

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Anning S. Prall
Middle School 027

11 CLOVE LAKE PLACE
STATEN ISLAND
NY 10310

Principal: Tracey Kornish

Dates of review: April 04 - 05, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Elif Gure

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

I.S. 027 Anning S. Prall is a middle school with 1,092 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 36% Hispanic, 29% White, 12% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders maintain a highly inclusive, safe, and respectful learning environment that supports learning for all students. (1.4)
 - o The principal and assistant principals, who maintain an active presence in the hallways and outside the school, ensure a smooth passing, arrival, and dismissal. Teachers greeting students usher them into the classrooms, creating a welcoming and timely start to each class. Additionally, student and adult interactions are warm yet respectful, contributing to the positive tone of the school. Perfect attendance and other student accomplishments, celebrated and promoted through daily student-led announcements, further the school's common values. Recently, the modified ladder of referral provides guidance for all teachers on how to respond to discipline problems and establishes the infractions that require immediate attention of a dean and/or guidance counselor. The principal personally meets with each student who is involved in a major infraction and provides opportunities to modify the nature of consequences based on the choices the student makes during the suspension period. This gives students an incentive to self-monitor their behavior and experience the positive results of making good choices. As a result, serious infractions have decreased by more than 50% over the past three years.
- The school engages families in reciprocal communication and provides supports to parents so that they understand student performance. (2.4)
 - o The use of progress reporting, four times during the school year, in addition to report cards, enables all parents to receive communication around their children's performance and progress, attendance, and conduct information, along with an opportunity to request a meeting with the school. Parents report that both teachers and administration respond to their outreach efforts in a timely and effective way, bringing all concerns to a speedy outcome with the best interest of the students in mind. Parents cite ARIS Parent Link and other workshops offered by the parent coordinator, the newly implemented parent teacher association (PTA) website, speedy email exchanges with teachers, as the school's tools for involving them in timely communication around the academic life of their children. As a result, parents who were interviewed were able to articulate specific needs of their children along with clear next steps to help support the success.
- School leaders make strategic decisions that support school wide goals and learning. (1.3)
 - o The school prioritized the use of funds to purchase a new English language arts (ELA) and math program that incorporate Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in unit and lesson plans. Resources are allocated so that teacher teams meet after school to work on further standards alignment and curriculum mapping. These strategic decisions are beginning to support school goals, particularly for improving student writing and creating lessons and tasks to help students respond to non-fiction text. Student work products are now evidencing the stages of the writing process and reflect improved ability to compare and contrast information from multiple resources.

- o The principal prioritizes the recruitment of highly qualified teachers who are licensed in the content areas. Some common branch teachers teach grade six ELA, math, and science classes, and an increasing number of teachers specialized in a content area bring in content expertise to students and teacher teams. In support of students with disabilities, school leaders established the integrated collaborative teaching (ICT) as the best model. To support its success, content specialist teachers are matched with special education teachers beginning in grade 6, and these teachers service the same group of students for three years. As a result, over the past two years, students with special needs in ICT classes have been surpassing ELA and math achievement relative to students in other special education programs.
- School leaders and teachers incorporate key standards to their curricula that reflect planning to engage students. (1.1)
 - o The recent purchase of commercially produced ELA and a math programs assists teachers in transitioning into implementing the Common Core Learning Standards, particularly focusing on text complexity and reading complex informational texts, persuasive and informational writing. These new programs, with a strong academic vocabulary emphasis, scaffold teaching and learning by developing a deep understanding of concepts critical for literacy and math across the grades. Furthermore, teachers and school leaders have engaged in a curriculum mapping exercise in an effort to strengthen the units of study in ELA and math. The implementation of the CCLS aligned tasks are also being modified using student work and data. As a result, academic tasks reflect initial planning to cognitively engage students.
- School leaders and staff communicate high expectations to adults and children, as well as provide supports to ensure that students achieve their best. (3.4)
 - o Teachers and school leaders utilize contracts to hold students and parents accountable to their mutual agreement on attendance, behavior, and academic expectations, established in the beginning of the school year. These contracts followed by frequent discipline assemblies continue to underscore school priorities for personal and academic growth. Teachers initiate immediate parent contact for those students who show ongoing signs of academic and/or behavioral distress. Progressive discipline policy and a team approach to academic intervention further support students to overcome obstacles to learning. The school's internal capacity for guidance and advisement supports is enhanced by developing partnerships with external organizations such as Sports and Arts in the Schools Foundation and Urban Advantage. As a result, students receive high school preparation classes after school and during school breaks and have access to science cultural institutions as well as college campuses. Consequently, parents and students report that the supports for academic and personal success in the school are increasing every year as evidenced by increasing number of students entering specialized and select highs school.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the observation of teaching, along with student data/work analysis, to provide teachers with clear and actionable feedback that is aligned with the school's teaching framework to elevate instructional practices and learning outcomes. (4.1)
 - o Although school leaders conduct informal and formal observations of teachers using the Danielson framework, this process does not involve review of student work and or sufficient data analysis. Feedback given to teachers does not

suitably represent their strengths, challenges, and/or next steps, and is not aligned with the school's framework. As a result, the school does not have a system for communicating clear practice expectations to teachers.

