

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 138

K-12 all grades school M138

**144-176 EAST 128 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10035**

Principal: JACQUELINE KEANE

Dates of review: March 26-28, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Sheryl Watkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 138 is a K-12 all grades school with 473 students from kindergarten through grade 9. The school population comprises 35% Black, 52% Hispanic, 9% White, 4% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 70% of the students enrolled and girls account for 30%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 83.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students' personal growth is a result of the supportive and mutually respectful learning environment. (1.4)
 - o The school is in year two of a five-year plan to establish a Positive Behavior Intervention Support program (PBIS). As of October 2011, the PBIS team targeted support to those students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) contain mandates for full-time individual Crisis Management Paraprofessionals. This assures that each student's personal needs are known and addressed. The program sets clear expectations around a focus on building communication, self-advocacy, respect for all, and safety (CARS). A team of staff from multiple sites within the organization meets regularly to coordinate and support social-emotional needs of students and share practices and strategies that have been successful. Students earn age-appropriate rewards: points at the elementary school level and school generated 'dollars' at the middle and high school levels. These rewards are exchanged for privileges such as participating in club periods on Friday afternoons. Certificates of Excellence are distributed at school-wide celebrations. Initial data analysis shows a reduction of nearly 80% of behavioral referrals per day for these students and has resulted in the removal of Crisis Paraprofessionals as full time mandates for four students. This improved behavior also allows for more instructional time on task, which promotes academic achievement.
- Effective programs and collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to develop functional academic and social/emotional skills in order to reach their maximum potential related to post-secondary opportunities. (4.4)
 - o At the high school level students are provided with in-house opportunities to engage in supported work experiences. Students perform maintenance work, manage the sorting and delivery of mail room for all programs within the co-located building that hosts their school program, and staff a traveling 'café' that provides morning beverages throughout the building. Once students have demonstrated competencies in the predetermined pre-vocational readiness skills, they are then transitioned into community-based work experiences, where school staff assures preparedness for post-secondary employment. As a result, over 50% of students over 18 years of age are on track to access appropriate and higher-skill level job opportunities after graduation.
 - o The school partners with the Association for Handicapped and Retarded Children and United Cerebral Palsy to provide after school programs for their students. These programs not only build social skills, they assure that students continue to develop and apply their communication skills. In addition, at the middle school level, partnerships with Henry Street Settlement offers experiences within the arts, as students prepare for a spring performance that highlights their dance and vocal and talents. Also, the Musical Explorers program develops students' artistic talents which are showcased in a culminating performance at Carnegie Hall. These partnerships ensure that students have maximum opportunities to build their communication skills and further develop confidence in themselves as active participants in school and community activities as they apply their unique talents and gifts.

- The school works closely with and involves parents in school-wide decision making, resulting in a shared commitment to continued progress for all students. (2.4)
 - Parents appreciate the open-door policy of the school that makes them always feel welcome to visit and chat with staff at arrival and dismissal. The rapid response to issues and concerns by administration reassures them that their voices are heard. Daily communication with families occurs through phone calls and email, where parents are informed of their children's progress and information related to behaviors. Parents typically reply to this outreach, offering the school information on the same progress and behaviors at home. Parents state that "teachers want them to be more involved," and they champion the school's efforts to "push [their children] beyond their boundaries." The newly elected Parent Association leadership team has worked diligently to raise parent participation, resulting in attendance at meetings increasing from 6 to over 25 parents at monthly meetings. A Family Fun Day is being collaboratively planned with the goal of further "bringing the school together." As a result of these valued communications, parents feel comfortable, and often bring issues to the school that impact on students. For example, policies related to the maintenance of shared spaces in co-located buildings have been modified to address parental concerns.

- Budgetary allocations and use of teacher time supports the school's goals to build expressive communication and results in increased performance for all students. (1.3)
 - In support of the school's communication goal, administration uses grant monies in excess of \$300,000 to furnish 30 classrooms with Smartboard technology. All teachers have iPads that are used to generate IEPs. In addition, these iPads are frequently used by students as an additional means of building communication and engagement. The school celebrates and partially attributes a reduction of speech therapy as a related service for 47 students to the increase in technological communication devices available to support learning.
 - Teachers are scheduled to meet collaboratively and do so once per week, if not more, in cohorts of staff serving like populations of students. Facilitated by a lead teacher, staff works to align curriculum, evaluate student work, and design instruction to meet the school's goals. This has resulted in improvement in instructional practices as evidenced by the high levels of student engagement across classrooms.

