

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 029 Queens
Elementary school Q029

125-10 23 AVENUE
QUEENS
NY 11356

Principal: Jennifer Jones

Dates of review: February 9-10, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 029 Queens is an Elementary school with 675 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 42% Hispanic, 14% White, 33% Asian students and 6% other students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Comprehensive curriculum work emphasizing alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) ensures that all students are engaged in rigorous academic tasks resulting in high student achievement. (1.1)
 - o The administration and teacher teams, in collaboration with Metamorphosis and Learner Centered Initiative, work on focused, data driven curriculum development to deepen math and literacy strategy and content knowledge and anchor the CCLS through a focus on text bands, building key math skills through multiple representation of problem solving and nonfiction writing. This rigorous work has resulted in clear curricular scaffolding and alignment across all grades and content areas and has closed the achievement gaps within the school by twelve percent in English language arts and nine percent in math.
 - o As part of curricular alignment and task development, teachers use student work products and baseline assessments aligned to prior year CCLS expectations to identify patterns and trends vertically and across grade levels to target areas of need in student work and problems in teacher practice and curricular design. Tasks and exemplars are designed and differentiated to address struggling learners and high achievers. This strategic planning and adjusting of curriculum and task design based on student data has improved students' weaknesses in targeted skills in all content areas, particularly argument writing, text band complexity in reading and geometry and measurement as evidenced in student writing products and teacher assessment results.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions that guide student learning and result in meaningful student work products. (1.3)
 - o The principal effectively uses resources around professional development goals within the school that focus on curriculum development and alignment to the CCLS. Consultants and coaches are scheduled to work with teachers and teacher teams on a weekly basis to monitor and revise curricula in order to target school-wide, grade level, class and individual student needs. Due to this ongoing curricular work in English Language Arts, around text complexity and text bands, current benchmark data reveals a strong decrease in students reading below grade level in all grades throughout the school.
 - o The school is intentionally organized to allow for teachers to meet three times per week to engage in collaborative work around the instructional goals of the school. Currently teams are structured by grade and subject, teacher leader and response to intervention teams. Members are intentionally assigned by the administration using student assessment data and teacher observation feedback that highlight strengths and areas of support needed to improve teacher practice. This teaming structure has led to the development and implementation of a strong, standards-based curriculum with aligned, challenging academic tasks and support for teachers to improve consistency of practices around effective evaluation of students work products culled from the rigorous tasks they engage in on each grade level.
- Rigorous goals closely aligned to data and embraced by the school community leverage ongoing changes that accelerate student growth. (3.1)

- o The principal's vision for the school focuses on curriculum development around the CCLS, efficient use of assessment practices to measure student skill and knowledge base, alignment of professional development to curriculum development, effective feedback to teachers and students to improve work products and parent involvement in learning. These goals are evident in classroom instruction, student work products, continuous communication practices with parents and focus on looking at the connection between what is taught and what is learned and its impact on instructional practices and decisions. This consistency has encouraged a change in school culture where the community defines their work around improving student outcomes through continuous evaluation of school wide goals based on student writing products and school based assessments and their effectiveness towards moving all students to meet the higher expectations of the CCLS.
- o Parents and families play an integral role in implementing the vision of the school. Members of the school leadership team give monthly workshops to parents around the school goals, data used to set them, and meeting the needs of student subgroups. Parents not only participate in the planning of school-wide goals and the development of action plans, but also align parent leadership work and support for the school community around these plans. This year parents structured the school-wide book fair around the CCLS by grade and genre and developed guides for parents to use in order to select books appropriate for their children.
- Astute observation and feedback promote thoughtful reflection and involvement of teacher input, resulting in improved pedagogy and elevated school-wide practice. (4.1)
 - o Administrators and teacher leaders throughout the school work closely with the staff to develop a shared understanding of the instructional expectations and how to improve teacher effectiveness. In addition to weekly cycles of classroom observations and teacher norming sessions using the Charlotte Danielson Teacher Effectiveness Rubrics, lessons are videotaped and teachers meet with administration to view and write feedback and recommendations collaboratively. Additionally, three times per year, the principal conducts data meetings with every staff member in the building where formative and summative assessments and student work products for the students they teach are analyzed. Following the meetings, teachers complete exit slips where they address trends and develop next steps to improve the outcomes of their students. Administrators align professional development to the next steps identified in these exit slips. Teachers say that they find this process an effective way to improve their practice though clear next steps and the administration states they see evidence of changes in pedagogy from this school wide practice.
- Teacher teams engage in iterative cycles of inquiry and systematic analysis of teacher and student work that result in improvement in curriculum, pedagogy and student learning. (4.2)
 - o Teacher teams in all grades developed curricula baseline assessments in English Language Arts and math aligned to the CCLS. Teams use results from these assessments along with State and Acuity results and daily teacher exit slips to inform their curriculum mapping and development. Assessment results also guided the development of differentiated tasks and exemplars within teacher teams that focus on assessing mastery of standards in all grades as well as individual student growth in identified areas of weakness, including students with disabilities and English language learners. This work has led to increased performance on summative assessments of targeted students within individual

teacher teams and increased progress for students in the lowest third school-wide in both English language Arts and math.

