

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 018 Park Terrace

K-8 school M018

**4124 9 AVENUE
MANHATTAN
NY 10034**

Principal: Connie Mejia

Dates of review: January 9-10, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 018 Park Terrace is a K-8 school with 398 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 98% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 44% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school integrates extensive support with outside partners in order to enhance and accelerate the academic and personal growth of students. (4.4)
 - o The school has developed a strong guidance team to support parents and students. The administration meets regularly with members of this team to discuss student needs to assure that the school's goals for students' personal and academic development are being met. The academic progress of students is closely monitored by school staff and celebrated at awards assemblies and through the student of the month program. As a method of promoting a positive learning environment, the team works collaboratively with teachers to plan lessons with a focus on character education. Parents report that the guidance team has been instrumental in helping with social issues related to their children even after they graduate from this school. The guidance team receives support from network specialists so that they can continue to develop skills and resources in order to further support the social and academic needs of students.
 - o The school collaborates with various organizations to provide students and families with academic and social support to reach school wide goals. In addition to after-school programs that provide support to struggling students and newly arrived English language learners, the school works collaboratively with community based organizations such as Washington Heights Inwood Coalition to provide targeted students with homework assistance, additional tutoring and arts programs. The school partners with financial institutions such as Bank of America to build student awareness of necessary steps in developing financial independence. Rosie's Theatre Kids also provides opportunities for students to be exposed to the world of theatre by taking students to Broadway plays. Exposure to these programs allows students a view of possible career choices leading to greater awareness of college career readiness.
- The principal makes strategic decisions to advance school goals and encourage collaboration in order to promote improved student outcomes. (1.3)
 - o The principal has allocated funds and made organizational decisions to support professional development for teachers and key personnel. Funds have been allocated to purchase SMART Boards for classrooms and the technology teacher's schedule was modified to enable him to provide additional support for teachers. Coaches, lead teachers and the assistant principal are sent to professional development sessions that focus on the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to enable them to better support classroom teachers. The principal has also set aside funds to purchase professional development services from organizations such as Reading Reform and Teachers College to further support the development of literacy instruction in order to improve student achievement. As result of the allocation of funds to support literacy instruction that is aligned to the demands of the CCLS, across classrooms the volume and quality of student work has improved as evidenced by classroom visits and a review of student work.
 - o The principal has structures to assure that hiring and teacher assignment decisions are reflective of the needs of the school. Hiring decisions are made by a committee made up of a United Federation of Teachers representative, coaches and classroom teachers to assure that any candidate accepted is a good match for the school. The principal requires all candidates to execute a

demonstration lesson before acceptance to the school. Teacher assignments are made by closely analyzing student achievement. The administration then meets with all teachers individually to discuss student performance data to assure that teacher placement results in a positive impact on student progress. As a result of this inclusive teacher placement and hiring decision process, the school has developed a cadre of teachers that is suitably equipped to help the school's mission of enhancing student progress.

- Teachers utilize a wide range of assessment data to analyze student performance in order to adjust instructional decisions to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
 - o To evaluate student work grade level teams have developed rubrics that align to the school's key standards. Teachers use data sources such as standardized test results, reading levels and results of interim assessments, but it is the analysis of student work that drives teachers' efforts to plan instruction to meet the needs of subgroups of students. Teachers engage in a continuous cycle of task development, analysis of student work products and revision of tasks in order to produce tasks that engage students and measure progress towards grade level standards. This continuous revision of tasks by teacher teams has led to academic gains by all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. In particular, student work demonstrates that students have made progress towards the school goal of improving expository writing by having students cite evidence from texts to support a theory.
- The school has established structures for providing teachers with cycles of feedback using a common framework to improve teacher practice across classrooms. (4.1)
 - o The school has chosen to use the Danielson framework as a teacher development tool, with a focus on planning, preparation and instruction. All teachers have received written feedback on the identified components multiple times and are working on implementing recommendations. Intervisitations have been scheduled to enable teachers to view the implementation of effective practices by colleagues. Teacher teams are asked to reflect on how their work aligns to the two identified components and submit written documentation to the administration. Teachers also report that instructional coaches provide feedback on their progress based on these two domains. Student progress data, feedback forms from teacher team meetings, as well as informal and formal observations are used to make decisions regarding teacher assignment and to plan professional development. As a result of the school's focused feedback on planning, preparation and instruction, across classrooms there is evidence that teachers are progressing in the implementation of a coherent curriculum and thoughtful grouping of students based on student work.
- Teachers work collaboratively in teacher teams to strengthen instruction and improve student learning. (4.2)
 - o A majority of teachers are engaged in teacher teams. Teams of teachers begin their work by analyzing summative as well as formative data to identify areas of strengths and areas in need of improvement. As a result of this data analysis, teacher teams then revise units, tasks and rubrics to reflect key standards, such as opinion and expository writing. The effectiveness of implemented units and tasks is continuously assessed by the analysis of student work. Teacher teams also have a focus on improving the results of subgroups of students across classes as part of their inquiry work. The work of one team observed focused on students who received a high level two on standardized English language arts exam. Another team focused on students who scored at the intermediate level of

the writing portion of the New York State English language assessment exam. The performance of these targeted students is closely monitored to assure that tasks adequately challenge and engage students. This thoughtful analysis of curriculum, tasks and student work enables teachers to make timely decisions regarding the needs of students to assure that they make academic gains.

