

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek**

**Elementary school M048**

**4360-78 BROADWAY  
MANHATTAN  
NY 10033**

**Principal: TRACY WALSH**

**Dates of review: January 30 and 31, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek is an elementary school with 601 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 92% Hispanic, 3% White, 2% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 16% 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 94.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has established a safe, welcoming and orderly environment that is conducive to student and adult learning. (1.4)
  - o The principal promotes the message that “We are all on the same team and play an important part in keeping students safe in school.” Both teachers and parents are enlisted to support this vision. Parents, who whole heartedly share in this belief, are always welcomed at the school and are important partners in this work. They believe that the school is a safe, nurturing place where their children can learn. Results of the learning environment survey demonstrate that ninety-seven percent of parents are satisfied with the education that their children receive at the school and an even higher percentage believe that their children are safe. Parents report that they volunteer countless hours at the school to support the efforts of the school. The school’s union representative indicated that in addition to the professional development offered at the school, the principal encourages staff to attend outside conferences in an effort to support adult learning. The collective efforts of school staff and parents has resulted in the establishment of a school climate that is relaxed yet orderly that nurtures and supports student and adult learning.
  - o The school has established an attendance committee, led by the guidance counselor and the pupil accounting secretary, to monitor student attendance. They meet on a regular basis to discuss students who may have excessive absences or social and/or emotional needs. Before morning arrival, calls to the homes of students who have a history of arriving late to school are made by school staff. Students who need more support than the guidance team is equipped to provide are referred to the Columbia Presbyterian Clinic Program housed in the school. The principal and parents report that the excellent collaborative work of the guidance counselor and the doctor on staff helps address the social and emotional needs of students, and this helps promote the emotional well being of students which, in turn, enables students to focus their efforts on making academic progress.
- The principal makes informed organizational decisions regarding the use of time, funding and personnel to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
  - o Through the close analysis of student data, the principal has instituted various structures to assure that the school’s efforts support continued school improvement. The principal has allocated funds to support the work of a cohort of teachers working afterschool engaged in the writing of curriculum units that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teachers on the second and fourth grade teams who are part of the Department of Education’s pilot program to help schools develop CCLS aligned tasks are provided with opportunities to share their leaning across grades. The principal has also allocated funds to hire Aussie consultants to support teachers. Teacher teams are scheduled to meet two times each week, allowing teachers to engage in the development and revisions of the curriculum and tasks to assure that all students are being challenged and engaged in rigorous tasks.
- The school uses various sources of assessments to make instructional decisions in order to improve student outcomes. (2.2)

- o Teacher teams have developed rubrics that are aligned to the school's chosen standards. Student writing, that is assessed using these rubrics, drives the work of teacher teams. Teachers' deep understanding of the rubrics allow them to skillfully analyze student work to identify student strengths and areas in need of improvement. In conjunction with results of writing tasks, the needs of subgroups of students are identified by close analysis of New York State English Language Assessment (NYSESLAT) results and reading levels to differentiate instruction for subgroups of students. Teachers work closely with the assistant principals to formulate instructional plans to enable all students to meet projected academic gains. As a result of analysis of student work, the curriculum is continuously revised to assure that all students are making progress toward grade level standards. For example, since last year, teacher teams have worked extensively on aligning the school's curriculum to the CCLS as evidenced by the school's curriculum maps.
- The school has established a short list of goals, based on analysis of student performance, to promote student achievement. (3.1)
  - o The school community shares the principal's belief that improvement in student writing will lead to improved student outcomes on standardized exams. The school's leadership team and grade level teacher teams closely analyzed results of standardized exams to identify school-wide performance trends as well as that of subgroups of students. This led to the development of a school-wide focus on helping students write effective essays, stating their opinions with supporting evidence from the text. Another school goal is to increase the complexity of tasks administered to students. The school's curricular calendar has been revised to increase time spent on nonfiction reading and expository writing. Teachers have created data tracking spreadsheets to monitor student progress. Teachers report that they have seen much improvement in students' ability to effectively state an opinion and provide support from different sources read. Discussions with administrators and teacher teams revealed support for the school's instructional goals and methods for tracking student progress. As a result of close monitoring of student work using rubrics that are aligned to the CCLS, administrators and teachers share in the belief that this will lead to improved outcomes on standardized reading and math exams.
- Teacher teams utilize effective structures to support collaborative review of student work and make curricular decisions in order to improve student outcomes. (4.2)
  - o Teacher teams utilize clearly established protocols to conduct their meetings and teachers rotate responsibility in leading team meetings where agenda items are centered on analyzing student work products. All teachers have a voice in the process of collecting and analyzing data based on student work and are expected to be active participants by sharing student achievement results. Teacher teams also share their work with other grade level teacher teams. As a result, teachers can better prepare their students to meet grade level goals because they have an understanding of the instructional demands across grades.
  - o Teacher teams are involved in the development of units of study, designing assessments and analysis of student work. Teachers discuss performance of students across classrooms as well as individual students. Achievement trends are discussed and teachers share strategies that have helped their students master writing skills such as organization, fluency and word choice. Teachers also discuss specific needs of subgroups of students such as English language learners and students with disabilities. Teachers are excited by this collaborative

approach to planning instruction in order to promote improvement in student writing across grades. As a result of these teacher team discussions, strategies such as using visuals, modeling and having students highlight key features of a text to support their comprehension are now consistent parts of school-wide teacher practice.

