

Quality Review Report

2011-2012

**P.S. 58 - School of Heroes
Elementary school Q058**

**72-24 Grand Avenue
Queens
NY 11378**

Principal: Adelina V. Tripoli

Dates of review: December 13-14, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 58 - School of Heroes is an Elementary school with 947 students from kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 2% Black, 34% Hispanic, 29% White, 33% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 96.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers benefit from insightful instructional feedback that sharpens the consistency of effective teaching practices.
 - One of the school's common instructional focuses is that all students improve their writing skills. The administrative team makes short, frequent class visits and provides teachers with specific recommendations for improvement of instruction. Post observation conferences outline next steps teachers need to take to show mastery. The feedback from the observation process has enabled teachers to improve their instructional skills and model for their novice colleagues. As a result, the school strategically makes performance decisions regarding inter-visitations and teacher mentoring schedules based on teacher and student data.
 - All teachers have a professional goal template that is constructed with their students' needs in mind. Teachers receive feedback highlighting concise next steps that are articulated and measurable using the Danielson researched based rubric and the benchmark framework the administration created to align with teachers' instructional goals. There is a transparent connection between a teacher's prescribed next steps and the professional development that is provided. Novice special education teachers have benefitted from this process as the writing of their students has improved in proper usage of academic language and the percentage of conventions used correctly.
- The school provides a safe, caring environment where students appreciate the support they receive for their personal and academic development, which influences their decisions and develops leadership skills.
 - School leaders' effective use of feedback from the Learning Environment Survey (LES) has led to students having a voice addressing school issues. Students feel very comfortable talking to staff members about their concerns and feel fortunate to have the opportunities that are afforded to them in the school to get involved in exciting activities that boost their academic prowess such as Arithmattickles and Math Olympics. In addition, the Student Nutrition Committee has provided an awareness concerning the dietary plans so that students' favorite foods can be served more frequently. This has made students feel empowered knowing that their voice counts.
 - Students posit that they are an important component of the school and are well cared for by their teachers and ancillary staff. The school wide program "Character Counts" is designed to help students be aware of how to act and what to say in certain sensitive situations. Since the inception of the program, behavioral issues have been minimized and students conclude that bullying is not an issue due to the success of this positive program. Students explain that their environment is risk free and they are able to take chances in the classroom without ridicule or feelings of embarrassment.
- Informed and effective organizational decisions are aligned to the school's instructional goals and support student learning.
 - A vast amount of teacher teams meet regularly throughout the week, during scheduled and voluntary times, to create teacher-designed rubrics that improve instruction and encourage students to be cognitively engaged. An instructional

- goal this year is to develop sustenance around using the Common Core Learning Standards in alignment with the curriculum to design rigorous tasks in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Grades three and six have moved forward with this goal and have structured student time to improve instruction. Students of all grades work autonomously on technology based research tasks. They then work in pairs to locate information and report out as a team. The engagement of students in these challenging tasks is evident in team meeting agendas, teacher preparation, and team discussions.
- Even though there was a decrease in the school's budget this year, technology still plays a major role in instructional practices and school wide goals. For example, mobile laptop carts have enabled students who benefit from tactile processes to publish and edit their work in a succinct and timely manner. Technology has enabled students to become more proficient in their writing and literary skills which is reflected in a higher quality of student work. In addition, the computer program, Imagine Learning English, was implemented to help English Language Learners (ELLs) with their reading skills. The results gathered thus far indicate that ELLs have made consistent gains in listening comprehension, letter and sound recognition and academic vocabulary, which support the school's long range goals to improve progress for this targeted group.
 - School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on learning outcomes to track school and student progress over time.
 - Class profile sheets depicting summative data demonstrate a highly effective process to analyze last year's scores while reviewing current classroom assessments to provide instruction for flexible groups in reading, writing and math. This consistent analysis has allowed teachers to plan for specific groups of students. Teachers report that the data findings are a guide for their instructional designs and grouping students using the data results has helped to make their instruction more seamless from lesson to lesson. In addition, literacy based instructional strategies for special education students have been better met through an analysis of data from informal assessments as evidenced in the increase of these subgroups' individualized reading levels over a period of 3 months.
 - Each grade utilizes teacher designed "Tip Books" in reading, writing, and math. These books provide students with "at your finger tips" guidance to help them reflect on their work, conduct a self-check of understanding, and self-assess for future needs. Students believe this resource is practical and helpful because it provides a template of understanding around major curricula ideas. This teacher assessment practice indicates a growth increase in upper grade students' math skills since September.
 - The school has incorporated the Common Core Learning Standards with their existing curriculum, including the Arts and technology, to create a higher level of learning so that students' needs are being met.
 - There is a strong focus on implementing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and providing a curriculum aligned to students' learning needs. All students are involved in a purposeful academic program that maintains the ability to reach learning goals through higher order thinking skills and accelerated progress. After careful analysis of the CCLS, the staff worked diligently to develop curricula and tasks in major content areas that better aligned with students' needs based on assessment results. These adjustments have resulted in English Language Learners exhibiting accelerated growth of knowledge in reading, which supports closing the achievement gap.

