

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

PS/MS 200 - The Pomonok School & STAR Academy

K-8 school Q200

**70-10 164 STREET
QUEENS
NY 11365**

Principal: Farrah Mckenna

**Dates of review: March 1-2, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS/MS 200 - The Pomonok School & STAR Academy is a K-8 school with 497 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 36% Hispanic, 23% White, 18% Asian students and 1% Native American, 1% Multiracial. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's approach to making informed and effective organizational decisions support student learning, leading to notable improvements in student writing and research skills. (1.3)
 - o Technology is an integral part of the instructional vision of the school and the principal channels resources effectively to support growth in this area. All classrooms have SMART boards and computers. Teachers have received professional development and have begun using these tools effectively to plan and deliver more rigorous lessons. Additionally, the principal ensures that the school's technology teacher meets with teachers and teacher teams to gain an understanding of each team's curricula planning and units of study so their work can be supported further within the school's computer lab. As a result of this focus, students in all grades have access to more authentic learning experiences and increased use of appropriate resources to improve the work products by learning strategies such as differentiating between reliable and unreliable resources and the contrasts between internet and traditional research skills incorporated in the nonfiction research unit of study developed this year aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS).
 - o Teacher time is structured to include two vertical preparation periods and one period of common planning per week. During this time, internal coaches provide professional development to staff and teacher teams craft curricula and academic tasks in all content areas and discuss student work and other relevant data. As a result, student work has demonstrated growth in research skills and argument writing and students are able to articulate what they have learned and areas in which they need to improve. Additionally, teachers say that improved work products evaluated during team meetings, have helped them gain clarity in the expectations of the CCLS and momentum in task development to challenge students and improve outcomes.
- Teachers continuously analyze and refine assessments and rubrics to align these tools so they accurately inform instructional decisions and measure student outcomes. (2.2)
 - o This year the school is focused on designing interim assessments and rubrics that effectively measure student mastery of standards addressed within the CCLS-aligned units they are currently engaged in developing. As a result of this consistency in assessment, teachers are gaining momentum in effectively measuring student outcomes against specific targeted standards, identifying trends and addressing the needs of individual students to more effectively plan instruction that will allow them to engage in more challenging work.
 - o In many classrooms, teachers are using exit slips to monitor student understanding daily. Student responses are used to plan guided groups, schedule one on one conferencing time or to plan assignments that provide extensions for advanced learners. As a result, daily class time is used more effectively and students' strengths and weaknesses are supported through more focused planning and instruction.
- School leaders are engaging in short, frequent observation cycles and providing feedback and next steps that are improving teacher effectiveness. (4.1)

- This year, the administration and staff have collectively engaged in Charlotte Danielson’s framework with a focus on designing coherent instruction, improving quality of questions and discussion techniques to improve teacher effectiveness school wide. The administration is engaging in weekly observation cycles with immediate feedback to teachers around these focus areas. Individual teacher goals are formed and monitored based on feedback and discussions between administration and staff. As a result, there is clear evidence that teachers intentionally plan and use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge to design higher order questions and accountable talk protocols during lessons and signs of teacher growth in these areas.
- The principal has a clear multi-year instructional vision aligned to the CCLS that has been communicated to the school community and helps to foster students’ academic and social-emotional growth. (3.1)
 - Teachers and parents within the school community can articulate the vision of the school and the direction the principal is working towards to improve student outcomes, teacher effectiveness and school climate. As part of this process, the principal plans a yearly retreat with the core inquiry team and other staff members to review school wide data such as Acuity and other assessment results, classroom observation trends, student work, the School Survey and citywide instructional expectations to design school level goals and action plans. These goals are then modified during the summer when state data is released and prepared for presentation to the school leadership team to modify and align CEP goals to the needs of the school. Goals are then discussed throughout the year by all constituencies. This focused and extended process is the mechanism that effectively guides school progress around improving student outcomes.
- The school has developed a standardized data collection structure by which they organize and aggregate data to identify trends in student progress, plan instruction and create intervention strategies when needed. (2.3)
 - This year, teachers have established school-wide protocols around collection of data within data binders to ensure consistency in using student outcomes across grades and subject areas to make timely and appropriate instructional decisions. In addition to state exams and Acuity interim assessments and predictives, these binders contain student goals, conference notes, guided group logs, citywide bundle data-collection sheets and student exit slips. This data is not only used to modify instruction on a daily basis and form appropriate differentiated groups, it is also used during some inquiry meetings as part of the gap analysis of curriculum maps, to design tasks aligned to the CCLS, to collectively analyze trends by grade, skill base and content area and by administration when conducting walkthroughs. As a result, the school has a clear and consistent model by which they engage in discussions around identifying and targeting the needs of students and improving teaching and learning throughout the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the work around curriculum building within and across grade levels to promote more rigorous habits and ensure all students make progress in their learning. (1.1)
 - In alignment with the school’s instructional goals, teachers are carefully merging the skills embedded within the CCLS around key areas of focus such as argument writing and text structure to increase nonfiction reading ability.

