

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 020 Anna Silver
Elementary school M020

166 ESSEX STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10002

Principal: JAMES LEE

Dates of review: January 17 - 18, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 020 Anna Silver is an Elementary school with 626 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 60% Hispanic, 3% White, 28% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 17% 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 94.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Staff nurture a positive learning environment and outstanding partnerships with organizations that, together, result in extensive enrichment and support services for students and families. (4.4)
 - o All students benefit from over twenty corporate and community partnership programs that engage students artistically, academically and social-emotionally at very high levels. For example, fourth grade students design and market a perfume campaign with Estee Lauder Company, while fifth grade students choreograph and perform with the American Ballet Theater. As a result, students gain invaluable, real world learning opportunities and exposure to different careers. The school also maximizes outreach to local agencies and community partners to support students and families with counseling and making healthy choices. Staff use a common management tool of silver stars to reward positive behaviors and they follow a "3:1 rule" of giving at least three positive comments to students for every one concern. This thoughtful nurturing of positive school culture by all staff has led to an improved student attendance rate as students want very much to be in school and learning.
- The school's instructional and organizational goals demonstrate high caliber, long-term direction for the school. (3.1)
 - o The school's "theory of action" is supported by major stakeholders and is articulated routinely by school leaders to help understand key school decisions. The basic theory is that in order for students to excel, they have to first love school, engage actively in language-rich activities, and experience positive reinforcement in learning. From this theory, it is apparent how and why the school has set short- and long-term goals, including increasing second language learning, improving students' writing and thinking across subjects and promoting meaningful external partnership programs. The productive cycle of school-wide goal setting has propelled this school forward to develop an innovative dual language Mandarin program and to increase student enrollment over the past three years.
 - o School leaders model and expect a high degree of data analysis to generate school and student performance goals. As a result, teachers and staff have good systems in place to review student data in cycles as part of strategic action planning. A good example has been the school's focused attention on performance of special education students with careful pairing of co-teachers, sensible professional development and close monitoring of student progress. This has led to an impressive rate of mainstreaming and improved academic outcomes for students with individualized education plans.
- Resources of all types are harnessed effectively to elevate coherence of practices. (1.3)
 - o Administration makes proactive organizational decisions and develop systems that ensure continuity of practices. For example, when parent demand for Mandarin bilingual services spiked two years ago, school leaders tenaciously researched and implemented what has become a highly successful Mandarin dual language program. They created a dual language advisory board and

