

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 096

Elementary School Q096

**130-01 ROCKAWAY BOULEVARD
QUEENS
NY 11420**

Principal: Joyce Walker

Dates of review: February 6-7, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 096 is an elementary school with 340 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 31% Black, 20% Hispanic, 4% White, 34% Asian students and 10% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 9% 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 93.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's curriculum emphasizes key standards and includes interdisciplinary units of study that cognitively engage a diverse group of students so that student learning increases. (1.1)
 - The Core Knowledge program is embedded in the school's curriculum and is aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that result in interdisciplinary lessons, such as in social studies and art. Based on summative and formative test results, the school focuses on informational text and places increased emphasis on phonics and targeted reading comprehension skills. The school's early childhood Core Knowledge pilot program is in its third year and based on the school's running records data, lower grade students are making progress with blends and decoding skills.
 - Teacher teams analyze formative data results, student work samples and use protocols to develop cognitively demanding math tasks for their grade. Tasks have appropriate scaffolds so that English language learners and students with disabilities are able to engage in mathematical tasks that are aligned to the CCLS and challenge their thinking. Teachers agree that the school's uniform and engaging math curriculum is effectively addressing the needs of all students. The use of manipulatives and computer generated instructional tools has resulted in improvements in students' mathematical understanding, specifically measurement in upper grade classes.
- The principal's use of resources and student programming decisions link explicitly to the school's instructional goals and teachers are responsible for meeting the needs of their students. (1.3)
 - The leadership and teachers sufficiently analyze students' performance across all content areas and purchase non-fiction libraries that integrate into the curriculum to support the school's interdisciplinary program as well as the goals of the CCLS. As a result, students in a grades 5/6 special needs classroom engage in research related to America's westward expansion using multiple intelligences and resources, such as laptops Smart boards and rich texts, that help them produce reports where they are able to make connections and improve their informational writing skills, a goal of the school.
 - English language learners are supported based on a pull-out model of instruction and in an afterschool program that offers small group skill-based targeted instruction utilizing research-based literacy and math resources. The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher shares effective strategies that support ELLs, such as sentence starters and graphic organizers, with colleagues. In a grade 1 class, students learn about the life of Mozart and sequence his life using graphic organizers and sequence words to help frame their thinking for essay writing. Hence, ELLs in all grades are making steady gains in vocabulary development as noted on running records and periodic assessment data.
- Teachers use a variety of assessments that illuminate the school's key standards and curricular needs resulting in increased accuracy of students' specific needs so that adjustments meet all students' learning needs. (2.2)

- Based on the school's analysis of summative, periodic assessment and classroom level data, significant emphasis has been given to improving reading and writing skills for ELLs and students with disabilities. Customized rubrics created by individual teachers and teacher teams are used to support students in identifying their specific areas of strength, weakness, and next steps. Teachers across the school adjust their instruction by placing increased prominence on guided reading, modeling and creating additional smaller groups to provide increased individualized attention to struggling learners. As a result, students continue to improve their performance in non-fiction writing.
- Students across the school use various forms of checklists to self-assess their work and teachers use low inference observations to check for understanding. The teacher of English language learners utilizes self assessment checklists, where students identify their own reading behaviors. Student-to-teacher conference notes reflect discussions that result in instructional adjustments, such as developing lessons that include underlining techniques, to help students identify character traits based on explicit and implicit information thus improving students' vocabulary skills.
- The leadership and faculty are adept at analyzing a wide range of relevant data to ensure that students' performance and learning needs are tracked and instructional practices adjusted for improved learning outcomes. (2.1)
 - The principal's instructional team engages in ongoing data analysis of summative and formative assessment results, unit tests, ITAs, and attendance data. Their analysis identified school-wide areas of need in number sense, comprehension skills, specifically inferences and main idea. After comparing attendance data with their peer schools, the school determined the need to increase attendance to 97%. An assigned teacher closely monitors attendance using the school's messenger system resulting in steadily growth from 93.9% to 95.9% since June 2010.
 - The principal analysis of subject area data revealed a slippage in number sense in math. In order to support the school wide goal to improve math, teachers incorporate math language into their lessons and use word walls and a plethora of math manipulatives, such as counters, base blocks, calculators, and on-line resources to promote student achievement. Student work samples are constantly reviewed and progress is tracked on spreadsheets indicating item skills analysis developed by the math coach. These analyses are discussed at team meetings, faculty and individual teacher-coach conferences, to ensure that appropriate instructional revisions, such as strengthening the workshop model adequately support all learners, including subgroups.
- The principal has a short list of school level goals that link to data, are agreed upon by the school community and generate extensive support that result in increased student achievement. (3.1)
 - The school has effectively created school wide goals based on the analysis of data that is specifically geared at improving teacher effectiveness, literacy and math, and integrating the CCLS. The goals are clear, collaborative, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely), and shared with all constituents at the start of the school year, during subsequent parent meetings, with the school leadership team and at other school level meetings throughout the year. As a result, the extended school community is informed of the year's action plans and focused on accelerating student learning.

