

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Curtis School

Elementary School 019

**780 Post Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10310**

Principal Mary Petrone

Dates of review: December 13 – 14, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Kathleen A. Burgess

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Curtis School is an elementary school with 623 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 59% Hispanic, 22% Black, 12% White, 6% Asian and 1% American Indian or Alaskan Native/multi-racial students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% and girls account for 50% of the students enrolled. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The alignment of the curricula to key State standards effectively supports student learning to improve and accelerate academic outcomes.1.1
 - Administrators have implemented a sustainable structure to provide time for staff to engage in developing rigorous curricula and academic tasks aligned to key standards. Time is invested in a variety of ways to use data and student work products to develop differentiated learning tasks with multiple entry points for a variety of learners. Staff implement the tasks across grades and administrators review results in order to make revisions. This structure, supportive of the school's instructional goal, embeds the standards with instructional decisions and planning in all core subject areas that promotes better student outcomes.
 - Administrators and staff have aligned State standards to curriculum maps and unit plans with opportunities for extended learning across grades and content areas. Teachers' College unit plans have "been tweaked" to 'infuse the rigor ascribed by the Common Core State Standards. In one class, students demonstrated their thinking about character traits by synthesizing information from multiple texts. Consistent teacher support for student learning is evident across grades and subject areas through mini-lessons followed by differentiated tasks and individual and group conferencing to further address student needs, resulting in a 13.2 % increase in performance on the 2010-2011 State English language arts assessment and a 17.2% increase on the State math assessments.
- The principal uses resources to make organizational decisions that support the instructional goals of the school to meet the pedagogical needs of the staff and accelerate student outcomes. 1.3
 - The school's schedule incorporates varied opportunities through which teachers build instructional coherence and participate in pedagogical activities that promote their personal growth in order to improve student outcomes. Participating in inquiry teams and horizontal and vertical grade meetings allows teachers to engage in a collaborative approach to school wide learning. As a result, teachers plan lessons that engage students in challenging instructional tasks that result in improved academic outcomes evidenced in an 11.5% increase for the school's lowest third in math and a 4% increase in English language arts on the median growth percentile.
 - The principal uses human and fiscal resources to make instructional moves to improve student outcomes. Allocations are used to purchase programs that meet the literacy needs of all students, while funds from grants, donations, and partnerships, contribute to the development of the whole child. Additional programming allows students to select a variety of academic and non-academic programs offered afterschool and on Saturdays to further promote better outcomes for them. Collaboration between support staff and classroom teachers in a 'push in' model minimizes loss of student's instructional time. English as a second language teachers share strategies with their assigned general education teachers to collaboratively support English language learners. This has resulted in a 7.9% increase in the number of students

achieving at Levels 3 and 4 on the 2010-2011 State English language arts and State English as a second language achievement test.

- The principal and staff use a variety of summative and formative data to analyze and adjust instructional decisions that meet the academic needs of students. 2.2
 - Teacher teams consistently gather and analyze student performance data using a variety of formal and informal assessments, to determine student mastery of targeted skills and make pedagogical adjustments to further support student achievement. Teachers identify students who need additional support and share how their instructional decisions impact differentiated lessons to meet the needs of student subgroups. Planning rigorous differentiated lessons resulted in a 24% increase in the number of special education students achieving at Level 3 and a 21% increase in the number of English language learners achieving at Level 3.
 - Across grades, teams of teachers have developed structures that help students measure their own learning from assignments through clear criteria and expectations set at the beginning of each lesson. Through an assessment cycle, teachers consistently leverage student understanding, and make necessary adjustments to their instruction. Consequently, students know their next learning steps as evidenced by the connections made during lessons, personal notations about their performance in their notebooks, the level of self-direction seen in classrooms, and comments articulated during student meetings.
- Components of a research-based framework provides strategic pedagogical feedback that ensures staff meet the agreed upon expectations in support of improved instructional practices that impact student learning. 4.1
 - Administrators strengthen teacher effectiveness in curriculum and the delivery of instruction using components of the Danielson framework to provide staff with actionable feedback and to structure further professional development opportunities. Monthly teaching snapshots against a Danielson's focus determine differentiated teacher support that include professional development requests, interclass visitations, and observation feedback using a school created template that includes next steps. Consequently, the professional development plan shows a coherent and systematic approach to teacher support to leverage their pedagogical skills in order to improve student outcomes.
 - A core team that includes the assistant principals and the lead teacher from each grade analyze student work and data to provide peer support and share best practices. Their comprehensive review of the school's quantitative and qualitative data to understand student performance in all grades, for all content areas, and for all subgroups, allows for the alignment of professional development support for teachers. During teacher team meetings, teachers share feedback they receive from school leaders and feel that their needs and their strengths are supported. The sense of collegiality in teacher meetings, classroom intervisitations, and reflective practice promotes professional growth.
- The school's learning environment highly supports the academic, social, and emotional needs of students in order to continuously engage them and develop their learning. 1.4

