

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Tottenville School

31R001

**58 Summit Street
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Diane Gordin

Dates of review: November 9 – 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Erminia Claudio

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 001 Tottenville is an Elementary school with 553 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 19% 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 94.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across the school differentiated teaching practices aligned with key standards reflect a common teaching framework with appropriate supports and challenges, resulting in meaningful work products and deep thinking. (1.2)
 - The school has an unwavering belief on how students learn best which is evident throughout classrooms and student work products. Through a balanced approach to learning, inclusive of the arts, teachers plan and use a wide range of strategies such as modeling, guided practice, application and feedback to engage students in a thinking curriculum. Lessons are implemented through the workshop model where mini lessons are delivered in a variety of modalities including the use of technology and SmartBoards, followed by guided work in small groups and one-on one support allowing for individualized, targeted instruction. The comprehensive collection of differentiation strategies in all subject areas allow students to explore text complexity, access standards-based essential questions and big ideas and produce meaningful work products that reflect high levels of rigor, quality and critical thinking.
- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions that are well aligned with the school's goals, resulting in increased outcomes as evidenced by meaningful work products across classrooms. (1.3)
 - The principal has used her budgetary and human resources to support the school's overarching goal of improved literacy and math for all students. The school has a full time academic coach that supports teacher development and the alignment of the common core learning standards. Using the push in model, a special education teacher is programmed for two double periods to support grades 4 and 5 students with disabilities. A technology teacher works collaboratively with classroom teachers to support the acquisition of research skills through computer literacy. The school has an extensive school wide enrichment program that fosters critical thinking through student inquiry. As a result of strategic use of resources and programming, teams of teachers know exactly what students need to be successful and support them towards mastery as evidenced in teacher to student feedback, students' individual goals, and rigorous student work products.
- The school maintains a culture of mutual trust and positive attitude toward learning that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The principal and her staff have created a nurturing learning environment that is welcoming and cherished by the entire school community. In response to a dip in student attendance, the principal has instituted an attendance incentive program that culminates in a high interest trip with the principal for those students that have perfect attendance. To foster a culture of respect, a student is chosen each day to recite the school's motto over the public address system, "Nice to be important, more important to be nice." As a result of the recent attendance initiatives, the

monthly attendance average has already increased by 2% to 95% as compared to the last years average of 93%

- Students feel they have a voice and are respected by the principal and her staff and that the school has high expectations for them. During the student meeting, students shared their individual English language arts and math goals, and next steps to achieve their goals. As a result of a student survey, *Mozzarella Mondays*, *Pretzel Thursday* and *Bagel Fridays* were added to the lunch menu. The extensive school wide enrichment program affords students in grades 3-5 to experience inquiry through the humanities and sciences, further supporting students' academic and personal growth.
- School leaders and teachers use common grading policies and tools to gather student performance trends that inform instruction and curriculum. (2.3)
 - The school designed, standards aligned English language arts and math pre-assessments, unit tests, checklists and rubrics to evaluate students' understanding of essential questions and big ideas. An item skills analysis template created by the school, facilitates the school wide dissemination of unit test data so all teachers can track growth of students and focus on achievement of specific student sub-groups in their class. Individual teachers, teacher teams and administrators are able to articulate how aggregated data is used to identify student achievement trends and reflect on implications to determine next steps for individual and cohorts of students, as evidenced by revisions to artifacts, rubrics, assessments and units of study.
 - The school has a cohesive grading policy that uses several resources to norm tasks so that teacher expectations of student work and outcomes are consistent. These resources include, 7 Attributes of Rigorous Learning Experiences, Depth of Knowledge and 6 Traits editing checklist. Grade 5 teachers have recently analyzed student work products and grading from a Fantasy unit of study and based on identified trends, expanded the unit to include Myths with teachers created Myth exemplars to pinpoint exactly what level 1-4 looks like for their students. Furthermore, the school designed their own report cards aligned to the standards so that teachers, parents and students have an accurate and consistent assessment of how students are performing.
- Coherent vision of the school community drive continuous school improvement through data based short and long term goal setting and action planning that is known and supported by all school constituents. (3.1)
 - The school disaggregates a wealth of formative and summative data to generate a comprehensive needs assessment which drives the schools' overarching short and long term goals. These goals are consistent with the principal's performance goals, the school's comprehensive education plan and the New York City Department of Education initiatives. This year, the school has implemented short and long term literacy goals into content area curriculum maps to ensure that all learners are supported towards the expectations of Common Core Learning Standards. Action plans are created and progress towards long term goals are tracked at the end of each unit with a particular attention to at-risk student

