

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

M.S. 582

Middle School K582

**207 Bushwick Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Brian Walsh

Dates of review: March 20-21, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Fortunato Rubino

Associate Reviewer: Sara P. Carvajal

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

M.S. 582 is a middle school with 308 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 77% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders effectively use resources and make organizational decisions that support school initiatives to increase student outcomes. (1.3)
 - The school aligns its extended day program with student data harvested during the regular instructional day. Teachers use formative assessments, such as class tests, conferencing notes, and student journals to group students accordingly. Based on this data, the after-school program targets the most struggling students and exposes them to intensive non-fiction and test preparation materials that develop their critical thinking skills, steadily increasing their capacity for more rigorous coursework during the school day.
 - School leaders make purposeful programming decisions designed to maximize staff talent, based on abilities to effectively implement the school's work with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and meet students' varying needs. A particularly noteworthy administrative decision is the assignment of teachers to split-grade assignments, creating classroom environments that provide tailored instruction that meet common student needs and increase learning outcomes, as per school-based interim assessments.
- The school climate ensures a safe and nurturing educational environment where students receive academic and emotional supports that engage students cognitively and socially. (1.4)
 - The administration has implemented an advisory program that promotes a respect for environment which fosters increased positive interactions between all members of the school community. The implementation of the formal advisory periods (3x/week) as well as the professional development which preceded the program has benefited both the student body and staff, improving communication throughout the school. School leaders, staff and students enthusiastically admit that student bullying, incidents of student-to-student and student-to-teacher disrespectful behavior have decreased considerably as a direct result of the advisory program. As a result, student receptiveness to teaching has increased across subject areas.
 - The school has implemented a variety of initiatives that are designed to support students' educational and social emotional needs throughout the academic day. In addition to the advisory program, students state that guidance personnel, deans and administration are always available to support them when needed. Students also comment that their teachers and guidance personnel offer tutoring and support on their lunch hours and other periods that they are free if students need help. Students have stated that they feel very comfortable that if they don't understand something or they are having a problem, they will have opportunities after class to receive more support from staff members. They also have commented that the grade level Town Halls offer them the opportunity to voice their opinion. These structures have created a supportive learning environment that is designed to raise student achievement.
- The school community works closely with families by sharing relevant data and information related to student progress, thereby promoting high expectations for student learning and outcomes. (2.4)

- The school has structured a system of communication to families that includes periodic student progress reports, report cards, on-line testing and student data (ARIS). These data-driven structures complement a variety of other informational structures, such as parent newsletters, phone calls, emails and a school website (ms582.com). With this plethora of communication between the school and home, parents keep informed about student progress and school information. Parents feel very strongly that communication through the Parent Teacher Association, the School Leadership Team and the administration's open-door policy has offered them a multi-pronged approach to keeping abreast of their children's educational and personal successes. This home-school partnership has reinforced ideas and concepts experienced in school and increased the effectiveness of the children's ability to learn more effectively and to understand more rigorous ideas and concepts.
- The school has initiated a parent support process to assist family members in logging onto and understanding the data that is presented on the school's DOE statistic page, ARIS and the school's web site. Parents say they feel quite supported that they have the ability to make an appointment, and school personnel will sit with them to tutor them on using various electronic tools and explaining the data that is available at various websites. Parents strongly believe that this has greatly increased their ability to partner with the school and to be directly involved in the positive learning outcomes of their children.
- School leaders engage the school community in establishing goals which ensure a shared commitment that improve student learning outcomes. (3.1)
 - School leaders have formulated goals within their CEP (Comprehensive Education Plan) that address various levels of student achievement and focus on establishing a supportive learning environment designed to increase student outcomes. The steady implementation of these goals can be seen in the advisory program, the implemented literacy tasks and within the classrooms that were observed. The positive learning environment and added literacy tasks have established an effective environment to progressively achieve the goal of infusing the CCLS within the daily curriculum across subject areas.
 - During administrative cabinet meetings, June Planning and weekly team meetings, school leaders and staff have consistently examined and analyzed State assessments, Acuity and inquiry data, the School Survey, and student work samples to structure grade-specific goals designed to support student needs and increase learning outcomes. Consequently, teacher inquiry teams examine this data on a regular basis and discuss the individual needs of students to suggest additional supports that meet their needs and increase their capacity as learners.
- School leaders utilize a balance of formal and informal feedback structures that support planning and result in improved rigor in the classrooms. (4.1)
 - School leaders have incorporated a combination of purposeful teacher self-assessments, a researched-based model of informal observations and formal observations to clearly define expectations and promote effective teaching practices. The school further uses the researched-based framework to promote school-wide foci on the classroom environment, questioning techniques and the use of data to meet the individual needs of all students. This rubric is used to support the connection between the schools goals and the next steps that need to be taken within each teacher's pedagogy. New teachers are paired with more experienced teachers and are involved in a variety of mentoring activities designed to increase their ability to become more effective instructors. Teachers