- Teachers are surveyed in the beginning of the school year to identify their professional development needs, but supports provided do not align with individual teacher needs relative to surveys and observations. Furthermore, the absence of including observations of classroom teacher, and analysis of student outcomes to recognize effective teaching, minimizes the school's ability to provide relevant and effective differentiated supports for teachers, hindering professional growth.
- Sufficiently gather and analyze formative information on student outcomes at the school, grade, and classroom level, to identify achievement trends and deficits. (2.1)
 - Although school leaders indicate that they review periodic and instructional-targeted (ITA) assessment results on Achievement Reporting Information System (ARIS), and periodically meet with teams of teachers to discuss student report card grades, school leaders do not sufficiently organize and analyze information on student outcomes to identify trends and patterns for the site-based institutes and school level. As a result, administrators are not able to determine the effectiveness of specific teacher, grade, and/or school practices to take appropriate actions to expand and/or adjust practices to yield increased student outcomes.
- Strengthen structured teacher collaborations in using student data analysis along with teaching artifacts to focus on and promote improved student learning. (4.2)
 - A majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations and the use of an inquiry approach is developing towards increasing the alignment of rubrics with key standards. Although teachers are beginning to unpack the expectations of the CCL standards towards modifying their assessment tools and curricular units, some of the team work, however, is focused on scoring student work, articulation with other staff, and problem solving for individual students as well as discussing guidance supports. When team members analyze authentic student work products, the discussions at the team level stays focused on sharing what individual teachers do to improve outcomes and do not expand to identifying achievement patterns and trends for large-scale intervention. There is little evidence that teams research and/or agree on implementing a common change strategy to improve the achievement of a particular learning target identified as a common challenge for a grade or a student sub-group. As a result, team collaborations do not consistently result in improved teacher practice and student outcomes.
- Increase teacher capacity in designing varied learning experiences to meet diverse student needs and promote cognitive engagement and thinking for students. (1.2)
 - Although most classrooms reflect some components of the workshop model as the school's common teaching framework, teaching strategies, questioning and assignments that meet diverse student needs are inconsistent across classrooms. The school's belief around task dependent student groupings that promote student collaboration while holding each student accountable for learning was not evident across classrooms. In most classrooms, students worked individually although their seats were grouped together. There was minimal evidence of routines and structures for group work that promotes purposeful collaborations. Most teachers at the school were not able to articulate

a rationale behind the student groupings and did not have evidence of appropriate tasks matched to the differentiated needs of students. In a science lab class, students worked collaboratively on designing experiments to investigate the concept of density and analyze relationships between densities of various objects. Learning tasks and tools were effectively differentiated based on the most recent results from a unit assessment. Similarly, one of the highest levels of cognitive engagement was observed in a self-contained special education class where students worked in pairs solving probability problems using spinners, cubes, marbles, and practiced skills identified based on a teacher assessment. In some other classes however, tasks did not match student needs as some students finished early and others were struggling to complete the assigned work. Furthermore, questioning did not promote focused and deep thinking, and students were not held accountable through active teacher questioning. As a result, students are engaged in thinking that is uneven, some producing work that reflects purposefully differentiated, high level instruction, others simply copying facts from text books, transferring those facts into sentences and paragraphs and working on written assignments that did not require them to think critically, form, argue, or defend an argument, while providing sufficient evidence for all claims.

- Utilize ongoing assessment practices to identify performance trends for student subgroups and consistently utilize ongoing checks of understanding to make relevant adjustments to instruction. (2.2)
 - o Teachers in teams are in the process of modifying their rubrics to increase the alignment between their assessments, rubrics, and chosen standards, as per an analysis of student work. Other periodic assessment analysis through the use of end-of-unit assessments also takes place during team meetings. However, there is no current structure or data analysis protocol in place for teachers to dissect the collected data and identify strengths and needs of students as a grade, in a content area, or for sub-groups. Furthermore, the use of ongoing checks for student understanding in critical sections of lessons is sporadic and inconsistent, hindering teachers' ability to make on the spot adjustments that ensure achievement of lessons' aims. In the absence of formalized data analysis approach that is focused on identifying trends beyond individual classes and students, the opportunities to adjust instructional practices at the team level to increase student-learning outcomes is compromised.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Anning S. Prall	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
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