

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 242 Leonard P. Stavisky Early Childhood School
Elementary school Q242

29-66 137 STREET
QUEENS
NY 11354

Principal: PATRICIA COSTA

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Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 242 Leonard P. Stavisky Early Childhood School is an elementary school with 354 students from kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 4% Black, 18% Hispanic, 5% White, 70% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Academic and social-emotional growth of students is encouraged through building an environment where students feel safe and supported by adults. (1.4)
 - In efforts to preserve the high levels of safety and respect indicated on the yearly School Survey, the school supports positive character development through a literacy based book of the month program that addresses such topics as diversity, respect for all and anti-bullying, and is reinforced throughout the school through a variety of artwork displays and bulletin boards decorated by classes, parents and other school staff. Additionally, student of the month expectations are established to allow all students opportunities to be successful. Topics include: good citizenship, perfect attendance, most improved, best academic performance and school peacemaker. These inclusive programs are infused throughout the school and within classrooms, allowing students to see the connection between citizenship, responsibility and academic growth.
 - Students communicate that they feel their academic and emotional needs are a priority and that their teachers know them well and help them through conferencing, feedback on their work and through teacher participation in the school wide youth development programs. They also appreciate student partnerships both within and across grades that are an integral part of the school learning environment. As a result, students feel a part of the school community and say they are never “lost” in their school. This culture fosters a love of learning and supports student growth and academic success.
- The school has clear systems to communicate high expectations to all constituents that allow them to actively support students’ academic and personal growth. (3.4)
 - Both parents and faculty speak positively of the high expectations communicated consistently and of the role they play in supporting children’s growth. The principal fully utilizes network support to work with teacher teams on a monthly basis, especially in math and English as a second language, to align curriculum and connect instructional expectations to student work products. Parents receive monthly curricular guides and student work comes home with reading and math levels and benchmarks. Additionally, there are online tools like School Rack and the school web site that allow parents access to word studies, assignments and important classroom information. A monthly “Parents as Partners Learning Friday” welcomes parents to participate in classroom lessons with their children and then attend workshops led by staff around different curricular areas. Some topics covered are: supporting critical thinking through math, understanding the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and supporting your child in improving reading comprehension skills. As a result of this continuous collaboration, students express that they feel supported adults and want to work hard to help students achieve their goals.
- Teacher and teacher teams have developed curriculum that offers a wide range of learning experiences, aligned to rigorous standards that emphasize higher order skills across grades and content areas to engage a variety of learners. (1.1)
 - Teachers work with Network curriculum specialists and Teachers College staff developers to align curriculum to the expectations of the CCLS through an in-depth cross-grade and grade level focus on deconstructing performance tasks in

- English language arts and math. This has led to the development of skill based math lessons through the Investigations Mathematics curriculum and within units of study based on outcomes from student work products and summative assessments. It has also led to an increase of nonfiction units that focus on developing reading comprehension skills as well as improving writing skills through opinion and argument writing. This systematic planning and adjusting of curriculum and task design has resulted in increased writing stamina in nonfiction and growth in student skill base in their ability to apply math skills and strategies when explaining their problem solving process as evidenced in student outcomes in on demand writing assessments and student results on math exemplars.
- o In working to close the achievement gap for English language learners and students with disabilities, teachers employ multiple entry points that address the needs of these subgroups. Depth of Knowledge questioning strategies and oral language checklists to support academic language acquisition are used against student work product as part of the curricular design and task development process. As a result, student subgroups are demonstrating growth in their writing, particularly in science and social studies content areas, and have increased progress in quarterly school benchmarks in math.
 - Across classrooms, teaching practices, classroom routines and questioning strategies encourage student engagement and have led to increased student ability to clearly articulate their thinking and participation in the learning process. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms, parallel teaching supports a variety of learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, to ensure all receive supports necessary to deepen their understanding. Materials and mini lessons are strategically tailored to provide multiple entry points into the lessons. In many of the classrooms visited, this teaching strategy was evident through scaffolded student tasks that included leveled books, picture charts, and math manipulatives that allow all students to fully engage in the work and explain their answers.
 - o The school belief around how children learn best focuses around providing students with learning opportunities where they can make choices and learn from their peers through opportunities to engage in student-generated discussion. Many lessons and group tasks center on guided questions where students work with one another in partnerships and/or small groups. Students are expected to give feedback to their peers through questioning, discussion prompts and checklists. As a result, students demonstrate high levels of engagement and independence as evidenced in their ability to engage in age appropriate, rigorous discussion. They are also able to articulate the purpose for their work, the skills necessary to accomplish tasks and a variety of ways to tackle their assignments.
 - School leaders make deliberate organizational decisions around program groupings that support teacher collaborations and the learning needs of students. (1.3)
 - o The principal channels her resources to support technology as an essential tool for higher order thinking and learning, such as providing Smart Boards and additional laptops for use in every classroom. The school also has two technology teachers who work in collaboration with the cross grade inquiry teams to effectively integrate the use of technology into the curriculum and everyday tasks. Additionally, through DonorsChoose.org grant funding, teachers were provided with iPads to better compile and monitor daily classroom data and improve conference time with students. Support for this instructional initiative has led to greater efficiency and consistency for teachers in the use of data to drive instruction, more targeted and effective lesson planning to include the use

