

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. Q177

K-12 all grades school Q177

**56-37 188 STREET
QUEENS
NY 11365**

Principal: Kathy Posa

Dates of review: February 14, 15, and 16, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Donna Dimino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. Q177 is a K-12 all grades school with 504 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 39% Black, 23% Hispanic, 22% White, 14% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 76% of the students enrolled and girls account for 24%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

What the school does well

- The school provides an extensive, integrated system of supports that ensure the personal, social, emotional and physical needs of students are met in order to impact overall success. (1.4)
 - o Creating and maintaining an inclusive culture of respect that fosters self-esteem and promotes on-going learning is the result of the school's highly integrated system of social, emotional and sensory supports. Positive student-adult rapport guides how school leadership organizes class cohorts, thereby ensuring that students are well known and supported by the teachers and paraprofessionals they work most closely with on a daily basis. A data system for capturing attendance and lateness information informs timely family outreach by school support staff that serves to involve families in their child's youth development. A variety of programs and methodologies such as Applaud Good Behavior, Get Ready to Learn and sensory carts on every floor are methods employed across the school as appropriate for student subgroups, based on disability needs, to help students self-regulate and be cognitively available to attend and focus. As a result, there has been a reduction of student referrals from 131 for the September 2010 to January 2011 time period to 34 referrals for the same time period this year, representing a 78% decrease in referrals as of January 31, 2012.
 - o Students have specific forums for actively participating in and influencing school-wide decisions. Student Council, the School Leadership Team, which includes two student representatives, suggestion boxes and an open door policy by every administrator assures that students' needs are voiced. Recently, alternate assessment students of higher cognitive abilities communicated a desire to attend college. The school is currently partnering with St. John's University to design a college-level inclusion program for students with cognitive delays. Overall, the school's integrative and responsive approach to youth development engages students to take ownership for their learning and fosters high student efficacy, thereby assuring students' motivation for academic success.
- The school communicates high expectations for each student's success to all stakeholders and values families as partners in their child's education in assuring students receive all the supports needed to achieve progress. (3.4)
 - o School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations for student progress. Administrators, related service providers and teachers work closely with families to set short term goals and put scaffolds in place that move students incrementally toward independence with success toward long-term goals in mind. Teachers work collaboratively to design common student self-assessments so that students take ownership for their progress, as appropriate, across all aspects of their learning, including worksite experiences. A guidance/advisement team supports students and families through parent support, sibling groups and education in sexuality and pregnancy. Working closely with administration, key staff, parent leaders and the parent coordinator, they provide ongoing trainings to help families reinforce skills at home as well as be proactive in their child's transition plan leading to a meaningful post-secondary goal. Outside agencies are brought in to further support parent training based on information garnered from a parent survey: e.g., guardianship, Medicaid services, increasing independence through travel training, and communication systems. Parents

report that the school goes “above and beyond” to support families in ensuring their child is on a path for maximum success. As of June 2011, 40% of students made gains toward a less restrictive environment, a 24% gain from the previous year. This consistently communicated vision around high expectations for each student results in a strong focus and investment across stakeholders to increase student outcomes in readiness for post-secondary goals.

- School leaders and the entire staff work cohesively to create a culture of mutual respect to ensure that students are engaged in learning and their unique needs are supported leading to post-secondary outcomes. (4.4)
 - The school has made adjustments for continuing improvement to their integrated approach to youth development based on inquiry research that surfaced significant social skill improvements in students who were taught an identified set of social skills routinely as compared to students from classrooms where social skills were taught indirectly. Staff received professional support in the use of a social skills curriculum whereby targeted social skills are taught explicitly at an identified time daily in all classrooms. The impact is a 250% increase in decertification of students’ crisis management support from September 2011 to date as compared to the rate of crisis support decertification for the entire 2010-11 school year, thereby accelerating the personal and academic growth of students.
 - The school partners with an adult on the autism spectrum, Michael John Carley, to train parents and teachers to understand the complexity of autism and the range of behaviors an individual with autism presents. Teaching specific strategies to positively support students’ social-emotional learning, Mr. Carley conducts student support groups in which he works with students with high verbal and developing social abilities on targeted skills necessary for positive transition outcomes. Students at Applebee’s, their community-based work site, evidenced active involvement in pro-social and effective communication skills as they performed their worksite responsibilities. Internal capacity is further built by the school since this provides the guidance team with pertinent information concerning specific frustrations and needs students communicate to Mr. Carley, resulting in timely and efficient support services for all students. The overall impact of this highly integrative support system is that students receive targeted support services by all stakeholders, generalized across a variety of settings including the home and work place, thereby maximizing students’ real-world learning for future success.
- Expectations around teacher development are driven by a research-based framework to promote professional growth for improving classroom practice. (4.1)
 - The Professional Teaching Standards by Santa Cruz and now the Danielson Framework are used to elevate teacher practice and inform teachers’ goal-setting. Teachers self-reflect twice during the school year and provide corresponding evidence. Through formal and informal observations and classroom walkthroughs, teachers, especially those new to the profession, consistently receive information that highlights strengths and targets areas for continued growth. Administration takes a hands-on approach as they support teachers by modeling strategies in the classroom. A school-based coach, who specializes in behavioral analysis, works closely with new and at-risk teachers to utilize a range of structural supports to create a climate conducive to learning. Additionally, teachers are partnered for inter-visitations, and the school uses the larger District 75 community as a resource sending teachers to a peer school for focused training. As a result, teachers have an understanding of their strengths,

their growth and their identified areas of need in order to improve student outcomes as evidenced in teacher observations, written feedback and discussions at teacher team meetings.