- Goals are developed based on the needs of students using various historical and current qualitative and quantitative data sources. Teachers comment that three years ago, the school placed a disproportionate amount of time focusing on a content-based program that resulted in a decline in students' math performance. The leadership and teachers agreed on the implementation of a comprehensive school wide math program that provides a clear pacing calendar, references to resources such as technology connections, and various kinds of intervention and extension strategies. As a result, teachers have been able to delve deeper into math concepts, such as problem solving and number sense, create skill-based math learning centers, continually assess students' math performance, and set new goals. Students across grades are making steady progress and assessment results indicate consistent improvements of addition and subtraction concepts for primary grade students.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance pedagogical practices so that higher order thinking and differentiated instruction with appropriate challenge and supports is reflected in all classrooms and result in improved student achievement. (1.2)
 - The school's set of beliefs about how students learn best is observed in lessons that reflect a warm-up activity, known as a 'do now', the workshop model and small ability groups across classrooms. However, the range of instructional practice in some classrooms is limited and teacher-directed. As a result, students are restricted in opportunities to sufficiently and consistently engage in challenging differentiated academic tasks that improve their performance.
 - Across the school, some teachers implement strategies such as prompts and use games that address the curriculum to stimulate students' thinking and promote discussion. While lessons require students to recall answers and engage in some discussion amongst their peers, questions that push students' thinking and lead to profound discussion is not consistent across the school. As a result, classrooms reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.
- Strengthen systems for monitoring teaching practice to include short frequent cycles of observation that effectively support improvement of teachers' instructional methodology. (4.1)
 - The observation of teachers is based primarily on the informal and formal observations. Teachers, including those new to the school, receive timely feedback from the leadership through conversations and written reports that highlight findings following classroom observations. However, the school does not provide feedback to teachers based on short frequent cycles of observation. Consequently, as indicated on the observation reports, too much time has elapsed between the informal and formal observation, and as a result, there are missed opportunities to improve teacher practice. In the absence of a formal structure where feedback from short frequent cycles of observation occur, the school's ability to leverage school-wide instructional practices that positively impact student performance is hindered.
 - The leadership observes instruction using a research-based rubric that provides clear expectations in areas such as questioning. Feedback is generally done via conversations; however the leadership's ability to effectively link classroom observation, teacher feedback and next steps based on the framework is unclear. As a result, the leadership's ability to identify trends in teacher practice, so that appropriate school wide and individual training can be offered is limited.

- Enhance the manner in which the school shares information with students and their families to ensure reciprocity and the sharing of next steps that result in improved student performance. (2.4)
 - The school shares student attendance and class performance data with students and their families through report cards, progress reports and a web-based grading system. Parents comment that while the on-line system offers grading information, it does not provide enough specific information about the performance of their children regarding literacy and math tasks aligned to the CCLS. As a result, reciprocal conversations between the school and families about the overall progress and next learning steps to support their child's learning at home are diminished.
 - The president of the Parent's Association created a communication web-page for parents and some parents use ARIS Parent Link and Engrade to learn about their child's performance. However, parents have not yet received training for ARIS Parent Link. While the school has structures, such as on-going training to support families in the use of progress tracking tools, the tools used are not embedded across the school so that a majority of families know their child's specific performance in all subject areas.
- Further the work to develop effective systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and areas of improvement for groups or targeted students that result in a school culture driven to improve instructional practices. (5.3)
 - The leadership analyzed a wide range of data generated from the previous year and has used summative assessments to establish instructional goals. However, school leaders have not adequately developed systems to measure interim goals based on their long-term planning. The lack of a fully established system hinders the school in its efforts to gauge its effectiveness of long-term and annual plans. As well as, the school struggles to determine the adequate amount of progress individual and groups of students make throughout the school year in order to implement modifications that will positively impact instruction to ensure that the school is continually poised for academic success.
- Refine the system to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and leadership development in order for the growth of staff to thrive and consistently evolve to support student achievement. (5.4)
 - Teacher teams meet weekly and engage in ongoing discussions about student performance, analyze data, and identify strategies that help them improve instruction for students in comprehension skills and questioning. Even though the principal meets weekly with team facilitators to discuss the work of the teams, there is no system generating data that shows the teams' success. As a result, the school cannot fully gauge the effects of teacher team work on student performance, and the lack of such a system diminishes the teams' effectiveness in knowing if they are making appropriate instructional decisions for students.
 - Support staff, such as coaches, serve as facilitators on teacher teams. Facilitators maintain agendas, lead discussion, and create data spreadsheets that support teams in their work. However, the lack of an effective system that regularly evaluates the school's leadership development opportunities hinders the school's ability to support future leadership within the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 096	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