- o Teachers play a key role in school decision making related to school-wide teaching practices. Teachers representing grades across the school are part of the principal's cabinet to provide input regarding the instructional practices of the school. Teachers are empowered to make instructional decisions during teacher team meetings and they have a deep knowledge of the rubrics used to analyze student work because they were instrumental in their development. Teachers regularly use rubrics to guide lesson planning to assure that classroom instruction adequately prepares students for end of unit tasks. As a result, teachers are invigorated and look forward to the process of revision of instructional practices as a result of analysis of student work and strongly believe that this will lead to improved student outcomes.
- The school uses various sources of data to regularly evaluate instructional and curricular decisions to help all students meet the demands of the CCLS. (5.1)
 - o Analysis of student work products is continuously used to judge effectiveness of the curriculum and make necessary revisions. Result of interim assessments are also closely monitored to assure that the skills identified as a focus are being properly addressed by the instructional program and that revisions are made as needed in order to maximize student progress.
 - o Teacher teams play a crucial role in assuring that student achievement data is consistently used to monitor the effectiveness of instructional decisions and that the school's resources are being used to maximize student achievement. Standardized test scores, Acuity assessments and student work products are used to form flexible grouping of students in order to provide support during the day and afterschool, thereby assuring that the academic needs of all subgroups of students are being met.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the curriculum offers a wide range of challenging and engaging learning experiences for all students in order to improve student outcomes. (1.1)
 - o The school has a strong focus on helping students understand non-fiction texts and on expository writing. Grade level planning of tasks is evident across grades due to common planning by teachers. However, tasks and questioning are generally not rigorous, asking students to mostly restate facts learned, and as a result students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are not provided with opportunities to deeply explore topics that would increase their knowledge base in order to accelerate academic progress.
 - o Curriculum and tasks are refined during teacher team meetings. Students who are learning English comprise over fifty percent of the student population, therefore much of the discussion at the teacher team level is focused on designing tasks that provide an entry point for English language learners and that can adequately and accurately provide information on their progress. However, tasks are not yet sufficient scaffolded or differentiated in order to engage and challenge all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

- Further develop the consistency of differentiated instruction, based on data, school-wide, so that all students are appropriately challenged to demonstrate higher levels of thinking and produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - o Throughout the school there is a focus on meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities. Teachers are asked to incorporate strategies to help these subgroups of students master core concepts. This has led to the incorporation of prompts to facilitate student discussions, clear objectives, explicit charts and modeling into teacher lesson plans. The school has also asked teachers to use the Depth of Knowledge matrix to plan questions at various levels to promote higher order thinking skills. However, across classrooms these strategies are not consistently implemented in order to provide support and challenge all students to fully engage in the curriculum.
- Increase support for parents to understanding student data and promote informed parental involvement in school decision making so that there can be a shared commitment to improve student outcomes. (2.4)
 - o The school provides parents of struggling students with frequent opportunities to meet with administrators and teachers to discuss the progress of their children and how to support them. Parents report that through conversations with teachers, guidance counselor, parent coordinator and intervention teachers they are made aware of their child's academic goals. However, the school does not yet have systems in place for providing all parents with feedback on the progress of their children with the same frequency and, as a result, higher achieving students do not receive the same level of support at home to enable them to make further academic gains.
 - o Parents report that they have adequate communication with the school. The principal's open door policy encourages parents to engage in the day to day activities of the school. School-wide parent orientation meetings, Parent Association meetings and Title III parent workshops are used to provide parents with information on how to access student achievement data and how to interpret this data. However, this information is transmitted mainly to those that regularly attend the meetings, resulting in a limited number of parents who have access to information regarding their child's achievement.
- Strengthen systems for gathering and analyzing classroom level data in order to further refine student learning goals for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, in order to improve student performance. (3.3)
 - o Results of interim assessments in English language arts, and math, reading levels and student writing samples are used to monitor student progress. Grade level teachers work collaboratively to use this data to modify lessons and tasks administered to students. However, the results of assessments are not yet communicated to parents in a timely manner, limiting their ability to support their child's academic development.
 - o Student data gathered school-wide is used by teachers and teacher teams to track student progress and set goals for individual and groups of students. However, across classrooms teachers do not gather student achievement data related to classroom tasks to adequately adjust teaching plans for students on daily basis. As a result, the needs of students who do not master key concepts are not immediately addressed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 018 Park Terrace	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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------