

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 346 Abe Stark  
Elementary school K346**

**1400 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE  
BROOKLYN  
NY 11239**

**Principal: KEVIN CAIFA**

**Dates of review: February 8-9, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Rose Marie Mills**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 346 Abe Stark is an Elementary school with 743 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 67% Black, 27% Hispanic, 4% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Critical analysis of a variety of student performance data provide administrators a comprehensive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and results in targeted interventions to positively impact school performance. (2.1)
  - o The administrative team analyzes data from Acuity assessments, NYStart, New York City Progress Report, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, student attendance, Learning Environment Survey (LES), Read Well, and Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS), to gain a complete understanding of how students are performing academically and personally. Review of school summative data is coupled with periodic assessment data, such as Acuity's Instructionally Targeted Assessments (ITA) and Predictives, which provide school leaders a more in-depth understanding of which groups of students require focus and why. For example, the instructional cabinet analyzed NYS assessment results and noted a need to focus on third graders, as they did not make expected adequate yearly progress. Analysis of periodic assessment data, including Fountas and Pinnell, indicated that second graders needed intensive support in vocabulary development and reading comprehension skills. Additionally, Acuity predictive is used to determine school-wide trends in teacher practice and create teaching schedules. For example, teachers with a proven track record of success in teaching English language arts to struggling students is assigned to work with third and second graders. Periodic assessment data,, including Acuity, is used to gauge the progress of these at-risk and struggling students. This ensures that school leaders have a comprehensive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, thus ensuring that school goals and support target the needs of individual and groups of students.
- Administrators support staff through short, frequent observations with specific feedback, aligned to a research-based framework, that improve teacher practice and support student performance. (4.1)
  - o Administrators support teacher development using short, frequent informal and extended formal classroom observations. The Danielson framework is used to provide teachers with feedback, which details their pedagogical strengths and next steps, as it relates to what is observed in student learning behavior. Some teachers have received feedback to "...implement strategies like talk and turn to facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills." Review of student work reveal an increase use of higher order thinking questions to promote expanded thinking. Formal observations follow-up on feedback provided to teachers on increasing the rigor in academic tasks students are asked to engage with. This ensures that all teachers know their strengths and weaknesses, relative to what is expected of them and are supported to improve. Consequently, teachers have a clear path to improve their practice, thus elevating student learning.
- Strategic scheduling and the effective use of time are integral steps in supporting the schools' goals thereby advancing student and teacher performance. (1.3)
  - o Teachers on each grade have daily common preps to plan and coordinate grade level instructional activities, such as looking at student work, modifying curriculum maps, creating common tasks and examining student work. . Additionally, the principal uses school-based-options (SBOs) to create two additional periods for teacher team meeting and inquiry work on a weekly basis

to focus more deeply on developing academic tasks that actively engage and offer students more challenge. Teacher teams focused on English language arts (ELA) integrate more information text into student learning. Consequently, student writing portfolios reflect the completion of common tasks in ELA that embed the content of Science and Social Studies across all grades in the school.

- o Student and teacher class assignments are based on student need and teacher strengths. Administration has departmentalized grade five for ELA, , math, science and social studies. In turn, teachers whose teacher data reports indicate have high results with fifth graders in either ELA or math are assigned accordingly. In addition, in support of the focus on elevating math scores in grades four and five, the math coach provides targeted instruction to key groups of students to accelerate learning. The school's English language learners (ELLs) are clustered in classes so that the teacher provides both push-in and pull-out support. Likewise, students identified with special needs are strategically placed so that targeted interventions are provided in the classroom. Lower grade students receive language acquisition instruction from various teacher based on their needs and placement changes throughout the year based on assessment results. Teachers are also strategically placed on teacher teams in order to foster planning for the diverse learning needs of the student population. Therefore, strong programming practices align with the schools goals thereby promoting teacher team collaborations result in improvements in student performance, as evidenced by a 10% improvement in outcomes on school-wide benchmark assessments.
- Students benefit from standards-based curricula, with integrated Common Core aligned tasks, based on the needs of students and result in high levels of cognitive engagement. (1.1)
  - o A cadre of teachers participate in Network training sessions to understand and learn how to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In response to NYS exam results that indicates students struggle with comprehension as it relates to non-fiction text, lead teachers guide the work of creating and refining curriculum maps and tasks to ensure that Science and Social Studies content are embedded. In addition, the school entrenches character development in the curriculum through literacy. Weekly team meetings focus on examining student work and make modification to teaching steps to ensure that all learners are provided with the opportunity to meet the demands of the standards. Academic tasks and rubrics are revised with ELLs and special needs students in mind. Moreover, classroom libraries reflect a vast amount of non-fiction materials that support the curriculum. Thus, writing products produced by a diverse group of students reflect the expectations of CCLS and high levels of cognitive engagement.
- Alignment of pedagogical practices to the schools' philosophy and curriculum ensures higher levels of engagement and results in meaningful student work products. (1.2)
  - o The school's belief in providing instruction based on the workshop model is evident across classrooms. Students engage in whole group, small group, and individualized instruction with the support of classroom and intervention teachers, as well as paraprofessionals. Classroom observations highlight students working in small groups, with pairs, individually and as a large group are prompted by teacher questions that move from easy to more challenging. Conversations with students and review of their work affirm that they engage in discussions and that challenge them without frustrating them. Thus, students' work products reflect

higher levels of thinking, as evidenced by increase responses to math word problems, elaborated science reports, shore and extended ELA written responses.

