

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 050 Frank Hankinson
Elementary school R050

200 ADELAIDE AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND
NY 10306

Principal: SHARON FINE

Dates of review: March 1 –2, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Ina Solomon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 050 Frank Hankinson is an Elementary school with 720 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 11% Hispanic, 80% White, 6% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership and staff create a safe, inclusive culture that supports student voice and participation in school-wide decisions, resulting in academic and social growth. (1.4)
 - The school community embraces the “Progressive Discipline” model that takes a corrective rather than punitive approach to inappropriate behavior. At the start of each school year, the guidance counselor engages each class in an anti-bullying conversation. Through a variety of techniques, including videos and a live-action performance, students and faculty are unified around a set of resources and strategies to resolve conflicts and address behavioral problems that may arise. Whenever a student exhibits problematic behavior, the principal meets with the student and family to find the root cause of the underlying behavior issue. In addition, “School Spirit Day,” a monthly event, was established by the school leadership as an approach to maintaining an inclusive culture and commitment to the idea of the school as a community. On that day, students, parents and faculty dress in school colors and other paraphernalia to celebrate school unity. As a result of the school’s corrective approach to discipline and the monthly community-building activity the average number of reported incidents has declined over the past three years and the school’s year-to-date attendance rate, 95.1%, is above the city average.
 - In-class learning opportunities, like book clubs, where students choose topics of study based on interest, and whole group discussions, where students are able to build on each other’s ideas while reinforcing their own understanding of curricular content, contribute to student interest and engagement in learning. Similarly, the student council provides an opportunity outside of the classroom, for students to actively engage in their learning by giving them a voice in decisions that impact the entire school community. For example, several students in the school voiced the desire to reinstate chicken teriyaki as an option on the lunch menu. The student council, during their monthly meeting with the nutrition committee, brought the concern to the committee and successfully persuaded them to reintroduce this food item to the menu. The student council is also responsible for deciding which community based organization will receive the \$1000 raised through the school’s annual Penny Harvest fundraiser. Student council representatives interview prospective recipients and make a collective decision based on the results of the interview.
- School leaders and families engage in on-going discussions about student progress to provide a clear understanding of student performance. (2.4)
 - School leaders include families in decision making processes that impact the school community. At the start of the school year, the school hosts an off-site retreat where parents, faculty and school leadership collaborate to review the school’s policies and procedures. During this year’s retreat parents worked with staff to develop the school’s pick-up and drop-off procedures, generate a list of commonly used Department of Education acronyms and devise a calendar of important school wide events. This information is compiled in the “PS 50 Parent Handbook” that is disseminated to families during the month of September. Also, at this retreat, parents and faculty are made aware of the school wide data trends, goals and the action plan for improving student outcomes. Throughout the school year parents are made aware of their own child’s performance

through quarterly reports that provide updates about reading levels, progress towards goals, and performance on formative and summative assessments. Parents are able to reach out to their child's teacher at anytime to continue a conversation about their child's progress. The school website is a vehicle utilized by parents to communicate with their child's teacher. In addition, the highly involved parent coordinator sends home, on an on-going basis, information about ARIS. The parent coordinator is available at anytime to assist parents in using the tool. Records indicate that 60% of the parents utilize ARIS to gather more information about their child's progress.

- The school leadership and faculty strategically use in-house resources and partnerships with outside organizations to maintain a safe environment and provide students with opportunities that support social development and academic success. (4.4)
 - The school has extensive partnerships with outside organizations that build on students' academic learning and promote social emotional growth and development. All students in grades 3, 4 and 5 participate in the Lincoln Center Philharmonic program to learn to read music and play an instrument. Through extensive professional development, the staff and Lincoln Center Philharmonic representatives develop a program of musical instruction that directly connects to students' in-class learning. For example, an analysis of student work revealed that students across grade levels were struggling with identifying the main idea in texts. Staff and the Lincoln Center Philharmonic instructors devised a strategy to teach main idea through music by having students listen to a composition and identify the main idea of that selection. By the end of the unit an assessment third grade test scores revealed that students performing at level 1 in main idea decreased by about 50% while the number of students performing at level 3 and above increased by about 25%. The school also partners with Marquis Studio to teach architecture to second grade students and song writing to third and fourth grade students. The school celebrates its arts program at an end-of-year showcase where families are invited to view and purchase student art work. During this showcase, every student in the school has one piece of work on display. Through partnerships with community based organizations and school-lead professional development, the school maintains a safe environment and an inclusive culture. The school guidance counselor leads staff and students in a two-part training designed to teach strategies both to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying. By supporting faculty, students and families, the school maintains an attendance rate that is 7% higher than the district average.
- School leadership strategically uses its budget, teacher schedules and student groupings to support the school's instructional goals, leading to improved student outcomes. (1.3)

The school's previous Quality Review report indicated that the school lacked a cohesive structure for providing English language arts instruction. In response, the school adopted the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program to teach literacy skills and hired a Teachers College consultant to support teachers with implementing the program. Teachers' schedules are programmed to include a double period meeting once each week with the consultant to view instruction in a lab site classroom, discuss observations and develop strategies for improving pedagogical practices. Parents noted that the level of writing the students produce exceeds their expectation. For example, a parent of a gifted and talented student shared that her daughter wrote a ten-page research paper on the deciduous forest. Last year's state English language arts exam revealed that boys across grade levels were performing lower than the girls. In response to

this data, new libraries were purchased for all classrooms with an emphasis on high interest literature for boys. To further support the school's goal of improving the academic performance of boys, teachers worked during weekly team meetings to enhance the literacy curriculum to incorporate themes that tend to interest boys. The ongoing refinement of the literacy curriculum during teacher team meetings and in consultation with the Teachers College consultant has resulted in a system of staff and administrative accountability for achieving school wide goals and improving student outcomes.

