

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 188 The Island School
K-8 school M188

442 EAST HOUSTON STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10002

Principal: MARY PREE

Dates of review: December 5, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 188 The Island School is a K-8 school with 397 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 32% Black, 59% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian students and 4% other students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a safe place with exceptionally strong supports for students to develop as respectful, confident learners. (1.4)
 - o Students and parents rave about the school as noted on the recent School Survey and in interviews. One parent stated that she and her children "feel loved and respected when I come here" to school. An often-cited reason for families' strong feelings about the school environment is the wrap-around structure of school day, after school and weekend programming that serves over half of all students with tutoring, counseling, enrichment, digital media, and sports. Additionally, there have been deliberate school efforts through staffing and youth development programs to address student lateness and attendance concerns, as well as middle school supervision. As a result, student attendance averages 91.3% so far this school year as compared with 88.8% last school year and year-to-date suspensions are lower.
- Resources of all types are harnessed effectively and result in steady progress of student achievement. (1.3)
 - o The school has extended its long-term partnership with New York CARES by applying and being selected as the only "VIP" site in New York City this year. Over thirty volunteers from the organization arrive at school each Saturday to lead students on cultural trips to local museums, to coach parents on computer literacy, and to work with students on producing films and arts performances. As a result, several students explained that creating apps for I-phones and photographing the neighborhood, which are two Saturday activities, help them "learn about the real world." These high interest activities engage students in learning outside of the regular classroom and motivate them with exposure to careers that require post-secondary education
 - o All teachers meet weekly with grade-level colleagues in Study Groups and they also serve on rotating basis on school-wide Instructional Council. While school leaders facilitated these teams early in the year, now teachers determine the agenda and follow up actions. Current teacher teams function more effectively than a year ago due to implementation of protocols for reviewing student work, which ensure instructional focus to the meeting and often lead to adjustments and sharing of teaching practices.
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment data sensibly which leads to meaningful instructional planning and interventions for students. (2.2)
 - o There is good consistency to the kinds of student data that all classroom teachers gather and review as evident in teachers' data binders. For example, teachers analyze running records, State test results, recent report cards, 100 Book Challenge logs, and math unit assessments, among several other sources. This deliberate tracking of student data strengthens teachers' planning for class lessons and work with students. The co-teachers in a combined third and fourth grade class excel at creating skill-based rubrics to ensure that students in both grade levels understand the progression of expected skills. As a result, teachers know clearly what next instructional steps they have to plan for groups of students.

- School leaders prioritize the observation of classroom teaching with constructive feedback that promotes professional discourse. (4.1)
 - o School leaders recognize that some teachers have been dissatisfied with prior observational feedback and they have committed to an ambitious agenda of short, frequent cycles of class visits and follow up. As a result, all teachers have had at least two informal observations with written feedback to date using a shared template that notes evidence of instructional priorities and professional responsibilities. This is a new approach, so there is tinkering about use of technology for storing the observational records and adjustments to ensure constructive feedback. But early indications are positive that feedback is rooted in the research-based rubric of Charlotte Danielson and effective in improving teaching practices.
- There is strong investment in school goals and vision by major stakeholders which leads to shared commitment to improved student outcomes. (3.1)
 - o The principal encourages engagement by all stakeholders and, therefore, it's not unusual to see the entire school leadership team attend meetings and trainings as one large unit. They have developed a three-year strategic plan and the principal notes that she's on "a massive speaking tour" with students and adults about understanding the brain as a muscle that produces optimal results when exercised and rested. This parallels school-wide goals of effort-based learning and attention to stress reduction and social-emotional health. School leaders, teachers, parents, and students talk and plan candidly together which results in shared investment in school improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop curricula that challenge students to think critically and problem solve creatively so that all students are prepared for high school and beyond. (1.1)
 - o The school has made significant progress in organizing and developing curriculum maps this past year with good attention to implementing performance tasks in math and English Language Arts. The dynamic assistant principal meets twice weekly with a group of teachers who are spearheading the work of aligning curriculum to Common Core Learning Standards. However, tasks assigned in most class lessons vary widely with too few examples of challenging and rigorous work. For example, sixth grade students in one class look up simple vocabulary words in a dictionary and then write sentences, while students in a self-contained Special Education class complete a math division work sheet with no context of real life word problems. These low-level tasks are offset by powerful examples of critical thinking, like English as a Second Language lesson where students pose questions about a picture and several lessons where students engage in analytical writing projects. This inconsistency of tasks across classrooms produces unequal expectations for thinking and learning by all students.
- Strengthen current teaching practices of differentiation with questioning and routines that extend students' higher order thinking skills to promote rigor. (1.2)
 - o Teachers talk about and plan purposeful differentiation to some extent. A consistent example across classrooms is teachers' use of on-line programs, such as Reading A-Z for literacy and IXL for math, during lessons to individualize exercises while teachers then work closely with small groups of students. Most

differentiation focuses exclusively on struggling learners with effective scaffolds and supports, yet some extensions are also evident for higher achieving students. School leaders recognize that teachers' questioning is at uneven points of development and this instructional practice needs increased support and attention in order to push students' thinking to higher levels.

- Sharpen professional development for faculty by focusing on quality of student work in order to evaluate consistency of teaching practices across grades. (4.3)
 - o The school has formulated a sensible Professional Development (PD) plan based on multiple data sources, including student achievement data and teachers' professional goals. In addition, the preliminary cycles of PD emphasize the domains of practice articulated by Charlotte Danielson, with several teachers facilitating workshops for colleagues. As a result, teacher leadership has expanded and a number of shared practices, such as common rubrics, have spread across grades and subjects. However, the absence of clear expectations about what constitutes high quality student work in all subject areas limits instructional consistency throughout the school. The newly-introduced protocol for reviewing student work at Study Groups is a useful starting point, but not all teacher teams integrate student work in their meetings which then weakens the effectiveness of the protocol.

- Develop further the school's approach to evaluating its own curricular, instructional and organizational decisions to maximize coherence. (5.1)
 - o School leaders are unafraid and strategic about piloting new initiatives and partnering with organizations to maximize student achievement. For example, the 100 Book Challenge, Reading Partners, and Exemplars math problems are all recent supplementary instructional programs. Staff credit these programs with filling gaps in students' knowledge or skills and with providing useful data about students' progress in easy formats to track. While the system for finding and evaluating add-on instructional programs is strong, there are insufficient structures for routinely evaluating school-wide instructional practices and student work products. Staff have few formal opportunities to observe similarities and differences across classrooms which then limits meaningful reflection of current teaching practices.

- Refine the school's strategic priorities by setting interim goals so that progress can be measured and adjustments made for school improvement. (5.3)
 - o School leaders have selected instructional programs with built-in benchmarks to monitor students' progress efficiently and regularly. For example, with the expansion of last year's pilot 100 Book Challenge to all grades, staff track students' reading proficiency and assign work that matches students' levels. Currently, 63% of all students are on target with reading compared with 30% of students city-wide. While these supplementary programs--100 Book Challenge, Reading Partners, and IXL--offer clear tracking of students' progress, the school's internal systems for measuring interim growth are not as fleshed out. For instance, teachers are still developing structures to track student writing, such as published pieces. The lack of clear interim goals for student writing then hinders potential progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 188 The Island School	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
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