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

- Increase the rigor of classroom tasks and questioning to enable students to engage in higher order thinking skills in order to improve the academic outcomes of all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. (1.1)
  - o Teacher teams are invested in the work of aligning curriculum units to the CCLS and developing rigorous tasks to assess student progress. Teacher leaders who are part of the Department of Education's pilot program in English language arts and math provide much guidance across grades in the development of CCLS aligned units and tasks. However, across classrooms, the tasks that are being implemented are not rigorous enough, therefore there are missed opportunities for higher levels of thinking by students.
  - o Teachers are mindful that they should be developing tasks that engage a variety of students as well as scaffolds to support student mastery. Most teachers articulate that they planned activities to challenge and engage all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. However, the majority of lessons observed were teacher directed and most tasks did not challenge students. Differentiated practices are not consistently implemented across classrooms, leading to the disengagement of students and as a result, learning by all students is not maximized.
- Develop greater consistency in the implementation of differentiated strategies across classrooms to appropriately challenge and engage all students in order to elevate the performance of all students (1.2)
  - o Teachers of classes visited articulated plans to differentiate instruction for subgroups of students. Teachers reported that they had planned using same themed books at various levels, differentiated tasks and grouping students for small group instruction as methods to differentiate instruction. Many teachers also stated that they would use differentiated questions to help students access content. A variety to teaching methods such as whole class teaching, small group instruction and one on one coaching was evident in some classrooms. However, across classrooms the instructional strategies implemented were not consistently differentiated for subgroups of students. Questions posed by teachers were generally lower level and did not challenge students to think critically to enable all students to produce meaningful work products, therefore students are missing learning opportunities that would help them to be more adequately prepared for the demands of the CCLS.
- Implement a system for providing teachers with cycles of short frequent feedback based on a research based framework in order to improve teacher practice. (4.1)
  - o The school has provided extensive professional development on the Danielson Framework to assure that all teachers are thoroughly familiar with the expectations related to the school's chosen components. The two assistant principals and selected teachers attended professional development outside the school in order to build their expertise to support all staff members. Through frequent classroom visits, assistant principals are aware of teacher strengths and

- weaknesses and support teacher development by providing strategies to help improve teacher practice. The principal made it one of her goals to support professional growth by providing teachers with feedback from cycles of observations and so far she has conducted some informal observations. However, only some teachers have received feedback from informal observations and the feedback provided is not related to the chosen framework. As a result, across classrooms expectations for effective practices are not clear and best practices are not consistently implemented.
- Increase opportunities to provide families with information regarding the progress of their children to further promote parent involvement in school decision making in order to support student achievement. (2.4)
    - o The school's open door policy enables parents to be active participants in the affairs of the school. Parents on the school's leadership team are actively engaged in instructional and programmatic decisions in order to help improve student achievement. Parents also report that teachers in the school are always willing to discuss the progress of their children, often providing personal cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses. In addition, parents are encouraged to make appointments with administrators, teachers and the guidance counselor to discuss student progress. Even so, parents receive written communication regarding the progress of their children mostly in the form of report cards. As such, their ability to fully engage in meaningful open discussions regarding the progress of their students towards meeting grade level expectations is limited.
    - o The school's active parent association does outreach to families in order to understand their concerns and suggestions for school improvement. Parent leaders meet with the principal on a regular basis to discuss parental issues and recommendations. Parents report that the principal is always accessible and willing to listen. The school's leadership team is also instrumental in assuring that parents have an opportunity to provide input into school wide decisions. However, presently input is mainly provided by a core group of parents and as a result the school does not receive input from a wide range of the parent body.
  - Create greater consistency and coherence in the collection of data in order to facilitate the analysis of student performance trends, leading to more informed school-wide decisions. (5.2)
    - o Teacher teams continuously gather data about student performance on CCLS-aligned writing tasks. Data gathered by teacher teams is submitted to administrators for close analysis and review of this data allows the school to analyze trends for grade level performance tasks. However, the school is still developing structures to aggregate data in various subjects. As such, opportunities to monitor school wide progress and to revise curricular decisions regarding progress towards preparing students to meet the demands of the CCLS are limited.
    - o Throughout the school, there is consistent evidence that teachers provide feedback to students using grade level rubrics. Some teacher teams have also begun developing student checklists based on the rubrics in order facilitate student use of key concepts to guide their work. Parents are aware that the school utilizes rubrics to assess student work but the school has not yet developed a system to provide families with ongoing feedback regarding student performance. As a result, parents are not effectively enabled to adequately support the school's efforts towards helping their children meet grade level standards.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 048 P.O. Michael J. Buczek	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>
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