- Teachers and teacher teams conduct a deep analysis of data, including assessments and student work, in order to create and refine high level thinking tasks that engage all learners and focus on the needs of various student groups. Since creating science based learning projects for upper grade students is a school-wide goal, concentrated lessons in comprehension and tactile learning have increased performance results depicting deeper active engagement in math and science based tasks. Another assessment is the Role of the writer, Audience, Format, and Topic technique (RAFT) in writing. Upper grade students have benefitted from writing to different audiences, using varying viewpoints to connect their imagination to newly learned information and aligning their work to a rubric which guides their efforts towards high writing proficiencies.
- The school aligns its leadership development and professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals and enhancing students' learning needs in order to raise learning outcomes for all students
 - A vast majority of teachers work in teams to analyze student data and determine best practices of learning for each student. Each of the three ELL specialists have succinct plans for multi-leveled ELLs and provides research- based instruction to assist with their learning. Lower grade ELLs have shown marked improvement in reading and writing as an outgrowth of individualized lessons that target specific academic needs.
 - Distributed leadership is in evidence in every phase of teacher team protocols. Structures are in place so that teachers are an important part of the decision-making process regarding the CCLS, curriculum mapping, and rubric designs. A decision to improve student learning across the school involved the creation of rubrics to enhance different genres of writing. Based on this development, more than 50% of the students in grades 3-5 have improved in writing a narrative procedure proficiently.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the regular use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building, and leadership developments so that adjustments can occur, as needed, throughout the year.
 - The effectiveness of teacher teams is evidenced in discussions and followed up by interim checks with team members noting progress and next steps based on student work and modified instructional practices, in addition to an individualized end of year letter produced by the principal. The letter states the achievements of the team and the next steps in moving forward. Currently the teams have been successful and focused in providing academic support for groups of students; however, the work of the teams has yet to make improvements in pinpointing the data that has tracked the working components of successful extensions like student attendance, culture or climate of the school.
 - Although distributed leadership is an ongoing process in this school with teachers rotating responsibilities at the team level and owning the focus of the meeting and its intended outcomes, there is a limited amount of documentation of systems that reinforce the connection of school decision making processes and how they are utilized in order to strengthen the development of teacher teams.

- Deepen differentiation of instruction so that all lessons offer suitable challenge for each student and effective questioning elicits higher order thinking, resulting in the production of challenging, high quality work.
 - Lessons are designed to create thinking in an enjoyable way on the part of the students. However, when asked if tasks are challenging most students responded that they were easy. While the majority of classroom discussions were reflective of moderate levels of student engagement and participation, some students demonstrated difficulty expressing meta-cognitive thinking, namely what they are learning and how it can help them in the future. Consequently, the lack of tasks designed to push students' thinking at their instructional levels stifles their participation and academic growth.
 - Teachers have made a tremendous effort in implementing the school's new differentiated instruction initiative across the grades. Students are working in groups and are able to join a task at varied entry points in the lesson; however, some students are unsure as to why they are grouped accordingly and what they need to do in order to gain on or above level proficiency levels of success. This lack of information limits the students' ability to use their grouping as a vehicle for progress.
- Further develop the expertise of staff in focusing on the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress so that it is accessible and transparent at the school, classroom and teacher team level.
 - Currently, school leaders and teachers analyze data and track the progress of student performance. However, more clarity, consistency, and explanation of the standards is needed around communicating this information to the school community so that school wide plans and goals can be modified during the year, in order to have a more positive effect on learning goals.
 - Various classroom level tools and Periodic Assessments such as ELA and math Intermediate Teaching Assessments (ITAs) are used to track progress and adjust academic goals for specific student groups. At this time however, plans are not being adjusted based on academic and behavioral goals for targeted subgroups of students, rendering a need for more transparency in this area in order to determine students' needs and address them using instructional safety nets that are timely and pro-active.
- Build on the school's current data collection system so that staff can determine progress and set measurable, differentiated learning goals for groups of students in need of additional support.
 - Teachers have a myriad of data available for analysis and review. Currently, data is being used to set annual and interim goals for groups of students, however there is a lack of consistency throughout the grades in this process, thus making it difficult to determine students' progress.
 - Teachers review data from various sources to determine how to plan their lessons so that students receive additional supports. Individualized learning goals are provided for students to better understand how to proceed. However, there is an unequal balance across the grades in the way data is deciphered and used to provide students with extensions and supports so that differentiated annual and interim goals are in place to provide all students with a clear path towards success.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 58 - School of Heroes	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.				
	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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