and teams examine data, discuss lessons and share effective practices across the grades and subject areas that increase adult learning and positively affect student learning outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen curriculum planning across all grades so that performance-based tasks across subject areas ensure consistent rigor, reaping improved student outcomes for all sub-groups. (1.1)
 - School leaders have initiated an alignment of all curriculum areas to meet the needs of all students and to increase the rigor across all grades and subject areas. Teachers and teams have begun the journey of collaboratively developing curriculum maps that address the CCLS and are designed to include complex literary and/or math tasks. At this time, however, not all subject area maps are complete and inclusive of the CCLS. Several teachers and teams are still discussing and developing units of study that are inclusive of the full scope of a unit, suggested materials, key essential questions and embedded approaches of study that will support struggling and novice teachers in addressing students via differentiated instruction.
 - School leaders have structured various professional development activities around student expectations and the development of rigor in the classroom setting to increase student outcomes. In addition, there has been an infusion of non-fiction literature across the various subject areas and this has increased a higher level of discussion within some classrooms. Though there is some evidence that certain written tasks have been completed using a specific rubric, there is little evidence that there exists the consistent use of grade-wide or subject-specific rubrics, benchmark papers and common assessments that promote rigorous instruction across all grades and subject areas for key sub-groups. As a result, the school lacks a clear alignment of curriculum and assessment across the grades that foster a significant impact on academic growth at this time.
- Promote greater consistency in instructional practices so that student engagement in all subject areas and grades leads to improved student learning outcomes across the school. (1.2)
 - A few teachers across the school use strategic instructional approaches, such as short focused mini-lessons, leveled and multi-leveled grouping, conferencing, and extended questioning. These practices prove to engage students and create a supportive setting that promotes student thinking and increases understanding of the ideas and concepts presented. Many of these practices are aligned to school beliefs that all students can learn. However, there is inconsistency in the implementation of these effective practices for at-risk students and English language learners. In particular, even after the mini-lesson has been completed, various groups of at-risk learners still experience difficulty in understanding and articulating what is expected of them to complete the independent assignment. As a result, the students who do not connect well with the assignments on a regular basis also struggle with succeeding on State assessments.
 - Classroom visits reveal that teachers are in the process of implementing curricula aligned to the CCLS and are in varying stages of engaging diverse student groups to effectively impact student learning outcomes. In some classes, teachers are transitioning from a more literal to a more figurative approach while challenging students to restate, supply corroborative information or to state an

application of ideas or concepts that are being discussed. There is evidence that some teachers are scaffolding materials, assignments and outcomes to address the needs of diverse learners within the classroom setting, but this is inconsistent across the various grades and subject areas. As a result, student writing demonstrates vastly uneven levels of understanding of content matter.

- Strengthen team capacity to construct and analyze interim assessments so that team members target student strengths and weaknesses, thereby increasing the effectiveness of instructional outcomes. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams use summative and formative data to discuss student performance and in strategizing instructional needs that improve student outcomes. Teachers discuss individual student challenges, and team members propose various supports, services or interventions to promote more effective student learning. However, the school lacks ongoing conversations regarding grade level or subject specific rubrics. More importantly, the school does not yet steadily demonstrate how student work or assessments are used to determine the effectiveness of classroom curricula and consequently used to make pivotal instructional decisions. There is little evidence of student self-assessment within class lessons that lead to improved student learning outcomes. Additionally, one teacher team, in particular, discusses progress on the periodic assessments and how data affects various students, but the team does not discuss or evaluate the effectiveness of classroom practices on student learning outcomes. As a result, interim data does not fully shape the necessary changes to pedagogy across classrooms.
- Expand the student goal-setting process so that students take ownership of their learning in order to accelerate student progress. (3.2)
 - The school has established a good trajectory for data-driven, grade-wide goal setting that aligns current student data with its evolving CCLS-aligned curriculum. In particular, teachers and teacher teams speak confidently to the initial goal setting practice with students which occurs at the beginning of the year. During team meetings, there are concrete discussions of individual student data and the challenges that students experience in various subject areas. However, there is little discussion of the students' active role in understanding and achieving the goals. Consequently, the current process limits the student ownership and accountability that motivates and positions students for increased independence and improved self-driven learning outcomes or involves them in providing input toward the tailored instruction that would most benefit them.
- Refine action plans to include interim checkpoints for all target groups that include measureable outcomes which track student progress. (5.3)
 - School leaders and teacher teams have analyzed various data sources and set yearly goals to increase student outcomes. However, the school lacks a consistent system of interim checkpoints that analyzes and assesses the progress of these goals. At this time, it is also not evident that all teachers use interim data to make adjustments to goals whether they have or have not met desired targeted gains. This limits the ability of the school to monitor progress of long-term goals set for the school year. As a result, the school restricts itself in monitoring the progress of its long-term goals and the interim impact made on students' academic growth and in consequently making the necessary adjustments in a timely fashion.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: M.S. 582	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
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