

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 053 Bay Terrace
Elementary school R053

330 DURANT AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND
NY 10308

Principal: ANNETTE ESPOSITO

Dates of review: May 30- 31, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ina Solomon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 53 Bay Terrace is an elementary school with 695 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 9% Hispanic, 82% White, 4% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 19% 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 93.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created a safe, inclusive environment that strategically utilizes out-of-classroom staff to support students' social-emotional and academic needs. (1.4)
 - o As one of 24 schools citywide that received the "Respect for All Award" honoring its programs that celebrate inclusion and diversity, PS 53 prides itself in creating and maintaining an environment that develops students' self-esteem and supports their academic and social-emotional development. Each month, through the Heartwood Character Education program, all classroom teachers read aloud a book that focuses on one of seven attributes, including loyalty, respect and justice. Students discuss the theme with their classmates and follow-up with a written response. This ongoing emphasis on character development within core academic classes has helped to increase literacy around character education and maintain a relatively low number of behavior infractions. Forty-four incidents in total were reported on the Online Occurrence Reporting System last school year. If a child does exhibit a behavioral concern, the physical education teacher, who also serves as the dean of discipline, collaborates with the guidance counselor to resolve the conflict. Every student in the school takes physical education class, providing an opportunity for the dean to develop a relationship with all students, particularly those who may be in crisis. This year, the full-time guidance counselor supports 26 at-risk students. This represents a 30% decrease from the total number of at-risk students at the school last year. To further support students' social-emotional development, the school librarian started a newspaper club with approximately 12 students who were identified by their classroom teacher as needing extra support to build their self-esteem. Also, every Friday, the principal meets with five fifth graders during their lunch period to strengthen relationships and give them opportunity to voice concerns about the school. At one Friday lunch meeting, a group of students expressed a desire to have a cheerleading club; the principal has since provided this opportunity to students in the school. The school's efforts to develop students' self-esteem in a way that promotes academic growth have resulted in an overall 1.6% special education decertification rate, which is 1% higher than the citywide rate for special education decertification.
- The school successfully trains faculty and partners with outside organizations to provide students with opportunities that support real world learning as a vehicle to promote social-emotional well-being and academic growth. (4.4)
 - o The school guidance counselor and dean of discipline were trained in the "Leader in Me," a school transformation model designed to improve all aspects of the school community, including behavior management. This program builds on Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People." The guidance counselor and physical education teacher incorporate the strategies learned during this training while working with all students. For example, the physical education teacher includes lessons on basic manners into her class. The school is in the process of ordering signs to place around the building to reinforce this teaching. Teachers and staff have reported that as a result of this training students' sensitivity to each others' basic needs has improved. Students more readily hold the door for each other, and use words like "please" and "thank you" when interacting with peers and adults. Because of this program's success with raising students' awareness about basic strategies for showing respect, the

school is writing a grant to provide training for the entire faculty in this methodology in order to deepen its impact school-wide.

- o The US Coast Guard participates in many aspects of the school community. Their most notable contribution has been to the school's efforts to increase daily attendance. Every month, an officer of the US Coast Guard personally presents each student who has perfect attendance with an award. Students that have 100% attendance for the entire year are invited with their families to the US Coast Guard marina where they tour the ships and are taken on a boat ride around the New York City. In addition to encouraging high attendance, the US Coast Guard has established the "Shipmate of the Year" award for students that exhibit team spirit and good citizenship. This correlates with the US Coast Guard's practice of recognizing a "Shipmate of the Week" for exhibiting these characteristics. To further build relationships with students and encourage overall positive behavior, from time to time members of the US Coast Guard will work with students that exhibit behavioral concerns. Approximately 15% of the students that attend the school have parents that work for the US Coast Guard, so this partnership is a unique way to integrate families into the school in a way that not only positively impacts their children, but the school community at large. In addition to partnering with the US Coast Guard, the school collaborates with several other community based organizations to bolster students' academic success. The Sundog Theater worked with second grade students to research, write and perform a play about Colonial America; trained reading volunteers from the Staten Island Mental Health Clinic read with struggling students for 30 minutes once a week. At the time of the review, the school's attendance rate has risen to 95%, up from 93.6% the previous school year.
- Teachers work collaboratively to analyze school and classroom level data to make adjustments to instructional practices in order to meet students' learning needs. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams successfully incorporate rubrics aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) into their assessment practices. Students review the rubrics at the beginning of a unit to understand what the expectations are for mastery and again at the end to determine where their work falls along the criteria. Teachers meet with students throughout a unit of study to help devise a set of goals that lead to mastery of the content. Prior to the start of each unit, teachers administer an initial assessment to determine the focus of whole and small group work. To check student understanding of the whole group instruction, students regularly engage in turn and talks that are closely observed by the teacher. As an additional check for understanding, teachers consistently circulate during work time and document on a checklist which students need additional support to master a particular skill or strategy. The ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment processes ensure that teachers are able to provide actionable and timely feedback to improve student outcomes.
- School leaders effectively utilize resources to support teacher development and student programs that promote academic goals. (1.3)
 - o One of the major emphases this school year was on building teacher capacity to align the literacy and math curriculum to the CCLS and effectively implement the Citywide Instructional Expectations. This year the school purchased and implemented a new math curriculum for students in grades K-2. Teacher schedules were adjusted on two occasions to receive full day trainings on how to effectively implement the program. The new program provides activities for low, average and high performing students. As a result, all students are able to access content. In a math lesson on patterns, for example, students were asked