Teachers are also using real world problems to address identified school based weaknesses in algebra, number sense and operations. However, the current development of this curriculum and academic tasks that support it do not fully address the needs of subgroups within the school, in particular special education students and lower performing males. As a result, these subgroups are not demonstrating growth towards meeting the standards and the school is missing opportunities to close achievement gaps.

- Further develop teacher skills that align differentiated strategies within classroom tasks to curricular expectations and student need in order to provide appropriate challenge for all students. (1.2)
 - o The school community is building capacity around shaping a school-wide foundation of what differentiated instruction should like in classrooms. However, there is a consistent gap between theory and practice in relation to curriculum, lesson planning and the differentiated tasks and routines developed to provide multiple entry points to increase student thinking and participation. In some classrooms differentiated strategies were used effectively, such as using data to establish tasks for guided reading and math groups, while in other classes students engaged in differentiated tasks but were unable to identify the curriculum-based objectives or they had difficulty with the complexity of the task itself. These inconsistencies limit the impact of this work and lead to uneven levels of student challenge and engagement that is reflected in student outcomes and work products.
- Increase systems of communication to more effectively engage families in ongoing exchange of information regarding student progress and their next learning steps. (2.4)
 - o Although parents communicate that the school is responsive when they call with a concern or to check on their child's progress, there are not clear communication systems to inform parents of the curricular or behavioral expectations of the school and the learning needs of their students other than quarterly report cards. Consequently, families are unclear as to their child's strengths and weaknesses and of ways to support their learning needs in a consistent way throughout the school year.
 - o The school community is working diligently to increase their use of technology both within the classrooms and as a way to communicate with families through ARIS parent link, Acuity and E-Chalk. However, at this time, this work is in its beginning stages and has not been put into practice yet, so the school is currently missing opportunities for families to work collaboratively toward understanding and improving student outcomes.
- Further expand school-wide professional development plans to include differentiated learning opportunities for staff to improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement. (4.3)
 - o The principal provides differentiated professional development opportunities to address instructional expectations that incorporate alignment to the CCLS and improving teacher effectiveness. However, teachers cannot clearly articulate how the work they are doing within their teams aligns to the professional development they are engaged in and its impact on teacher practice and student outcomes. As a result, the work of some teams is not fully developed or aligned to school wide goals and has not yet begun to impact teacher practice or student work.

- o The principal has selected teacher leaders to support the school inquiry teams and meets with them once a week to provide information for leaders to deliver to the teams in order to move the school-wide instructional agenda forward. However, there are limited supports or professional development opportunities to help these teachers strengthen their leadership skills, so there are currently missed opportunities for developing an adult learning community that can leverage pedagogical change school-wide.
- Design systems to evaluate the school-wide professional collaborations to provide ongoing support and build school wide capacity through team and teacher leadership. (5.4)
 - o The principal meets weekly with teacher leaders to discuss and gauge the work of teacher teams. However, currently the administration is in the process of developing systems to assess and provide feedback around the effectiveness of this school-wide inquiry work and how it impacts the school's goals. As a result, there is a lack of coherence between and within some teams around implementation of the school-wide goals, leading to inconsistencies throughout the school around curricular development and its impact on instructional practices.
 - o The principal has identified a small cohort of teachers who she feels have built model classroom sites and recommends, as a result of frequent observations, that teachers visit these model rooms for mentoring and supports. However, this work is done only on a small scale and there is limited professional development for the teacher leaders, hindering capacity building of model classrooms and teacher leaders within the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: PS/MS 200 - The Pomonok School & STAR Academy	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