentiate instruction for all students and expand opportunities for extending student learning is not being maximized
- Continue to strengthen the system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams in analyzing student data, planning instruction and developing intervention strategies to meet student and school-wide goals. (5.4)
  - The school has structures to consistently use data and observations to inform decisions regarding teacher leadership opportunities and impact decisions around capacity building and teacher placement. However, although the school leader visits teacher team meetings throughout the year and makes recommendations to support their work, the school needs to look deeper into the effectiveness of teacher teams toward driving efforts to build alignment between instruction, school culture and attendance practices. As a result, this lessens the ability of the school to make informed decisions to continue to build professional collaboration and support teacher development.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 326	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
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**

<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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