

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 068 The Cambridge School  
Elementary school Q068**

**59-09 SAINT FELIX AVENUE  
QUEENS  
NY 11385**

**Principal: Anne Marie Snadecky-Scalfaro**

**Dates of review: February 1-2, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 068 The Cambridge is an Elementary school with 765 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 81% Hispanic, 10% White, 4% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 16% 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 93%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school provides a nurturing environment where there is a sense of trust and appreciation in support of academics and personal growth, fostering positive attitudes towards learning. (1.4)
  - o The tone of the school emphasizes enthusiasm and a deep love of learning. Students clearly state that they feel well cared for, have daily personal support from their teachers, and have a "go-to person" if a problem arises. Both parents and students believe there is a strong level of respect between students and teachers. Assemblies like, "Student of the Month" and activities that recognize students who are improving in their academics are a celebration norm within the school. Attendance data analysis led to a robust school-wide attendance incentive. As a result of the school's efforts, attendance has increased by 2% from 92.0% to 94.0% since September. In an effort to address disciplinary concerns during lunch time, targeted students were assigned as lunch monitors. This has led to a decrease in the number of incidents recorded on the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS).
- The school has a coherent curriculum embedded across grades and subjects, including the Arts, support increased learning for a variety of learners and is aligned to key State standards. (1.1)
  - o The school has implemented a set of key cognitive strategies, such as developing skills for the comprehension of informational text and providing reasons and arguments for math decisions that span the grades. They are integrated into the curriculum and are aligned to targeted State writing standards embedded within the Teachers College Writing Continuum, which is used to measure student growth over time. Since this implementation, there has been an increase in rigor of assignments across grades and subjects reflected in students' tasks. Students state that they feel better prepared to move to the next grade as their learning is scaffolded and teachers have seen an increase in student achievement on Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks in English and math.
  - o Curricula and rubrics around the CCLS are designed to meet the needs of all students. Writing rubrics were modified using students' pre-assessment tasks. Since the fruition of these guidelines, upper school English language learners gained specific content and strategy growth by developing strong conversations about what they have read and are re-reading for details and finding context clues that support ongoing and independent learning. In addition, lower school ELLs have increased one to four levels on the writing continuum.
- The school ensures active student engagement so that teaching strategies provide classroom support and work to improve students' cognitive capacity. (1.2)
  - o Throughout the school, students are producing work that is reflective of rigorous and precise curriculum and instructional goals, like student inquiry and student voice. Teachers plan lessons that thoroughly and actively engage all students in classroom discourse through varied entry points into the lesson. As a school-wide practice, regular check-ins with students in grade five reveal that through extended work time and the use of multiple drafts, they are having weekly success in informational writing.

- o Reading strategies like synthesizing letters, recognizing patterns and chunking letters to identify words in order to propel the thought processes of kindergarten students are implemented so they can explain their answers using word and symbol clues. Questions and routines are modified to increase the level of student thinking. A change in kindergarten work products aligned with reading goals has shown increases of 30% from one to three reading levels since September. In addition, upper grade students receiving Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are working on identifying character traits and using a graphic organizer to map out their thoughts. As a result, 74.3% of fourth grade students and 79.4% of fifth grade students have increased their reading by at least 2 levels.
- The administration's strategic leadership promotes organizational decisions that regularly support school, teacher team and classroom level goals to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
  - o In light of the recent excess of eight teachers due to budget cuts, the principal pooled her resources and was able to support students with a part-time math coach and a full time reading specialist. Academic intervention services (AIS) are provided for students who are in the bottom one-third of the school's proficiency range in ELA. As a result of this program, students in grades two through four have shown significant increases in the skills of identifying “inferences” and using figurative language as context clues. Another budgetary decision was the development of a parent resource center to enhance parent collaboration as noted in the Learning Environment Survey (LES). Parents utilize this area to discuss school fundraising events, curriculum changes and grade level expectations .As a result, resources are now available to parents that help them with their children’s homework increasing students preparedness and academic performance.
  - o Teacher teams meet throughout the week to write and adjust curriculum maps and discuss best practices for example, eliciting evidence of students' understanding during the lesson and synthesizing information across multiple sources of text. Student program groupings and relatively low class registers support the school's instructional goals to improve the level of rigor in students' writing. Manageable groupings have led to increased student engagement in classroom tasks and more focused differentiation of instruction as evidenced by using open ended questions with multiple possible answers as a result of the individualized attention students are now able to receive.
- Teacher teams frequently collaborate using an inquiry approach to share ideas and strategies in order to improve student outcomes in writing and differentiated activities. (4.2)
  - o Teacher teams participate in a collaborative and systematic process to investigate the efficacy of skills taught across all subjects. Teachers discuss the benefits of the writing curriculum in alignment with the CCLS and look at student work and reflect on classroom routines. This has resulted in clearly targeted writing strategies like determining character traits and actions and identifying specific details in non-fiction works. An analysis of “on demand” writing pieces shows that ELLs have increased their abilities to include specific details from the text advancing students’ writing proficiency.
  - o Pedagogues assume key roles in instructional improvement and operational matters. In addition to a team grade leader for each inquiry team; this year there is also a grade representative for the core instructional team. Based on item