- o The principal has developed a teacher leadership initiative within the school that consists of grade team, content area, curriculum, special education and English language learner teacher leaders. This team meets weekly with the principal to inform their work using exit slips and agendas from inquiry meetings to make decisions about next steps aligned to school goals. These teacher leaders then lead their teams around curriculum development and instructional practice. This work had led to teacher guided, new teacher supports in the areas of meeting the needs of English language learners and special education students. Additionally, the School Survey indicates a 43 percent increase in teacher responses around positive teacher leadership opportunities within the school.
- Professional development is strategically aligned to school needs encouraging constant evaluation of practice, teacher leadership and improved student learning outcomes (4.3)
 - o Professional learning around curriculum mapping and alignment is provided on a weekly basis by consultants. Teacher teams throughout the school consistently publish the findings of their inquiry work which is shared in a teacher professional development resource library. Additionally, individualized professional development structured through teacher exit slips, feedback and formal observation recommendations are provided to staff by teacher leaders, the data specialist and the administration. This collaborative and collegial work has changed the teaching and learning culture within the school. Growth of teacher responses on the School Survey show a ten percent increase in teachers receiving helpful training in the use of student achievement data, a twelve percent increase in receiving support in content/subject area, an eighteen percent increase in being provided with teaching strategies to better meet the needs of students and a drop in special education referral rates of six percent.
- Administration has developed extensive systems to evaluate and support teachers in a way that maintains a culture of teacher leadership and collaborative decision making that has lead to improved teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. (5.4)
 - o During weekly meeting with teacher leaders, the principal monitors the work of teacher teams as well as the progress of her teacher leadership initiative. Data gathered from these meetings is used to inform decisions made around adjusting school wide practices. The principal then meets with the curriculum consultants to modify professional development plans to support the work of teacher teams and monitors this curricular work through Atlas Rubicon: the system that houses all of the school's curriculum maps. An example of this school-based evaluation system was a decision, based on teacher leader input, to focus school-wide on effective ways to use text characteristics as a point of reference during conferencing and the development of systems to measure student growth in this area. Adjustments were made to consultant plans to address this pedagogical practice and teacher leaders received professional development around coaching and mentoring teachers in this area. This work led to improved teacher practice around conferencing and demonstrated student growth in both assessment data and student work products in understanding text structure, particularly in nonfiction texts.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the skills of teachers so that all students have multiple entry points to engage in a challenging curriculum that encourages high levels of cognitive engagement and student participation in their learning. (1.2)
 - o Consistent in all classrooms is evidence of differentiated tasks, strategic grouping, teacher modeling, effective questioning techniques and classroom routines to provide for multiple entry points into the lesson. However, in some classrooms, teacher planning of student tasks and assignments did not leverage the high range of cognitive challenge aligned to the rigorous curricular expectations within the school leading to general levels of student thinking and participation in their learning.
- Improve the development and use of tools to aggregate and disaggregate data so that trends in student subgroup performance are clearly evident and can be used to make informed decisions to meet specific instructional needs. (2.2)
 - o This year teachers have designed their own assessments and rubrics to evaluate student progress around the chosen units of study teachers are engaged in analyzing student work to provide feedback and ongoing checks for understanding that include student self monitoring of their growth. However, at this time, the assessments and rubrics do not consistently track progress of all learners, including those needing supports or extensions, limiting the effectiveness of these tools to provide feedback and next steps for all students.
 - o Currently teachers analyze data on student subgroups provided to them by the school data specialist or teacher leaders and use this data to identify strengths and needs of these students. This data work does not highlight subgroup growth or stalls. Because of this current data process, not all subgroups are included in discussions around instructional implications on student learning or when curricular revisions and decisions are made at the team or classroom level, leading to missed opportunities for effective adjustment of instructional practices that address all learners.
- Retool rubrics to ensure that they are genre and task specific so that students and teachers can more accurately evaluate and better guide next steps for needed improvements that may lead to increased academic achievement. (2.3)
 - o As part of the curriculum development process, teachers and teacher teams are designing rubrics and grading policies that align to the units of study and provide effective feedback to students. However, at this time, teams are still engaged in infusing key CCLS expectations to provide actionable feedback and next steps for students. This phase of rubric and grading policy development is limiting teacher's ability to effectively measure student growth within the framework of the CCLS at this time.
 - o Although teachers and teacher teams analyze a variety of assessment data such as state test results, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project benchmarks, Acuity results and daily exit slips and they consistently use this information to identify strengths and needs of students, including special education and English Language learners, tracking specific data for other high needs populations that can effect overall accountability are not present, limiting teachers' ability to appropriately monitor and define student needs in order to make strategic instructional decisions and plan effectively for these learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 029 Queens	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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------