

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 163 Flushing Heights
Elementary school Q163**

**159-01 59 AVENUE
QUEENS
NY 11365**

Principal: Nicole Bullen

**Dates of review: April 17, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 163 Flushing Heights is an Elementary school with 553 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 16% Hispanic, 4% White, 77% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 96.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has established a coherent vision for the school actualized by the collaborative development and communication of school wide goals closely aligned to data that leverage ongoing changes to curriculum and accelerate student growth. (3.1)
 - o The areas of focus within the school are to ensure literacy instruction is differentiated to meet the needs of students at all reading levels, to provide opportunities for students to transfer writing skills and strategies to all content areas and for students to be able to expand their mathematical thinking within performance tasks where they are expected to use pictures, symbols and words to explain their thought process. In order to set and monitor the progress of these goals, the principal meets monthly with the school wide instructional team (SWIT) comprised of administrators and teacher leaders that represent all subjects and subgroups within the school to review school wide data and student work products to ensure progress and alignment to the schools chosen instructional program. Additionally, parents participate in a variety of workshops where they receive training in the curricula expectations of the school and the use of data to set school based and individual student goals. Parents feel they are informed and can clearly identify where students are in the goal process and the next steps necessary to continue to move their children in the right direction towards meeting rigorous school standards. This collaborative relationship around focused goals and action planning ensures that all constituents are taking part in improving student achievement and has led to increased student performance on both English language arts and math state exam results.
- The principal strategically channels resources, including staff and student time, to support the instructional needs of the school resulting in improved pedagogy and continued student achievement. (1.3)
 - o In alignment with student literacy needs revealed through a comprehensive data study, the principal programmed a shared reading program period one every morning in grades three through five and a read aloud program in grades kindergarten through two to address five key reading skills; previewing, making connections, envisioning, inference and summarizing. Day five of the initiative also includes a writing component. Furthermore, the principal has designated an additional literacy period for struggling learners that is monitored in sixteen week cycles. She also provides multiple opportunities for teachers to meet to plan weekly tasks aligned to focused skill areas. As a result of this school wide organization of teacher and student time, students are demonstrating significant gains in reading levels in the early childhood grades as evidenced through Teacher's College reading assessments, growth in genre specific reading skills in the upper grades revealed through Acuity assessments, and growth in writing skills across the school in all content areas.
 - o The principal provides monthly professional development in literacy through an AUSSIE coach. Additionally, she has scheduled an extra period each week for a math teacher leader to support teachers with the development of exemplars as problems of the day and to meet the school wide goal of expanding student ability to use a variety of computational methods to solve mathematical problems and express their process in writing. This work has resulted in improved content knowledge for teachers in both literacy and math, more focused curricular and

task design aligned to the Common Core Learning standards, and improvements in pedagogy that focus on how to structure lessons and tasks using student strengths and area of need.

- The school community is committed to fostering a safe, nurturing learning environment that recognizes students as individuals and supports their social and academic achievement (1.4)
 - o The diverse culture that exists within the school is celebrated throughout the community by fostering the belief that all students can succeed if they feel safe and are part of an engaging environment. This resonates throughout the school where the staff speaks not only to data and curriculum but individual social/emotional needs of students and ways to effectively address these needs in order to support academic success. This philosophy of education is further encouraged within the dual language program, sports enrichment teams, dance and visual arts programs alongside character building, peer mediation and tutoring opportunities. The principal supports students in their request to form and run their own clubs. Students must gather members, establish a budget and develop bi-laws and guiding principles and choose their adult supporters. As a result of this positive school climate, children communicate that they feel supported by the staff and their peers and have a strong desire to learn, participate and be successful at school.
- The consistent analysis of effective data systems provides school leaders with a true representation of the strengths and needs of the school which supports appropriate curricular and instructional decisions. (2.1)
 - o The principal and her school wide instructional team (SWIT) continuously gather data from an array of sources such as item skills analysis, instructionally targeted and predictive Acuity assessments (used to target needs of students based on predicted skill based outcomes), sample student work from pre and post unit assessments and student portfolios and math journals to pull patterns and trends. Interventions and supports are then designed to target areas of need and provide acceleration for advanced learners. For example, fourth grade data revealing weaknesses with multiplication led to the design of a morning program focusing on building these skills, grade three teachers are incorporating using evidence from a story to support a claim as a curricular skill in all content areas and the entire school is addressing identifying text structures and expository writing based on student outcomes on constructive responses. Intervention classes are formed using results from Teacher's College reading assessment results. This continual cycle of data analysis and decision making has resulted in increased use of data by teachers to inform instruction and is providing targeted supports and extensions that are raising overall school performance in skill based areas of weakness as indicated through bi-monthly school wide assessments and an increase in the use of academic and genre specific language in student work products.
- School leaders and teachers provide students and families with the supports and tools necessary to actively participate in the school wide goals and the learning needs of students. (3.4)
 - o Throughout the school, there are consistent expectations of instructional rigor communicated to staff, students and families. Teachers are building capacity on the effective use of Depth of Knowledge levels in questioning skills and classroom and curricular tasks and are expected to develop classroom resources and rubrics that support deeper thinking. Students are able to speak to these

resources and communicate ways that they use them to enhance their work and help them to better understand content. These expectations are improving student outcomes and accelerating students learning towards meeting the rigor of the Common Core learning standards.