- There is a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best which is evident in teaching practices that lead to progress for all students. (1.2)
 - o The school community shares the belief that students learn best when standards-driven content and skill acquisition and reinforcement are delivered via pedagogical methods that motivate students and have meaning for them; i.e., use of technology, functional applications, visual prompts, access to expressive language through a communication system, and a structured learning environment whereby individual students and small groups are supported by the entire classroom teaching team. In addition, as the school revises the curriculum to align with the evolving standards, individual teachers and teacher teams are moderating the rigor of performance tasks in ways that are relevant for student subgroups based on cognitive ability. This has led to an additional focus and adjustment to plans across the school on levels of questioning. The impact is that across classrooms student work provides evidence that consistent use of these practices exists, thereby assuring all students have maximum opportunities to practice and apply learning.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to assure that ongoing student learning leads to meaningful student work. (1.3)
 - o The school manages its resources to create in-house work sites for secondary students as aligned with their individual education plan (IEP) goals, transition plans, and in support of the school's instructional goals. As part of transition planning and in preparation for community-based job opportunities as they near age 21, students go through an application process to work at a school-based job of their choice. The school has creatively managed resources, including teacher and paraprofessional assignments, to increase the number of in-house work sites from six to thirteen this year in order to meet the need of over two hundred secondary students, a 25% increase from last year, providing them with a multitude of work experience options. Funds are prioritized for a transition coordinator who seeks out community-based work opportunities for students as they near graduation and as appropriate. Since 2007 this has yielded a nearly 300% growth to almost thirty site opportunities, impacting almost one hundred fifty secondary students, 8% more students since last year. This directly supports the school's theory of practice that students require meaningful and supported, real world opportunities to generalize skills learned in the classroom. High levels of student engagement and meaningful student work/performance evidence the effectiveness of the school's purposeful decision-making as aligned with school goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the application of an inquiry approach within teams so that identified student achievement gaps inform instructional planning and the application of delivery. (4.2)
 - o The principal has collaborated with the United Federation of Teachers to engage all teachers in structured collaborations once a week where they work together in support of school goals. Teachers are strategically grouped based on the cognitive similarities of the students they serve. Currently teams are focusing on examining student work. Analyses of work products are leading to curricular

revisions, specifically assessing for task rigor, aligned with the evolving standards and respective to student subgroups. However, lack of a dedicated and formalized structure around teacher team inquiry work, such as using protocols to surface learning gaps and leading to greater teacher responsibility for examining and testing effective instructional techniques, is reducing the consistency with which promising practices are expanding across classrooms, thereby limiting progress for greater numbers of students with similar needs.

- Further develop data gathering and analysis practices so that school leaders and faculty capture and use a full range of meaningful information about performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum. (2.3)
 - o Students' IEP goals anchor what information is collected in order to track progress toward mastery. The school uses specific curricular assessments and other diagnostics for various student subgroups that provide teachers with common data points for analysis. However, the data is not organized to be easily accessible. Additionally, criteria-referenced student work/performance is evaluated throughout the school by student self-assessment checklists. However, these reflective rubrics lack content-specific skills and sub-skills. Some teachers have created rubrics with primary academic criteria to evaluate work and give feedback to students, but this varies from classroom to classroom. Therefore, information related to student performance, other than behavior, is inconsistent across the school. As a result, trend analysis around student mastery varies across classrooms, for groups of students, as well as for individual students. Consequently there are missed opportunities for necessary curricular and instructional adjustments at both the school and classroom levels.
- Evaluate progress toward defined goals by developing interim benchmarks for all formalized plans to enable leadership and faculty to monitor progress and adjust plans, leading to maximized learning outcomes for students. (5.3)
 - o The school has established a clear set of long-term goals that build from pertinent school documents and a range of low-inference information generated by the school around student progress. However, administration, teacher teams and individual teachers have not developed formalized plans with respective short-term goals and benchmark data. This limits the school's ability to determine interim progress in meeting its goals, thereby reducing its capacity to make necessary adjustments mid-course in order to ensure acceleration of intended learning outcomes.
- Refine structures and processes that utilize data to monitor and assess the effectiveness of professional collaborations and teacher development in order to build leadership capacity. (5.4)
 - o Structured professional collaborations are used for a variety of purposes as determined by the administration. Currently, teams are using student work samples to determine revisions of content-specific plans. Teams have specific content goals as aligned to school goals and current initiatives, but there are no clear pedagogical goals. While some teachers take the lead in sharing instructional best practices, there is inconsistency in the way all staff work. A meeting log is completed and turned in to administration, but it lacks specific delivery techniques that teachers have determined they will try with their students. Consequently, this minimizes the administration's ability to oversee and evaluate the impact of each team's instructional work by all staff, thereby limiting the school's capacity to leverage improvements to practice school-wide.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. Q177	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
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