

Quality Review Report

2011-2012

Thomas Emanuel Early Childhood Center
Elementary 24Q028

109-10 47th Avenue
Corona
NY 11368

Principal: Laura Pessutti

Dates of review: January 5-6, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 28 - The Thomas Emanuel Early Childhood Center is an Early Childhood school with 525 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 0% Black, 91% Hispanic, 1% White, 7% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 48% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.6%

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school infuses the State standards into their existing curricula, with the Arts and technology, to create high levels of learning that support all students' needs. (1.1)
 - The integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is part of the school's instructional vision for deep understanding of subject matter for all students. Curriculum maps are created by teacher teams and modified according to data. An analysis of baseline assessments in math indicated that students showed a need to develop word story explanations and processing skills, which became the focus of inquiry for grades K-2. As a result of this purposeful decision, students in grades K-2 have a better grasp on proving how to represent word problems using pictures and have shown an overall improvement in number sense problems. In addition, teachers are cognizant of future grade readiness by adjusting curriculum maps in order to close the achievement gap.
 - Looking at student work and data is at the forefront of developing curriculum maps so that the needs of all students are met. Teachers and teacher teams conduct a deep analysis of data, including assessments and student work, in order to create and refine academic tasks that include all learners and focus on the needs of multiple student groups. Since improving proficiency of reading levels using informational (non-fiction) text for grade 2 students is a school-wide goal, improved levels of critical thinking and inference skills have resulted in students' active engagement and reading development.
- The administration makes effective organizational decisions in alignment with school-wide instructional goals, to support students' learning styles and needs. (1.3)
 - One of the school's instructional goals is to increase the number of first graders scoring at Level 3 or higher in reading using the Fountas & Pinnell assessment. To meet this task, budgetary decisions regarding staff, resources, and planning time were made. A literacy consultant and Title III support personnel were hired to work with teachers and students on reading strategies and skills. These organizational changes enabled teachers to have the tools to incorporate stronger practices in reading comprehension. This has resulted in an increase of 75% of English Language Learners (ELLs) improving in reading skills from September to December. An additional budgetary decision involved purchasing science books that afforded students with rich vocabulary. Teachers posit that students are now better equipped to discuss prior and core knowledge in science as well as be more articulate and aware of science concepts and terms as evidenced in their discussions and science projects.
 - "Educating the whole child" is a school belief that is carried out in different curricula areas through the efforts of groups of teachers. Enrichment personnel and cluster teachers collaborate with classroom teachers and provide direct instruction so that the school's instructional goals are met. "Teaching Literacy through Music" and an after school music enrichment program help groups of students work to improve vocal and speech development, as well as listening skills. Art and science clusters incorporate real life experiences in all lessons so that meta-cognitive concepts are addressed. As a result, students with disabilities have shown progress in reading using computer based programs and a tactile approach to learning new words.

- The school is a nurturing, community where all constituents, share opportunities to grow both academically and socially, to achieve their personal best. (1.4)
 - The school consistently uses data to determine immediate and long range goals. The Learning Environment Survey (LES) is evaluated to surface accomplishments and move forward on issues of need. As an outcome of this process student attendance was noted as an area to be addressed. Consequently, parents were recruited to be part of committees to enhance academics, social-emotional growth and improve attendance. One school wide activity to motivate students is the creation of a Greenhouse Lab. Another is the initiation of the Recycling Ranger Program where students recycle and inspect classrooms on a daily basis. Parents state that they have seen an optimistic awareness of recycling by their children at home. These structures have created a positive environment where parents and students universally call their school a "safe and happy place to learn and grow".
 - The principal's "open door policy" along with teachers who voluntarily come to school early and stay late to meet and work with students to ensure that every student's needs are properly addressed and all parents are an essential part of this school community. Teacher - generated activities build students' confidence and support their development and academic success. Students participate in teacher motivated Art Contests that are offered throughout the city. The ECOfest Poster Competition and Exhibit is an annual presentation to showcase the artistic voice of students in this school. Annual participation drives the full time art teacher's planning and integration of the Common Core Learning Standards. In addition, students feel comfortable asking questions and eagerly seek support from teachers and comment that their teachers, "never give up until we understand the entire lesson".
- The school consistently utilizes effective systems for monitoring standard setting teaching styles with a clear focus on improving instructional practices to increase professional performance. (4.1)
 - A common instructional focuses is that all students read on or above level by the end of the year. The administrative team makes frequent class visits that result in observation reports with specific recommendations for improvement of instruction. Documentation of teachers' next steps to show mastery is embedded into this process. As a result, feedback from observations highlighted the fact that instructional practices in word recognition and responding to text for ELLs in grades one and two are showing significant progress.
 - As an outgrowth of the observation process the following design is in place to assist teacher growth; planning conferences, data discussions with the administration, and plans for subsequent observations. Teachers have one to one mentoring opportunities with an outside literacy coach and then use their own resources for future development. Many teachers believe these professional development sessions have helped clarify their understanding around looking at tasks and making them more challenging in relation to the CCLS and their implementation. Thus, the use of these resources is guiding the administration in making effective decisions on supporting teacher development.
- School leaders have established systems that drive data based goals regarding student outcomes and communicate the school's direction to all constituencies, yielding positive academic results. (3.1)