analysis of student assessments, interim goals are reported out on a regular basis supporting teachers' planning efforts and bringing coherence to next steps in curricula adjustments. This process has enabled teachers to group students according to their strengths and needs increasing student engagement and levels of differentiation.

- Parents have valuable opportunities to be involved in their children's learning and to monitor their progress through regular and open communication with the school administration and the staff. (2.4)
  - o Respect and trust are the underpinnings that drive the school's family-like culture. Supportive attitudes linked to careful analysis of attendance data and the LES guide improvements and change. The "Be Here, Be A Winner" is a strong incentive that has improved attendance by 2%. The parent coordinator, along with key staff, offer monthly meetings to inform parents about student progress and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards have proven useful as parents say they are better prepared to help their children at home. Monthly student progress reports and newsletters inform families of academic skills being taught, interim and long range goals that need to be met and opportunities for parents to be part of the classroom experience. Parents have a voice in determining activities they would like their children to participate in during enrichment periods. Students posit that their increased success is based on dedicated staff who spend time talking and listening to their opinions and concerns. Activities like Spirit Day, Student Government, and Lunchroom Leaders encourage students to put their best foot forward. Students choose weekly enrichment activities that are run in modules and include choices such as yoga, cooking, film making and Readers' Theatre. This framework gives students an opportunity to be part of a club experience, express their choice in learning and equate school learning with fun experiences.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Develop coherence for all constituents in aligning assessments to curriculum and analyzing information on student learning outcomes so that instructional decisions can be adjusted in order to plan accordingly for all students. (2.2)
  - o Teams of teachers have worked diligently to develop rubrics aligned with the State standards to drive rigorous activities. Although this has been accomplished, actionable feedback on the impact of their work has not yet surfaced, making it difficult to determine levels of students' progress.
  - o Running records and conference notes are analyzed throughout the grades as a means of lesson planning for subgroups of students. At this time however, tracking the progress of these students in a systematic manner is not yet in place, thus making the adjustments of instructional decisions difficult to align directly to their identified needs. Consequently, the interim and annual goals for targeted subgroups may not always be met.
- Track student performance toward their achievement goals across content areas and grades, and communicate progress and next steps to all constituents in order to build positive impact for all students. (3.3)
  - o Although the school is thoughtful and data driven in its goal setting process as evidenced in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), the process is limited to initial communication sessions. Formal benchmarks to measure school progress are not yet periodically communicated so that reachable goals are easily

discussed and school-wide plans are adjusted to meet the needs of the school. Lack of interim discussions creates uneven levels of understanding among the school community.

- o Monthly progress reports are provided for parents allowing them to gain insight into the goals of their children. Albeit this awareness, the school's feedback lacks next steps in addition to information regarding enrichment activities so that students can accomplish their intended expectations and beyond.
- Improve the practice of measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and make transparent adjustments throughout the year implementing new strategies and plans as needed. (5.3)
  - o Planning documents like the CEP and LES are monitored and revised at different intervals during the school year. Even though there is a focus on long-range impact the process is not yet aligned to specific evidence of teacher development or student performance, limiting the authenticity of the process in order to make adjustments during the year and over time.
  - o Running records and conference notes are used across the grades, to measure progress towards interim benchmarks so that planning can commence to identify and execute skills that are needed. Although planning stages are in place the process and rationale for developing the plans are not coherently communicated by the staff in a systematic manner.
- Strengthen the use of the observation tool so that teachers receive next steps towards improving their instructional skills with clear connections to professional development, promoting growth of best practices and opportunities for reflection. (4.1)
  - o Each grade has a leader who supports teachers in curricula planning. Short cycles of daily administrative observations and feedback are directly related to classroom findings in connection with students' work products. Feedback sessions include looking at class data and referencing applicable student work. At this time, scheduled inter-visitations and analyzing student work as a group is not transparently available in conjunction with teachers' personal goals and the implementation of the CCLS. Although a research-based document is utilized for feedback assistance, there are limited, specific connections to professional development making it difficult to determine if student work is reflecting teachers' next steps and workshop content.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 068 The Cambridge School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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