- o The school continuously communicates with parents around student learning outcomes and social/ emotional learning needs and provides a plethora of workshops around the school curriculum, goals of the school, the Common Core Learning Standards, using technology to support learning and the differences in social and emotional development between girls and boys. Additionally, the principal communicates with parents monthly through “The Dolphin”, a newsletter that highlights school progress. In addition to report cards and parent teacher conferences, teachers correspond quarterly with parents around student progress using interim reports aligned to school goals. As a result, there are high levels of parent engagement within the school community that support student growth.
- Observation and feedback protocols aligned to the instructional needs of the school are providing teachers with next steps and clear expectations that are enhancing school wide practice and student performance. (4.1)
 - o The school has adopted the Charlotte Danielson Framework to use as a tool to provide feedback to teachers and improve student learning. The administration studied past classroom observations and selected four targeted areas of focus this year; designing coherent instruction, discussion and questioning, engaging students in learning and establishing a culture for learning. Professional development was provided to the entire staff in these areas with time for teachers to reflect and choose two of the four areas they would focus on this year. Individual meetings between teachers and the administration are scheduled to create professional development plans collaboratively. The focus of these plans is used as a lens during walkthroughs, formal and informal observations and to plan professional development opportunities throughout the year. In addition to weekly informal feedback sessions, teachers meet quarterly with their immediate supervisor to monitor and adjust goals by looking at student work products and aligning student outcomes to the curriculum and schools instructional and individual teacher goals. This work allows teachers to enhance their professional growth through comparing standards and expectations to student performance trends and has had an impact on “thinking with the end in mind” in terms of curriculum development, increased rigor through effective use of higher order questioning and more effective classroom tools such as shared reading bookmarks, and math vocabulary toolkits throughout the school to reinforce content area vocabulary skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the work of curriculum alignment to key standards to further develop consistency of rigor within units of study and tasks to cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
 - o Although school leaders and faculty have clear goals and curriculum that focuses on key standards that address the needs of the school and integrate the Common Core Learning Standards, currently planning of curricula and academic tasks to meet the needs of student subgroups, particularly English Language learners is done on an informal basis with more focus on individual skill mastery than strategic supports to allow for them to engage fully in the curriculum. This creates pockets of stalled student achievement within the school.

- o Currently, teachers use student data to carefully refine and plan lessons and academic tasks taking into consideration low and high achievers. However, although many classes contain high numbers of English language learners, curriculum and task planning tends to focus on individual students more than the challenges of this subgroup where adjustments can be made to ensure their needs are fully met.
- Further develop the skills of teachers in meaningful questioning strategies, lesson development and task construction to better meet the needs of all learners to increase levels of engagement and participation within classrooms. (1.2)
 - o The school has fostered the belief that students learn best from an active room environment that enhances instructional time to support differentiation, provides multiple entry points into the curricula through use of graphs and charts and introduces accountable talk stems and learning centers that facilitate academic choices for students. However, although most classrooms have created these learning environments, not all teachers are using them as instructional tools to engage students in discussion and content, particularly English language learners. Consequently, in some classrooms, the learning experience for these students leads to general levels of participation by limiting student choice options and initiative which affects the rigor of their work and their ability to fully participate in lessons.
- Continue the work around aligning assessments and rubrics to better gauge the impact of curricular and instructional decisions and student learning outcomes. (2.2)
 - o Individual teachers and teacher teams are currently in the process of developing and enhancing rubrics to better align to the changes in the curriculum that support the Common Core Learning Standards and to effectively measure areas of need and individual student strength within student work products and classroom assessments. As a result of careful analysis of student work products, teacher teams are discovering that current rubrics need to align more effectively to school goals and be more student friendly in order to articulate student progress and next learning steps. At this stage of revision, some rubrics do not accurately measure key standards or student progress relating to these standards. Other rubrics do not fully articulate clear skill based expectations to effectively measure student mastery limiting engagement in learning and teachers' ability to accurately gauge student progress.
- Refine systems to evaluate and better support the effectiveness of the work of professional collaborations to ensure timely adjustments are made to build school wide capacity around student growth. (5.4)
 - o School leaders fully support leadership development within the school. The SWIT team evaluates the work of teacher teams building curriculum and revising rubrics around the needs of students. However, currently there is not a formal system in place for checks for alignment of team work to school goals or the development of building leadership capacity on the administrative level. As a result of limited monitoring systems by school leaders, some teams are not using student data when making curricular and instructional decisions limiting their ability to effectively assess and monitor the impact of their work on student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 163 Flushing Heights	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				
1..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