subgroups. Goals and plans are revisited and updated based on end of unit data analysis to delineate next steps for students and teachers. The effective parental involvement in creation of school goals is evidenced by parents who are able to articulate both the overarching school's goals as well as their children's individual goals.

- School effectively engages families in key school decision-making, school activities, and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress, resulting in strong parental buy in and support for school goals. (2.4)
 - The school is transparent and consistent in communicating to parents and students, high expectations for rigorous, coherent instruction, high rate of attendance, and good citizenship. Students know what they are learning and what they need to do to improve. Parents are involved in their children's learning and have access to resources to help their children. At the end of last school year, and the beginning of this year, parent workshops were held to familiarize the parents with the common core learning standards. In each subject area, parents receive unit goals and an outline of the unit. At the completion of the unit, a unit assessment is sent home, indicating next learning steps for each child. Review sheets and other artifacts are accessible on the school's website. Strategic and timely efforts as such result in ongoing, two way communication between the school and parents that supports student achievement.
 - The parent coordinator and school coach have been instrumental in training parents on ARIS tool so that they can monitor their children's state exams as well as reading levels. The school website has a wealth of curricula information, such as units of study, school goals, class goals and study materials. Parents understand the schools grading policy and support the implementation of the new standards based report cards. The school tracks the utilization of these tools and engages in parental outreach to ensure that a majority of parents use them to support learning at home.
- School promotes leadership capacity building among teacher teams focused on effective professional collaborations that result in improved teacher practice and student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Highly motivated teacher teams, across grades and subject areas, consistently collaborate to analyze student work as the driving force for improving student outcomes, and to refine teacher practice. Collegial sharing of ideas, strategies and best practice is common and leads to strengthening instruction and teacher practice. For example, several teachers were trained using the Linda Mood Bell program to support reading and writing of at risk students and serve as leaders at the school for expansion of these teaching strategies. As a result of this specific differentiated training, these teachers serve as experts, providing resources, modeling and support for their colleagues to infuse these strategies in their curriculum maps and unit plans. Teachers have indicated that these visualization strategies have lead to increased comprehension in both verbal and written responses of targeted students as evidenced by student work products and classroom discussion.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the instructional coherence across subject areas and grades through standards aligned curricula that emphasize rigorous thinking and skills to cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
 - While the school uses a vast data sources to align the reading and writing curriculum to key standards and has made great strides in designing and implementing rigorous and engaging literacy tasks aligned to the common core learning standards, this practice is not yet embedded in all subject areas and grades. Therefore, not all students are cognitively engaged in challenging tasks across all content areas, hindering school's ability to maximize interdisciplinary learning experiences to cognitively engage all learners.
- Further support teachers in developing a tool kit of varied comprehension check strategies during lesson delivery so that adjustments can be made to meet all learners' needs. (2.2)
 - While teams of teachers create tasks, specific rubrics and have crafted reading, writing and math checklists to identify students' ongoing understanding of literacy and math instruction and make adjustments to their teaching based on the information they gather, these strategies are mostly utilized during small group work. Lack of varied checks of understanding during whole group lesson delivery, results in missed opportunities to identify students' misconceptions on the spot and minimizes the ability to troubleshoot so that all students are able to show mastery during guided or independent practice of lessons at hand.
- Systemize the observation of classroom teaching and analysis of learning outcomes to evaluate school-wide instructional practices and promote professional growth and teacher reflection to increase student outcomes. (4.1)
 - While school leaders provide quality feedback using a researched based framework and student work analysis, and have a keen understanding of individual needs of teachers, the system to align the feedback process with individual teacher goal setting and progress monitoring is still developing. Without an established system as such, teacher development efforts can not be fully leveraged for maximized outcomes in teaching and learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Tottenville School 31R001	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