- School leaders have effective structures in place to monitor data and refine short- and long-term plans to improve student outcomes. (5.3)
 - The instructional team, made up of representatives from six of the seven grade levels, the assistant principal and the school's data specialist, meets monthly to review school-wide data. This process allows the school to monitor progress towards interim and long-term goals. During a review of data at the beginning of the school year, the team noticed that students' performance on the Teachers College (TC) Pro reading level assessment did not correspond to their performance on summative exams. They concluded that the texts used to determine reading levels through the TC Pro assessment lacked the complexity and breadth of content to accurately assess students' reading abilities. The school leadership and the instructional team decided to replace TC Pro with the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). To support the transition to the new assessment system, school leaders and the instructional team developed a correlation sheet to show equivalent benchmark reading levels across assessment systems. Monthly, the Instructional Team representative shares school wide data and decisions with the grade level teacher teams. This system provides an opportunity for grade level teams to measure student progress towards benchmark goals, in the context of school wide goals, and ensure that student progress is on target to meet school wide goals. Because of the change from the TC Pro Assessment System to DRA, teacher teams adjusted student goals to accurately reflect the benchmark standards of the new system.
- Teachers and teams regularly analyze data and track trends to identify student needs and set goals to accelerate student learning. (3.2)
 - The school has a standardized practice for measuring student growth and identifying trends in student performance. All teachers across grade levels administer a pre-test at the start of each unit to determine students' prior knowledge and understanding of the content. This information is used by individual teachers and teacher teams to set student learning goals, establish differentiated groups, and develop instructional strategies to meet the needs of both individual and groups of students. The kindergarten team, for example, noticed that students were not developing in their understanding of the conventions of writing. The team administered an on-demand writing assignment at the start of unit on conventions. The analysis of the resulting student work revealed that providing students with one piece of paper restricted the amount of writing students produced, thus limiting opportunities to practice conventions. Teachers easily adjusted this classroom practice by providing students with a choice of paper to select from during writing time. Teachers also developed a set of tiered instructional strategies for high, medium and low performing students to address their gap in understanding about writing conventions. The school-wide practice of providing pre- and post-assessments, then using that data to set goals for students and make adjustments to classroom practice, has led to a steady decrease in students performing at level 1 and 2 on recent state wide exams in math and literacy.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen system for embedding rigor in academic tasks across grade levels so that all learners, including students with disabilities as well as academic high achievers, are cognitively engaged (1.1)
 - Through vertical and grade level team meetings, teachers decided to include the Common Core Aligned Tasks within a unit of study in both literacy and math. The tasks were administered as a pre-test at the beginning of the unit and again as a post-test at the end of the unit to assess student mastery of content. Teachers used the results of the assessment to refine curricula to meet students' diverse learning needs. However, academic tasks reveal that rigorous habits, while consistently emphasized school-wide, are not embedded in the curriculum in a way that would allow all students to demonstrate their thinking.
- Strategically differentiate questioning and discussion techniques across classrooms to promote high levels of student thinking and participation for all students. (1.2)
 - Teacher directed mini-lessons followed by independent work time in which students complete tasks in groups are a consistent pedagogical practice throughout the school. Across classrooms, during independent work time, teachers meet with small groups of students to reinforce concepts taught during the lesson or previous lessons, leading to greater understanding of content for all students. Many classroom teachers, however, are not incorporating higher order thinking questions into their small and whole group instruction, limiting students' opportunities to engage in high level thinking that would result in stronger, more meaningful student work products.
- Expand assessment practices to consistently incorporate on-going checks for understanding to provide information that will guide adjustments to instruction. (2.2)
 - Staff consistently examine periodic and classroom level assessments and use results of this data analysis to inform instructional decisions for all students, including English language learners, students with disabilities and high achievers. Also, the staff aligns rubrics with the school's key standards and they are then used by teachers to monitor and assess student progress. However these rubrics are not consistently used by students to self-assess, thus limiting students' understanding of their own work, leading to missed opportunities to develop meaningful work products. In addition, across classrooms, teachers do not have systems in place to effectively monitor student understanding throughout the progression of a lesson. This results in missed opportunities to correct student misunderstandings, in a timely manner, limiting student comprehension and development.
- Increase the frequency of classroom observations and align feedback to a research-based framework to provide clear next steps for instruction so that teacher practice is systematically improved. (4.1)
 - Through formal and informal observations, school leaders provide feedback to teachers that outlines next steps to improve instructional practice. Feedback provided is loosely aligned to a research-based framework practice. However, as a whole, the number of classroom visits is limited and feedback does not explicitly connect teacher practice to the research-based rubric, thus limiting an opportunity to provide direct feedback about instruction and restricting teachers' ability to improve practice.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 050 Frank Hankinson	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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