

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Dutch Kills

Elementary School

25-05 37th Avenue

Queens

NY 11101

Principal: Rafael Gatjens Campos

Dates of review: December 5 - 6, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Dutch Kills School is an elementary school with 504 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 46% Hispanic, 11% White 22% Asian and 3% other students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 18% 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 92.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Parents and students deeply appreciate the safe, respectful and orderly school environment and the high level of support for the personal and academic development of students.
 - The school hired a full time dean and modified the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) to address safety concerns noted in the school's Learning Environment Survey. PBIS is a positive intervention plan that focuses on good behavior and academic success. Students attend assembly programs that focus on the ABC's of the program which consist of, accepting responsibility, being respectful, celebrating diversity and school safety. Teachers are provided cool tool lessons that promote appropriate behaviors for the school environment, such as hallways, classrooms, cafeteria and bathrooms. Gotcha tickets are given to the students for exhibiting positive behavior; they change their tickets for a prize. One student stated, "I am really good this year, I have a lot of tickets." Therefore, occurrences in 2010 from September through November were 72. This school year, to date, only eleven occurrences have been reported. Attendance has increased from 93% to 95%. As a result, the school maintains a sharp focus on the academic and personal development of students and adults.
- The school's strong partnerships with a variety of organizations help the school meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students and build capacity to improve student achievement.
 - Based on a parent survey conducted in September, there was a need for support for the fifth grade students who are on the path to graduate and move on to middle schools. The parent coordinator, guidance counselor and dean support families getting ready for middle school by providing family counseling and workshops. The zoned middle school guidance counselor spoke to the fifth graders and parents to answer questions about the middle school experience and transition process. Also, the fifth grade students visited the middle school. One student commented that he is looking forward to going to the middle school because they have a Growing Green Program and he is going to do all of his work so he gets promoted. This has led to the fifth grade students being highly motivated and well prepared to move on to middle school.
 - The school works with several community based organizations that uses school data, which provides students with homework help, chess, and an opportunity to participate in recreational activities as a means to work in teams and solve problems. Also, English as Second Language (ESL) parents are provided a class after school to help them increase oral and written language skills. Consequently, students and families appreciate the strong support provided by the school and the school has developed effective relations with the community. One parent stated that when her son does not want to get up in the morning, she tells him he will be late for school and he jumps out of bed because he does not want to miss anything.

- School leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer a range of positive learning experiences that support student learning.
 - The school strategically uses scope and sequence guides, curriculum maps, units of study and rubrics in all subjects and exposes the staff to the Common Core State Standards. Teachers dissect the Common Core Writing Standards. They engage in developing well crafted instructional units of study focused on main idea and supporting details which support informational writing. This has increased the quality of the curriculum in order to close the achievement gap and prepare the students for middle school as evidenced by a 20% increase on the progress monitoring tool.
 - Classroom visits reflect that teachers, on and across grades, focus on higher order thinking skills, especially in informational reading and writing. For example, students demonstrate an increase in their ability to make persuasive arguments with effective reasoning, supported by textual evidence. Thus, the school aligns its instructional tasks both vertically and horizontally to promote student learning and outcomes. Consequently, there has been an increase in the Fountas and Pinnell literacy assessment for reading levels, especially for English language learners.
- Teaching practices and lessons across classrooms are typically differentiated so that students have multiple opportunities to meet their learning needs.
 - Teachers across classrooms and grades use data and their knowledge of students' strengths, needs and interests to group students for learning. Data generated from state assessments, unit assessments and teacher made tests across subjects is analyzed regularly so that activities and student groups are adjusted based on learning outcomes. Lessons engage all students across grades in accelerated, on level and strategic intervention groups that provide adequate scaffolds to improve their learning. For example, during visits to classrooms, students worked in a low, medium or a high group on differentiated learning tasks that offer multiple entry points for all students. As a result, classroom data shows improved achievement in reading and an increased volume and accuracy in writing across subjects, evident in student work folders, school bulletin boards and unit assessment results.
- School leaders make informed and purposeful organizational decisions that improve instruction, and meet students' need, resulting in increased achievement.
 - The school uses its resources effectively to improve the learning outcomes of all students. For example, the school provides an inquiry period, common preps, one period after school and one full day of planning for teacher teams each month to increase coherence across the grades to close the achievement gap. The school has a vertical instructional team comprised of one teacher representing each grade, English as a second language coordinator and a special education specialist. The teams are instrumental in leading the initiative to revise the curriculum, improve monitoring tools and enhance parent-teacher

communication around students' academic progress. The school has used their resources to provide a smart board for each classroom. As a result, the students are engaged in more rigorous instructional activities across the grades evident in an increase of 15% on the Fountas and Pinnell assessments particularly for targeted students.

- School leaders and staff effectively use a wide range of assessment data that guides student grouping decisions and informs planning, resulting in a clear understanding of the performance of learners.
 - To ensure that all teachers adhere to the same level of high expectations across the school, a progress monitoring tool was developed in literacy and math. The school's literacy team and math team created a framework for the progress monitoring tool that demonstrates consistency across the grades. Each teacher team created the questions for the assessments and the rubrics that are aligned with the school's key standards and provide feedback on curriculum and instructional decisions. The progress monitoring tool supplements the data analysis from English language arts (ELA) and math, periodic mock ELA and math assessments, and Periodic assessment data from Instructional Targeted Assessments (ITA's) by identifying areas of strengths and needs for English language learners and students with disabilities. As a result, teacher teams and individual teachers effectively adjust curriculum and classroom practice to better meet the needs of target subgroups, as evidenced in an increase in comprehension for 90% English language learners and students with disabilities on unit tests.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the use of classroom observations along with the analysis of student work data to improve professional development and student achievement.
 - School leaders offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal observations and analysis of student work products using a common instructional lens. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based rubric to articulate clear expectations for teacher practices and use that framework for the development of teachers. However, school leaders have just started to engage in short, frequent cycles of classroom visits to provide clear next steps to improve instruction. This limits their ability to positively impact on the development of teachers and improve student outcomes.
- Increase professional collaboration that aligns with individual teacher goals along with monitoring procedures to address the impact of these offerings on adult and student learning.
 - The Learning Environment Survey (LES) indicates that some teachers want a greater voice in decision making and learning. School staff meets to collaborate on sharing best instructional practices, and engages in professional learning groups. However, some teachers indicate the need for a personal professional development plan to meet their specific needs. The lack of targeted plans limits opportunities for these staff members to

grow professionally to improve instruction and align their practices to school goals and student needs. The school's approach in developing leadership is evolving. Consequently, this limits distributed leadership to influence instructional decisions to improve student and adult learning.

- Establish systems to evaluate teacher team effectiveness and to build leadership capacity.
 - School leaders are in the process of creating systems to evaluate the work of teacher teams. They use spread sheets to gather information related to the focus, agenda and next steps for the respective teams. However, administrators are just starting to use the data to assess the collaborative inquiry work across the school. Consequently, the school's ability to provide feedback to target improvements in the work of teacher teams and build leadership capacity is emerging.
- Enhance goal setting for greater consistency in identifying short term differentiated goals targeted to meet the identified needs of individual and groups of students in order to increase learning outcomes.
 - Teacher teams use data to set goals for students in greatest need of improvement, such as English language learners, and students with special needs. Most teams and classroom level goals have leveraged changes in some classrooms. However, the practice of setting interim goals and the use of specific academic interim benchmarks to meet granular learning targets of identified groups of students is not yet fully embedded across the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Dutch Kills School	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