

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Brookfield School

Elementary School 181

**148 – 15 230 Street
Queens
NY 11413**

Principal: Andrea A. Belcher

Dates of review: December 12 – 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Brookfield School is an elementary school with 430 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 92% Black, 5% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school implements an engaging, streamlined curriculum that is intentionally aligned to State standards and delivered to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners in order to improve student achievement. (1.1)
 - Teachers collaborate to create horizontal and vertical curriculum maps in the core curriculum subjects. In the Arts, teachers use the curriculum blueprint provided by the city. There is a greater emphasis on improving writing skills and reading non-fiction texts with comprehension, for example teachers use more non-fiction texts for Read-Alouds and require students to write reflections after math lessons. The school has begun to design and integrate the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks in literacy and math by grade level. As a result, teachers are experiencing measurable improvement in student writing across the board. The rubrics in use around the school indicate an increase in volume and proficiency levels both in papers displayed and in student notebooks. This is observed across all grade levels. Math scores on unit tests show improvement over a year earlier after the early topics have been covered.
 - Students use technology and participate in science and math activities using manipulative objects. The school uses carefully selected books to promote character development and academic rigor. In a third-grade class, students were trained to use the internet for scientific research. In the fifth grade self-contained class, students are encouraged to express themselves in writing with the same frequency as the other classes on the grade as evidenced by the published pieces available in notebooks and folders. This grade level approach has led to a large majority of students becoming engaged in their learning.
- The school leaders and faculty make purposeful organizational decisions that support the school's instructional goals to meet student learning needs. (1.3)
 - The school leadership and faculty have adjusted to a shrinking budget by clarifying their priorities and focusing on instruction. They have maintained their coach, increased their use of technology including interactive whiteboards, and purchased large numbers of books and materials. The school has facilitated volunteerism to maintain experiences in the Arts for the students and parents assist daily in classroom tutoring. As a consequence, the students have increased their writing, artwork and projects.
 - The school leadership has dedicated time during the school day for teacher teams to meet regularly. A central inquiry team drives the work and supports the grade level teams. The teachers have increased this school year the amount of time spent examining student work and devising tasks of increasing challenge. As a result, teacher teams are improving instruction by refining lesson planning across grades.

- Teachers utilize regular assessments and curriculum alignment to clarify their picture of student progress and adjust their instruction at the classroom and teacher team level for increased student success. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers have spent considerable time developing, devising and adapting rubrics for their daily use. In student notebooks and on student writing the use of rubrics is evident. A fourth grade student was enormously proud of his essay on bullying and was able to identify his strengths and next steps using the rubric. Teachers check student work during class and provide feedback in individual conferring sessions. A fourth grade math teacher was able to adjust her lesson on graphing based on the student efforts. This approach has led to increased adjustments to reach underperforming students.
 - The school has placed great emphasis on analyzing Periodic Assessments and classroom level assessments to identify student needs. The leadership has acknowledged that they were overly optimistic with the results in previous months and are examining current data with greater care. The special education teacher team is vertically aligned and uses item analysis to drill down on specific areas of weakness. As a result, trends are identified and attempts made to rectify them within a much shorter timeframe.
- School leadership uses formal and informal observation of classroom teaching aligned with student learning outcomes to improve instructional practices and enhance professional growth. (4.1)
 - The school leadership encourages teachers to develop their own personal high-level goals. They then support teacher growth with short frequent cycles of classroom observation both formally and informally. The administration provides high-quality, specific feedback that is tailored to each individual teacher such as the comments to a fourth grade teacher that her questions tended to fall in the basic recall category and did not challenge students to think deeply. In addition, a range of supports for next steps are provided to teachers that include one-to-one consultation, mentoring for newer teachers, frequent collaboration with coaches and classroom inter-visitations. This practice is based on professional research by Danielson and others. As a result, the vast majority of teachers feel supported and equipped to better meet student learning needs and strengthen their instructional practices for professional growth.
- Teams of teachers and individual teachers use collaborative and data-driven processes to set measurable, differentiated learning goals for all students that result in measured improvement in six week cycles. (3.2)
 - Teachers use their student performance data to set goals for their classes and student subgroups. This is a major thrust of the teacher team grade meetings. Student goals in the major subject areas are displayed in the classroom and readily available to students. Students are aware of their goals and the support they may need to achieve them. Several students shared that math was a challenge for them and they knew the next steps required for improvement. Teachers use peer tutoring and flexible