- Teacher teams create and utilize assessment and rubrics aligned to the curriculum, to determine the needs of groups of students in order to improve instructional practices. (2.2)
  - o Coaches guide teacher teams to create and revise assessments and rubrics that align to the school's curriculum. Acuity's custom assessments are widely used and teachers collectively score them in an effort to ensure consistency of practice across the school. Teacher teams scan student assessment sheets into the Acuity system and this facilitates easy data disaggregation and quick identification of trends that result in requisite change strategy. The analysis of data from the first Acuity assessment showed that students struggled with writing short responses; hence teachers changed the order of the circular units and focused on facts, opinions, and details based on non-fiction texts instead of the persuasive essay.. Subsequent assessments show a 10% increase in the number of students scoring at proficiency on short written responses.
  - o Teacher teams focused on Periodic assessment data is analyzed by teacher teams in an effort to gauge students' learning needs. State assessment and Acuity customized assessment data indicate making inferences and writing skills are targeted areas of need across the school, particularly for special needs students and ELLs. Hence, teacher teams focus on planning lesson and designing tasks for ELLs and special needs collaborate and share best practices and resources to target this area of deficiency. Further interventions to address these deficit skills for are discussed and shared by grade. Consequently, special programs are purchased and key resources are used to address the needs of these sub-groups of students.

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

- Strengthen teachers' practice of setting goals to ensure that the analysis of student performance data lead to differentiated annual and interim goals in order to accelerate student learning. (3.2)
  - o Teams and individual teachers analyze periodic assessment data, such as Acuity assessment results, teacher-created test results and student work samples, to set data-driven goals for students in reading, writing, and math. Teachers set reading goals for students based on current reading proficiency and expected outcomes. However, teacher teams do not yet set measurable learning goals for targeted groups of students based on the results of performance data. Therefore, the use of additional resources and tasks that extend student learning are limited, thus minimizing teachers' ability to accelerate student learning.
- Bolster professional development to ensure purposeful differentiation in order to accelerate the growth of individual teachers and teacher leaders. (4.3)
  - o The schools' professional development focuses on supporting staff with the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, questioning, and creating and maintaining a safe learning environment. Some teachers attend monthly workshops that focus on curriculum mapping and creating academic tasks that challenge students. In addition, teachers have completed one round of inter-class visitations based on their interests and recommendations from administration. However, administration does not yet have a formalized,

differentiated plan of support that is based on the individual needs of staff. Furthermore, capacity building efforts are not rooted in and assessed by student and teacher data. This reduces the school's ability to ensure that the individual needs of teachers and that the development of leaders are consistently and effectively met and addressed, respectively. As a result, the individual growth of teachers and prospective teacher leaders is limited.

- Evaluate structures for organizing, aggregating and sharing performance data with students and families in order to make adjustments and ensure consistency across the school. (5.2)
  - o Administration has established a variety of processes for gathering and sharing student performance and progress data. Students' attendance, summative and behavioral data is shared with staff and families. Teachers gather information from ARIS and periodic assessments. Student conferencing in reading, writing, and math is a formalized process in all classrooms. These data are shared within the school and with students and families. Parents indicate that they receive feedback on the performance of their children via report cards, progress reports, phone calls and notes sent home. However, there is not a clearly layout out process in place to evaluate the effectiveness of how student performance information is organize and share with faculty and families. This prevents administration from making data informed, timely adjustments to data collection and dissemination practices that will result in coherent support from teachers, staff and families in increasing student outcomes.
- Further develop systems to evaluate capacity-building and leadership development in order to ensure continuity and build instructional coherence across the school. (5.4)
  - o Teacher teams meet regularly and discuss student work, instructional practices, share resources, and analyze student data. While team leaders meet on a monthly basis with the administrative team, there is no clear process in place for to determine the effectiveness of the team. This prevents administration from making timely improvements that propel professional collaborations to strengthen continuity across the school. As a result, the impact of teacher team work is limited.
  - o While the school has grade leaders, teacher team leaders, part-time teacher coaches, administrators, and Network support staff working to enhance professional growth and improve student outcome, there is no clear structure in place to regularly evaluate leadership development within the school. The absence of this structure results in administrators' inability to ensure targeted development for individual teachers, thus limiting effective distributive leadership opportunities.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 346 Abe Stark	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		
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**

<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>
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------