- School planning documents have been designed to leverage changes that improve student learning and support social-emotional growth. Assessments gathered from an ongoing analysis of school statistics aligned to effective instructional practices helps administration develop a long and short term goal setting plan. One successful short- term goal was to revise the math curriculum for grade two based on the need to improve students' sequence of tasks. Results from the Everyday Math checklist showed that the majority of second graders benefited from this adjustment and can now explain the task using pictures and key vocabulary words. Another change indicating social-emotional growth of students is reflected in attendance data. Attendance improvements from 89.7% to 95.3% show that students are coming to school on a more regular basis. This information is currently collected and shared by the data specialist to inform the school community on the success of its long and short term goals.
- Data discussions and school level planning processes have led to consistent involvement and communication between teachers and parents regarding the school's Progress Report, Learning Environment Survey, Comprehensive Educational Plan, and Principal's Performance Review goals. All constituency groups show a strong allegiance towards the achievement of data based goals. These goals are clearly reflected in the comments of parents and staff, as they are fully aware of the school's direction for improving scores. This awareness has helped school leaders gather information and collaboratively plan for the future.
- Families have a major role in school decision- making activities and take part in ongoing discussions regarding students' progress so that school and class expectations are met. (2.4)
 - Parents feel well versed in the expectations of the CCLS tasks and have been given sample activities to review and familiarize themselves with at home. Based on the individualized learning goals that parents receive on interim progress reports in the major content areas, they feel better equipped to assist their children with academic work. Teachers have seen an overall increase in proficiently completed homework and a greater percentage of students are meeting their goals.
 - There is a very strong culture of shared commitment at this school as evidenced by the principal's rapport with the parents and her tenacity to offer her monthly principal's report in Spanish. Parents are often asked to respond to school practices involving uniforms, dismissal protocols, and the standards students need to meet to produce above grade level work. The attendance at monthly parent association meetings has risen by 40% since last year. Parents see this school as an equal partnership and they are highly vested in its success.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that learning engages students and offers suitable challenge at varying developmental levels including questioning that elicits higher order thinking and extends learning. (1.2)
 - There is an alignment of teaching practices and students' learning needs, in addition to differentiation of instruction in regard to classroom routines and questioning strategies. At this time, however, there are limited discussions around the development of questions and skills that are strategically differentiated, at different points in the lesson, so that all learners, especially those that have exceeded their benchmarks in reading, writing, and math are consistently challenged by their tasks and follow up assignments.

- Students' work products and discussions reflect the ongoing opportunities to engage students based on their different styles of learning. Workstations reinforce the teaching points of each lesson and are complete with tasks for students with strong auditory and kinesthetic modalities. At this time however, the school is working on establishing these supports and extensions for groups of students who are able to surpass the standards and produce higher levels of student work.
- Build on current practices to align performance assessments to student outcomes so that instructional decisions and self-reflections can capture the extent of students' learning and next steps. (2.2)
 - Feedback provided from some assessments ties into guided reading results and independent reading levels, per student. However, not all assessment data is sufficient enough to determine if the feedback is generating positive impact on curricula and instructional decisions regarding students' progress towards their goals. Consequently, the school is not always positioned to support effective curricular decisions that enhance growth for all students.
 - In all subject areas assessment practices have built in student reflection pieces to summarize and qualify students' work. Writing rubrics are available on each grade level and are used to inform students of how well they completed their task. However, at this time, some students do not receive immediate feedback to help move them toward their next steps in writing.
- Extend the practice of providing differentiated professional development to all staff in a consistent and actionable way that enables them to evaluate and incorporate best practices to improve learning outcomes. (4.3)
 - At this time the school is working to provide the staff with professional development that involves the expectations of each student and their CCLS tasks. Although there is a rationale for each instructional session there is a lack of evidence supporting the connection between professional development and student work. Thus, not all teachers are provided with targeted support to increase effective instructional practices to elevate growth for all students.
 - School leaders are open to organizing professional development based on staff requests. However, there is little evidence of a connection between student and teacher work to make improvements across classrooms. As a result student achievement cannot yet be measured based on a link between teacher work and student product.
- Utilize data to develop evaluative benchmarks so teacher teams can monitor the effectiveness of goal setting that is shared with the school. (5.4)
 - Systems are being developed to show evidence of teacher team effectiveness on a consistent basis. However the lack of an established system limits the initial findings of school leaders in the areas of evaluating professional collaborations based on building alignment between instruction, culture of the school, and attendance practice.
 - Individual data discussions about students' progress are in place three to five times a year to determine if goals are being met. However, without a more granular look at evidence throughout the year it is difficult to determine how the evaluation of student data impacts the decisions made around teacher hiring, capacity building, teacher placement, and team effectiveness.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

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|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| School name: Thomas Emanuel Early Childhood Center | 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. | | | | |
| To what extent does the school regularly... | 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. | | | | |
| To what extent does the school ... | 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. | | | | |
| To what extent does the school ... | 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. | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| To what extent does the school... | 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. | | | | | | | | |
| To what extent does the school... | 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 | W | D | Well Developed |