

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Public School 43

Elementary – Middle 043

**160 Beach 29th Street
Queens
NY 11691**

Principal: Gary Fairweather

Dates of review: March 27 – 28, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 43 is an elementary-middle school with 1,187 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 64% Black, 30% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 12% 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 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make informed organizational decisions that support teaching and learning. (1.3)
 - To address the achievement gap of students with disabilities and second language learners, resources were allocated in support of teaching and learning to purchase supplemental literacy programs focusing on vocabulary development and language acquisition. The newly adopted literacy curriculum enables teachers to tailor instruction to the needs of identified students and increase their level of progress. An enrichment literacy program targets high performing students to ensure that their progress continues to accelerate.
 - To expand the support provided to students who struggle, school leaders revised teacher assignments to include an intervention teacher to work with small groups of students throughout the day with an eye towards increasing literacy proficiency. In addition, part time teachers are specifically assigned to support students with disabilities and second language learners. In an effort to decrease student load and increase the shared responsibility for meeting the needs of students, teachers of sixth grade remain with their students throughout the day, thus enabling them to provide congruent instruction across the content areas.
- School leaders and teacher teams gather and analyze a wide range of formative and summative data to identify the strengths and needs of students. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers create rubrics aligned with key standards. Thus, student-learning outcomes are measured against these rubrics, and provide students with an understanding of their strengths and areas that need additional work. Student work that is analyzed during teacher meetings lends support to the discussions and decisions around revisions to curricular and/or instruction aimed at further increasing student mastery of the standards.
 - Teachers who administer the Acuity Predictives, end-of-unit and other formative assessments, to determine next instructional steps, meet weekly and engage in the analysis of test data, and student work to identify students' strengths and needs. Assessment data is used to plan for appropriate student groupings to ensure individual instructional needs are met. The school's on-going analysis of assessment results indicate students are making progress.
- The school conveys high expectations for attendance, behavior, and academics, to teachers, students, and families, impacting positively on student study habits. (3.4)
 - "With high expectations, commitment, and hard work, we will achieve." These words are included across the top of the page of the school's daily bulletin. A calendar posted on the bulletin board as you enter the

building, delineates parent workshops, assessment dates, and school-wide initiatives thus giving a clear picture to all of key events. Walkthroughs, observations, cabinet discussions, the analysis of student work, and the instructional foci of coaches and consultants, confirms and reinforces the high instructional expectations established by school leaders. Consequently, these practices have resulted in a coherent accountability system school-wide.

- Parents are provided with Spanish translated agenda books that capture the school's instructional expectations. Ceremonies recognizing perfect attendance, the principal's honor role system, the peer mediation program and no bullying campaign, continuously reinforce to students and parents the high expectations around attendance, academics, and behavior, ensuring that students come to school prepared to achieve success.
- The school maintains a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning and supports students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - On-going discussions with teachers, students, and families, regarding tolerance and acceptance have contributed to a change in tone in the building. The principal shared, "My geography initiative has resulted in students being more accepting of one another." The study of food, dance language, transportation, and the global marketplace of countries around the world, has resulted in the celebration of cultures and a more tolerant school community. One student shared, "The school is safe because of the principal's consequences and rules. Everyone knows that we have to work hard and do the right thing."
 - Students are interested in their learning. An eighth grade student shared that he is excellent in math and has been studying algebra on his own, working through problems cover to cover so that he knows the expected work. Another student shared, "Teachers motivate us. They make us feel welcome." When asked what does success look like, one student answered, "It looks like it's possible, even though you think it may not be."
- School leaders conduct short and frequent cycles of observations to determine teacher strengths and areas needing support to strengthen practice. (4.1)
 - Feedback to teachers, occurring one or two days after an observation, captures the lesson's attributes on a short observation template. Subsequently, school leaders discuss the strengths and needs of various components of professional practice. Teachers in need of additional support are paired up with teacher leaders or the literacy consultant, resulting in strengthening pedagogy to meet the needs of students. Established release times for grade meetings and common planning periods further support teacher development. Teachers collaborate, examine student work, discuss effective teaching strategies, and plan lessons targeting instruction to accelerate student learning.
 - School leaders' system for managing staff development that includes walkthroughs, teacher observations, and the analysis of student learning outcomes from Acuity, informs the school's decisions around tenure, retention, and professional development. The school's literacy consultant

provides assistance to identified teachers to further help them in their professional growth. A 'cycle of support' summary submitted to school leaders delineates strengths and areas still in need of improvement, resulting in revised plans so that each teacher's professional needs are addressed.