- of technology to enhance learning and increased engagement for students through exposure to a wide range of media which has led to student growth in their nonfiction writing products this year.
- o The principal engages in creative program models in order to establish time for teacher teams to meet up to four times a week. Additionally, she supports teachers in building their content knowledge and instructional capacity by encouraging them not to remain on one grade level consistently and by strategically pairing teachers using student data such as report card grades, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test scores and by teacher strengths or areas of need in particular curriculum areas focused around school goals. This creative use of staff time has resulted in teachers building capacity around the development of units of study in second and third grades that focus on increasing student knowledge of nonfiction text as well as increased rigor of assessment and unit planning in math.
 - The principal fully supports pedagogical growth by providing an array of professional learning opportunities to enrich practice, resulting in improved student learning. (4.3)
 - o The school's comprehensive professional development plan exposes teachers to a plethora of learning opportunities that address the current needs of the school, alignment to the CCLS and encourages teachers to take on leadership roles. These experiences include Teachers College Reading and Writing project working with teacher teams and leaders, as well as support from network specialists on topics such as effective use of data to make teaching and organizational decisions, using the quality review rubric to develop tangible and actionable next steps for teachers, supporting math teams in curricular and rubric development, raising the level of questioning through an in depth study of Depth of Knowledge framework, meeting the needs of English language learners by supporting academic language and using best practices to provide multiple entry points to meet the needs of special education and at risk students. Additionally, the principal schedules inquiry team and common planning time for teachers to meet and discuss their practice and plan ways to incorporate their learning into lessons. This professional learning configuration has helped teachers build upon their competence of the expectations of the CCLS, develop common expectations to effectively evaluate student work, align them to key standards and has surfaced teacher leadership opportunities through the recognition of teacher strengths and allowing them to turnkey and support their colleagues in professional development areas. Evidence of this work is consistent throughout classrooms, has led to more rigorous instructional strategies such improved questioning skills and increased student engagement in their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a strategic approach to infuse classroom observation and feedback with professional development goals to articulate clear expectations and next steps for teachers in order to improve teacher effectiveness. (4.1)
 - o Teachers and administrators are engaging in a year-long study of Charlotte Danielson's framework for teaching with a specific focus around improving questioning and discussion techniques, increasing student engagement and the use of effective assessment tools to design and deliver instruction. However, at this time, administrators are engaging in infrequent cycles of observations and feedback to teachers is mostly verbal and disconnected from the current domains being studied school wide. As a result, teachers are unclear of next steps to improve their current practice. Also, professional skepticism around feedback

from administrators as being negative in regard to teacher practice leads to limited professional growth and larger systems for improving student learning.

- Strengthen teacher feedback on student work products to include clear next steps aligned to expectations within units of study and levels of mastery within the standards in order to raise achievement levels. (3.3)
 - o Teachers and teacher teams continuously use assessment tools to track student progress and there are feedback systems including: hearts and footprints, colored reading levels, colored teacher comments, student checklists and end of unit benchmark parent letters in math. However, these systems do not identify specific areas of strength and weaknesses, nor do they provide effective feedback with clear next steps. This limits students' ability to set clear goals for improvement and for families to support students to ensure that the learning needs of all students are understood and collaboratively addressed.
- Design systems to evaluate the school wide professional collaboration on administrative and faculty levels to provide ongoing support and build school wide capacity through team and teacher leadership. (5.4)
 - o Teacher teams have established internal monitoring systems that allow them to consistently measure the impact of their work to improve teacher practice and student growth. However, administration does not regularly monitor teams nor are there structured systems to align teamwork to the instructional goals of the school, leading to disconnected instructional and assessment tools and limited opportunities for school wide implementation of best practices.
 - o Each teacher team has their own structure to select teacher leaders who support their work. These teacher leaders engage in network and other professional development opportunities to build knowledge and turnkey best practices to better support their teams. However, although school leaders support this professional development structure, they do not participate in or monitor the impact of this work. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of building teacher leader capacity and its impact on moving the school's instructional agenda forward to improve school wide outcomes.
- Continue to develop clear assessment systems that provide meaningful feedback to teachers around the impact of curricular decisions and student performance. (2.2)
 - o Currently teacher teams meet by grade and as vertical teams to develop a variety of assessment tools including on demand writing tasks, math exemplars aligned to standards-based tracking tools, such as quality of good writing, and math checklists that measure growth in targeted areas. These assessments effectively measure student performance and provide teachers with clear data to adjust teaching and planning to better target student needs. However, teachers throughout the school have yet to come to consensus around how to balance the use of checklists and rubrics in order to measure individual and student subgroup mastery within units of study or other classroom tasks. Some teachers use rubrics for certain content areas and checklists for other assignments. Additionally, while some rubrics, particularly in math, accurately measure the rigorous skills addressed within the curriculum, other rubrics and checklists are less aligned to standards and more aligned to task directions. These inconsistencies in assessment tools limit school-wide capacity to create a comprehensive portrait of student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 242 Leonard P. Stavisky Early Childhood 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				
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