to demonstrate an understanding of patterns using skip counting. One high performing student was given an extension activity to create three different patterns that begin with the number 55, while a struggling student was re-taught the lesson by reviewing the basic rules that must be applied when skip counting to form a pattern. To support teachers in developing non-fiction literacy units of study and tasks aligned to the CCLS, select teachers attended professional development with Tony Stead, a literacy specialist. The training was turn-keyed to the remainder of the teachers on the grade, providing everyone with a common base of knowledge from which to develop units and tasks. Teacher schedules were programmed to provide two common planning periods per week, one of which is often used for professional development. In addition, teachers have a third non-teaching period once a week that is dedicated to analyzing student work. These scheduling decisions provided more opportunities for teachers to plan collaboratively to develop a course of instruction more closely aligned to the school wide instructional goals.

- Teams of teachers use classroom level and summative data to set learning goals for students that inform instructional decisions and improve learning. (3.2)
 - o Teacher teams and classroom teachers set student goals for each unit of study. A pre-test is administered at the start of each unit to determine what skills and knowledge students have related to the content. Student performance on the pre-test is used by teacher teams to set group goals based on common findings about students' learning needs. The fifth grade teachers, for example, when analyzing students' work with multiplication and division, realized that most students on the grade struggled with applying concepts to real-world situations. Teachers then decided to incorporate real world problem solving into all math units. The fifth grade math data shows that across units approximately 90% of students mastered the math content taught this year. In literacy across grade levels teachers use the pre-test/post-test model to set differentiated learning goals for groups of students. For example, the pre-test for the Informational Text unit of study assessed students' ability to stick to a topic, use facts, voice, write a conclusion, etc. Students that didn't show mastery of those skills were placed into groups to learn strategies that would lead to mastery. The post-test data show that most students mastered the skills and strategies taught during the unit.
- School leaders and faculty have systems in place to examine student data, leading to revised curricula and instruction that result in improved student outcomes. (4.2)
 - o All teachers in the school are involved in a teacher team that uses an inquiry approach to improve student outcomes and teacher practice. After a school wide review of the 2011 New York State exams, teachers noticed that across grade levels students were unable to use context clues to learn new vocabulary. The school purchased the i-Ready online system that targets comprehension, vocabulary and phonics skills for all students in grades 3, 4 and 5. In addition to summative assessments to improve outcomes, teacher teams consistently reflect on new learning from professional development, engage in conversations about their own planning to make adjustments to instructional practices, and revise curriculum maps. After attending a professional development on teaching non-fiction, fifth grade teachers revised the essential questions on their curriculum map to incorporate academic vocabulary. "Why do we do research?" was changed to, "Why do we conduct research?" and "How can you use other's work in your own?" was changed to, "How can we include research in our own writing?" As a result of the inquiry approach to improving teacher practice and student outcomes, grades 3, 4 and 5 students showed a 17% increase in their on-grade level vocabulary skills from the fall to spring i-Ready assessment.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen the system for providing feedback to teachers so that strengths and next steps are captured and utilized to improve instructional practice. (4.1)
 - o Each teacher has been observed informally at least three times using the Teachscape tool to track observations and provide feedback. In addition, each teacher (with the exception of one) collaborated with the principal to set a goal for their practice and develop an action plan to meet that goal by the end of the school year. All teachers however, set the same goal for their practice and feedback provided to teachers through the Teachscape tool is only loosely connected to a research based framework. As a result, the staff's ability to make specific instructional adjustments aligned with the school wide goals is limited, and an opportunity to directly impact student achievement is missed.
- Expand the data tracking system to use a variety of data to show student progress in all areas so that teacher teams can be aware of school-wide trends and make adjustments during the year to improve student outcomes. (3.3)
 - o Teachers use classroom level data to track student progress and set goals for groups of students, and school leaders and faculty use classroom level and summative data to track student performance in reading, math, and writing. However, a comprehensive data tracking system that utilizes various data sources, i.e., attendance and New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, to track targeted students' progress on a classroom and school-wide level is missing. This limits the staff's ability to measure the impact of school-wide instructional practices on groups of students and to make necessary adjustments.
- Further refine teacher practice to provide entry points for students with disabilities and high achievers to extend student achievement. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms teachers are involved in on-going conversations and professional development related to the CCLS and utilize data effectively to form flexible, differentiated learning groups with tiered tasks for students. Most teachers use questions and routines to engage students in conversations. However, many teachers ask low level questions and do not always incorporate sufficient supports for students with disabilities and English language learners or provide extensions for high level students. Furthermore, tasks and activities do not move students beyond a general level of engagement. As a result, there are limited opportunities for all students to engage in high levels of learning.
- Continue to refine curricula and strengthen the academic tasks to reflect planning for all students so that high achievers, students with disabilities and English language learners are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - o Teachers and administration have not only aligned math and literacy curricula to the selected CCLS, but with guidance from network staff and professional development consultants, the school has chosen additional standards to align to their literacy curricula. Tasks were implemented in all grade levels according to the Citywide Instructional Expectations. However, curriculum maps, lesson plans and in-class assignments do not reflect planning for students with disabilities, English language learners and high achievers in a coherent and strategic way, resulting in missed opportunities to develop instructional strategies that will push their thinking and expand their base of knowledge.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 053 Bay Terrace	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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