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich the curriculum to ensure that academic tasks in all classrooms are challenging and that questioning extends student-thinking leading to improved performance. (1.1)
 - Current initiatives to integrate the Common Core Learning Standards into the school's curriculum include looking at student work, identifying the instructional gaps, and revising curriculum accordingly. For example, one eighth grade math teacher analyzed the learning outcomes of his students' performance task and based on the assessment, determined the need to revise his curriculum and extend instructional time around a particular concept to ensure student understanding. Similarly, the sixth grade teacher team concluded that additional instructional time needs to be provided around the concept of percents. However, instruction that emphasizes higher order thinking was not evident in most classrooms. Learning experiences are not sufficiently modified to increase the rigor or include appropriate scaffolds and extensions for students with disabilities and second language learners. Across classrooms, high performing students, including students from relevant subgroups, are engaged in the same tasks as lower performing students. The lack of rigor in learning experiences across the grades, programs and subject areas, hamper students' in continuously engaging in and effectively tackling cognitively demanding tasks and achieving at higher levels.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction, based on formative assessment data, so that all students are consistently challenged. (1.2)
 - In one upper grade classroom, students worked in pairs, discussing and grappling with a recent current event issue, taking notes, and jotting down important understandings. However, across the school, most lessons were teacher directed and the practice of providing scaffolds, supports, and extensions to ensure differentiated tasks to maximize learning is not evident. School wide teaching techniques and questioning do not sufficiently challenge higher performing students in the majority of classrooms. Moreover, the lack of student-to-student academic discourse hampers comprehension and language acquisition resulting in uneven levels of engagement.
- Develop a school-wide system to track progress of learning goals for relevant student subgroups, to evaluate progress and suitably adjust instructional plans and pedagogy. (3.3)
 - School leaders capture and analyze periodic assessments and other formative data. However, as of yet, the school does not have a system to regularly track and/or evaluate the progress of student subgroups as measured against rigorous and timely benchmarks. Thus, the school misses out on making relevant, well-matched, timely, and precise

instructional decisions to improve performance and progress for all students.

- Analysis of student learning outcomes occurs during teacher team meetings. However, as teacher teams do not continuously track student progress, and inter- and inter-grade common assessments are not evident, teachers are hampered from making well-informed instructional decisions. The eighth grade teacher team administered the performance tasks according to Citywide instructional expectations. However, as students with disabilities did not engage in the same performance task, teachers do not yet continuously plan for and revise all student-learning goals when appropriate.
- Create a transparent system for measuring progress of student subgroups towards interim benchmarks so that timely revisions to pedagogy and/or curriculum can be made. (5.3)
 - The school analyzes student performance and teacher development data. Cabinet and teacher team meetings include the analysis of student learning outcomes. However, school leaders have not developed a system for measuring progress of student subgroups against interim benchmarks so that midcourse revisions to pedagogy and curriculum are made in a timely fashion. Individual teachers and teacher teams have established goals for identified students but have not developed a system to measure progress toward those goals, thus hindering instructional and pedagogical decision-making to address student needs.
- Create a structure to regularly evaluate school level decisions in response to student progress and the expectations of the Common Core Standards. (5.1)
 - The school does not have a structure in place to regularly evaluate instructional practices and their impact on student achievement, preventing school leaders from making midcourse corrections to increase progress. Additionally, structures are not in place for school leaders to evaluate organizational decisions, such as teacher assignments and student groupings, further hampering school leaders from making timely and relevant adjustments to ensure accelerating student progress and improving outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Public School 43	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