- Teacher development is supported by increased observations guided by a research-based framework that promotes higher levels of practice. (4.1)
 - The school consistently applies the Professional Teaching Standards to all formal and informal observations. Feedback to teachers is given through informal conversations and a completed checklist of what was observed, including areas for further development. Often, teachers, predominantly those new to teaching or the school, are directed to District-based professional development offerings or interclass visitations. These observations have led to staff assignment changes intended to improve student outcomes. For example, the most skilled and highly trained teachers have been assigned to serve the incoming students in the elementary school, as research indicates the greatest post-secondary outcomes for students when skill development begins at the onset of their school experience. As a result, Assessment of Basic Language and Literacy Skills (ABLLS) assessments show an ever-increasing level of skill development for these students.

What the school needs to improve

- Use tools that organize and aggregate data so administrators and teachers can identify trends in student performance and use this information to make curricular and organizational decisions. (2.3)
 - o Teachers collect a wide variety of data related to student performance that is connected to IEP goals. This information is not aggregated or organized in a way that enables the administration or teacher teams working on specific skill-related inquiry to make meaningful and informed decisions about instruction and curricula. They do not have information related to trends in overall performance of students across some sub-group categories, thus preventing them from make informed decisions at the school, teacher team and classroom levels related the effective implementation of curricular and/or instructional decisions.
- Develop systems for evaluating progress towards school-wide and teacher team goals in order to measure improvements and make timely modifications to increase learning for all students. (5.3)
 - o The Comprehensive Education Plan identifies goals for student improvement and is built upon from year to year , including action plans for meeting said goals. In addition, teacher teams, specifically the PBIS team and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) alignment team, at the high school level have goals that guide their work. However, the system to determine the progress made towards meeting these goals is not in place at both the teacher team and administrative levels. As a result, administrators and teachers are unable to determine where improvements in plans or strategies to meet the goals are needed and cannot make adjustments to the resources and supports in order to promote increased progress, both academically and socially, for all students.
- Build consistency of academic tasks within the standards-based curriculum so that learning experiences lead to higher levels of cognitive engagement and student achievement. (1.1)
 - o The school uses a district-developed standards-based English language arts curriculum that is supplemented by the Unique Learning curriculum across all programs and sites. This assures that students are being exposed to the expectations of the CCLS. Some academic tasks in English language arts promote rigorous habits in student learning. However, there is inconsistency in the use or development of tasks that, where developmentally appropriate, require students to demonstrate learning beyond basic recall of facts and details. In addition, while teachers gather information on student performance, this information is inconsistently used to modify or adapt academic tasks, thus limiting the maximization of student progress.
- Build upon the practices of using assessments to inform student groupings so that learning experiences provide appropriate challenge for all students. (1.2)
 - o The school believes that students learn best when learning is meaningful, experiential, functional and embedded across subject areas. Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) methodologies are intended to promote engagement in learning tasks. However, there are varied levels of practice related to these beliefs and

strategies, which leads to uneven levels of student thinking and participation. Teachers uniformly administer the Unique baseline assessment and use the results to inform placement within the program's three-tiered instructional plan. However, data gathered and connected to practices does not consistently connect to the learning goals set forth in students' IEPs. This prevents teachers from strategically engaging students in learning activities that are based on current levels of performance with an eye towards promoting increasing progress.

- Build consistency in the practice of gathering and analyzing student data so that curricular decisions and instructional decisions are based on identified students' academic strengths and weaknesses. (2.2)
 - o The school uniformly administers the ABLLS and Brigance assessments to all students, depending on their class placements. This provides a baseline of student performance level and is the foundation upon which IEPs are generated. In addition, the school consistently uses a rubric to all student work that assesses communication, participation and demonstration of skill that is posted on bulletin boards. Student folders contain significant amounts of work products but the review of their work surfaced there is little connection between the assessment tools and the student work. Furthermore, teachers are not yet effectively analyzing student performance information to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in order to develop a clear understanding of what students do and do not know relative to expectations. Therefore, there is an inability to accurately determine the effectiveness of their curricular and instructional decisions and, thus, little opportunity to make effective adjustments.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 138	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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