- ‘Respect for All’ empowers students to make decisions that minimizes disrespect for each other while supporting their social and emotional development. The School Enrichment Model offers students a variety of academic and non-academic afterschool options to develop positive attitudes to school and learning. Students in the Young Helpers Club indicate that they feel satisfied when they engage in service learning. They provide food baskets for those in need and collect canned and dry goods for a shelter. Students passionately speak about their activities, which resulted in the receipt of the Mayor’s Award for Service in Schools.
- The principal and staff create an environment where students are responsible for their own learning. Students know and are able to articulate their strengths and areas of need. In one class, each child had their personal long-term academic goals for the year along with related short-term action plans posted on their desk. A student noted, “I like the way we learn here. I like the challenge groups. We all get to work in groups. Everyone is included. However, when you are in the challenge group, you get to learn more. With practice my teacher helps us until they feel we all got it and that makes me even more determined to try.”
- Staff consistently convey high expectations and provides actionable feedback about student progress in order to make families key partners in the education of their children. 3.4
 - Administration and staff continue to build sustainable structures that provide parents and students with information on school events, curricula, and extra curricula activities. The school’s website www.ps19r.org, each teacher’s echalk page, and the PS 19 Parent Handbook, in English and Spanish, communicate high expectations to students and their parents. The parent coordinator provides many opportunities for parents to understand new initiatives so that they can support their children’s academic growth. Parents attend charter school transition fairs, and receive help from zoned middle school representatives, thus enabling them to make informed decisions about their children’s next academic level.
 - Administrators develop high expectations and hold themselves, staff, students, and families, responsible for achieving set goals to increase student outcomes. The principal visits peer schools to learn about initiatives that support and advance the school’s performance. The assistant principals participate in leadership sessions at Teachers’ College, the Children’s First Network, and the Council for Supervisors and Administrators, to remain current as they implement educational initiatives. The parent coordinator networks to bring various services to students and families in order to further improve the potential outcomes of all students.
- The principal adjusts the overarching goal to develop interim goals and short-term action plans in order to monitor, accelerate, and benchmark progress to meeting long-term instructional goals. 5.3
 - The principal engages in an annual three-day planning process to monitor measure and adjust the school’s instructional goals. Using student work products and summative and formative data, goals are set for groups of students in order to leverage significant academic progress for students.
 - To further improve instructional practices at the school, the principal and her team have identified internal systems to consistently monitor goals for

individual students and groups of students. Students articulate their goals and they know the support that their teachers provide. Teachers understand structures to support the needs of students. The inquiry team collaborates with the core team to build and sustain teacher practice. Consequently, the principal is able to monitor the needs of students and staff, make adjustments, and measure progress to the instructional goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the consistency in the questioning strategies across grades and content areas to provide multiple entry points for all students to further develop high levels of student thinking. 1.2
 - Across grades a variety of teaching strategies lead students to a deeper understanding of the subject material and improve their communication skills. The seminar approach observed in two classes provided students with the opportunity to write and ask questions of their peers. Teachers set protocols, model expectations and provide an open forum to engage students and inspire their thinking. Students use rubrics to self reflect on their level of engagement. However, these practices are not yet embedded across grades thus hindering learning support for all students.
- Extend the level of structured professional collaborations to advance shared leadership in order to improve the achievement of students. 4.2
 - Teacher teams consistently meet to analyze data in order to improve their practice to increase student outcomes. However, to optimize student outcomes, teachers assigned to the same students do not systematically meet to analyze data and student work products. Therefore, teacher teams are not fully able to maximize learning for all students.
 - The principal has implemented structures so that classroom teachers participate in the decisions that directly impact student learning. However, the practice of shared leadership to focus on improved student learning is in its seminal stages. Therefore all teachers do not yet fully support decisions made to improve student learning
- Expand the system for monitoring and evaluating data relative to the progress of student achievement in order to ensure the effective use of information in collaborative inquiry. 5.2
 - The principal has established a system to monitor and evaluate assessments and grading practices. However, the expectations of the new standards in the assessment practices are in the beginning phases. Therefore, the teachers and teams are not yet fully able to leverage the necessary adjustments in order to accelerate learning for all students.
 - The principal has implemented a structure to aggregate, organize, and adjust data sets. However, the administration is developing further processes to deepen the alignment of the data points to the work of the professional learning committee given the new academic demands. Therefore, the school's structure is not fully developed to sustain policy and practices that build coherence around the use of data sets in the work of the inquiry teams.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Curtis 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
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