grouping to instill confidence in students towards the achievement of their goals. This has led to the systematic accomplishment of preliminary goals for students for the early part of the school year as reflected in student work samples aligned with their goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the coherence of the pedagogical beliefs about student learning to ensure curriculum alignment and differentiation that expands the quality of student work. (1.2)
 - There is an articulated belief across the school that students must work on tasks based on their ability levels. Selected textbooks are designed to support students at grade level, below grade level, and above grade level. The vast majority of lessons are designed around a mini-lesson, followed by individual work on the three identified levels. Sometimes teachers will work with students in small groups and re-teach the lesson. As a result, some students are engaged on their levels and this helps them to improve their learning. However, the lack of sufficient differentiation of lessons to meet students at their instructional levels stifles academic progress for all students as evidenced in student data and work samples.
- Accelerate the engagement of families in school activities, decision-making and information exchanges on students' academic progress and social growth in order to steadily increase student performance. (2.4)
 - The school exerts diligent efforts to provide students and families with personalized feedback so that they remain aware of student progress on a continuous basis. School leaders make presentations at the School Leadership Team (SLT) meetings, parent association meetings, assemblies and functions where parents are present, such as workshops on academic subjects and areas of interest that are offered throughout the year. There is full disclosure of school data on the SLT. Although the school provides parents with progress reports on students' achievement and organizes meetings to share school data and expectations, there is very little parent participation at scheduled meetings to engage their voice in school decisions. The limited participation of parents hampers their ability to support increases in their students' performance.
- Improve the communication of high expectations to staff, students and families along with the student support to achieve the expectations. (3.4)
 - Parents have expressed gratitude about the high expectations communicated from the school leadership. For example the school has made a concerted effort to improve attendance with major outreach to families of absent students by phone, email and flyers. The principal has consistently communicated her high expectations about professionalism, communication, instruction and the CCLS as reflected in faculty meeting notes, grade conference minutes and letters to individual teachers. The leadership is developing a system of accountability that would provide training on implementing high expectations for students' growth and assist teachers and staff in taking responsibility for the results of their efforts. While the administration supports families and staff with some

high expectations, there is no system currently in place to provide on going training for teachers. The lack of a current system to provide training to staff on the implementation of high academic and professional expectations hinders students' growth in meeting high standards.

- Improve child development, guidance and support services in coordination with stronger community involvement to promote the personal and academic growth of students.
 - The school is developing supports for the faculty to contribute directly to creating and maintaining a safe, positive and respectful culture at the school. Character education is embedded into the literacy curriculum and teachers explicitly communicate behavioral expectations around conflict resolution and against bullying. Parent volunteers provide tutoring and mentorship for selected students. The community is welcomed into the school and students actively work to beautify their school environment. However, the parents are largely unaware of community resources to which they can turn and were uninformed of the school's accountability status. The lack of internal and external partnerships aligned to school wide goals to develop strong social-emotional and academic skills, lessens opportunities for families and staff to support students in preparation for post-secondary skills as reflected in below proficiency student performance data.
- Streamline a collaborative system for measuring progress towards both interim and long-term goals in order to make quicker adjustments in teaching practices. (5.3)
 - While the school has established achievement goals for all subject areas, math and literacy receive the greatest attention. Interim goals are explicit, yet there are no systemic benchmarks to measure their attainment during the course of the year. This prevents the school from assessing growth and making adjustments to identified needs. Currently, the school works on the positive practices it has identified and is already doing and hopes for the best outcomes. Thus, the lack of attention to the attainment of interim goals inhibits the school's informed decision-making to adjust instructional practices for student improvements.
 - The school makes insufficient use of its data for annual planning and evaluation. They have just begun to take the expectations of the CCLS, the evidence of teacher development and student performance into a fully coherent account. The school does not use its Progress Report data and other accountability tools to identify how specific subgroups need to be moved and by how much. The lack of alignment of goals and an evaluation of yearly data to set long range and interim goals has resulted in standardized achievement data being stagnant over the past three years.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

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|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| School name: The Brookfield 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 |