- invested wisely in professional development in language acquisition strategies across classrooms. Therefore, while addressing a specific need for English language learners, the school has maximized resources that benefit all students' learning. Moreover, to prevent the dual language program from being a separate track, school leaders have taken steps to integrate cultural learning such as all second graders studying Chinese dance. This approach then improves the school's instructional coherence and is evidenced by meaningful student work products.
- Teachers use wisely a broad range of assessment data that leads to effective instructional planning and interventions for students. (2.2)
 - o All classroom teachers collect baseline student performance data three times per year, including running records, on-demand writing tasks and Everyday Math unit assessments. These, along with quarterly social studies and science performance assessments, supplement State test data and form the basis of grade teams monitoring individual student and subgroup achievement. Teachers cite student-specific learning outcomes during grade team meetings, which leads to targeted interventions, group work and conferencing during lessons. Therefore, there is good alignment of assessment practices with instructional decisions.
 - School leaders prioritize professional development and teacher collaboration that advances clear expectations for teaching practices. (4.1)
 - o Both the principal and assistant principal pursue a unified and sensible approach to observational feedback and professional development for teachers. They have developed a research-based teacher observation checklist for literacy workshops that details clear expectations about structuring and teaching each lesson. In addition, teachers meet individually with administrators at least three times a year to discuss student work data, goals and plans, which then guide strategic instructional decisions. School leaders also provide meaningful opportunities for teacher collaboration and staff development. As a result, the vast majority of teachers are satisfied with the quantity and quality of feedback about their teaching practices, which leads to improved quality and consistency of instruction across classrooms, as evidenced during classroom visits.
 - There is strategic investment and accountability in teacher teams that then strengthens teacher leadership and adult capacity. (4.2)
 - o All classroom teachers meet weekly in an extended block and review student work, calibrate their assessments and plan units of study. Additionally, classroom and cluster teachers have common planning time built into their program schedules at least twice each month, which helps align curricula and project-based work. Along with ample meeting time, there is coaching for grade leaders in effective facilitation strategies and monitoring by Instructional Council. As a result, teachers appear comfortable and productive in their collaboration and planning together. In turn, the school benefits from little teacher turnover and improved professional discourse. The school has strong structures in place for maximizing teachers' collaborative work and for developing future leaders, as many teachers reported that they aspire to become grade leaders and as demonstrated in the most recent School Survey where it was shown that 88% of teachers stated they respect colleagues who take the lead in school improvement efforts.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop curricula and academic tasks that challenge students to think critically and problem solve creatively so that all students are prepared for future learning. (1.1)
 - o Teacher teams organize and develop curricula with good attention to writing across content areas and implementing performance tasks through social studies, science and math. Two recent interdisciplinary units on bread in kindergarten and the Panama Canal in third grade showcase well that teachers infuse rigorous benchmarks and plan for multiple learning styles in their curriculum design. However, too many tasks assigned in class lessons still lack sufficient challenge. For example, first grade students in a technology class fill in the blanks on a PowerPoint slide show from a prescribed word list about the Chinese lunar new year. Low-level tasks are offset by powerful examples of critical thinking, like a fifth grade co-teaching lesson where students pose questions about a main character as background research for writing a mini-biography. This inconsistency of tasks across classrooms produces unequal expectations for thinking and learning by all students, hindering students' overall academic growth.
- Deepen the consistent practices of differentiation already in place to maximize student learning. (1.2)
 - o Students appear motivated and sufficiently engaged in class as they learn individually, within small groups and in whole-class settings. Teachers differentiate across classrooms, especially in varying questions, using scaffolds and planning for multiple learning styles. For example, third grade students in a science cluster class participated actively in measuring the force required to lift a weight up an incline plane while the teacher modeled the impact of a wedge between books and provided some students with a graphic organizer. This lesson was abuzz with student collaboration, experimentation, reflection and serious thinking. However, some lessons are mostly teacher-directed or lack adequate extensions to push the thinking of higher performing students. This leads to a general level of student engagement for all students with more meaningful and challenging learning occurring in some classes, limiting opportunities for all students to produce meaningful work products.
- Strengthen teachers' feedback to students about their work and progress to identify clear next learning steps. (3.3)
 - o All teachers confer regularly with students in class and provide useful feedback to families via progress report in January and regular report cards and meetings. Grade teams track and analyze student work data thoughtfully, which they then leverage for targeted interventions and conferences. For example, teachers have revised unit plans based upon students' declines, and boys in particular, in writing on the October assessment. However, some teachers share generic feedback in their written comments about next steps for improvement, which prevents students from advancing fully in their learning. There is good consistency to all posted and completed student work receiving teacher feedback, yet students are not always clear what is meant by the teachers' comments, hindering opportunities for academic progress and growth.
- Refine the school's monitoring of assessment and grading practices with increased development of rubrics in order to improve students' understanding of best work. (5.2)

- o Staff invest wisely in developing and revising rubrics to evaluate student work. This multi-year effort has produced meaningful rubrics with student-friendly language for each on-demand writing assessment. Additionally, teachers select anchor papers of student writing to calibrate accurately what levels one to four entail and to support students with possible next steps. However, there are not enough examples of rubrics for performance tasks across content areas. Instead, teachers rely on standardized tests and quizzes, which are less instructive to students about how to improve their learning, thereby limiting potential progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 020 Anna Silver	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				
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							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed