

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 20 P.O. George J. Werdan III

K-8 school X020

**3050 WEBSTER AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10467**

Principal: CAROL CARLSEN

Dates of review: November 02, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 20 P.O. George J. Werdan III is a K-8 school with 1138 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 72% Hispanic, 14% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The entire school community has worked hard to establish and maintain a collaborative culture of mutual trust and a positive attitude towards learning that supports the growth of students and adults in the school community. (1.4)
 - o Throughout the building students and teachers are interested and engaged in their learning. Students describe the school as “safe, nice, academic and hard-working.” Peer tutoring, peer mediation, and student council provide opportunities for student voice to influence school decisions. School leaders are strategic in examining incident reports and using school wide surveys to monitor tone and culture in the building. The School Environment Survey shows nearly a 10% increase from the previous year in students that say they feel safe in the hallways, bathrooms and locker rooms at their school and 85% of students reported feeling safe in their classes. As a result students are able to be present in classes, ready to focus on their instruction and learning without being overwhelmed by outside influences.
- Throughout the school, teams of dedicated teachers are engaged in inquiry based, structured professional collaborations that promote shared leadership and focus on student improvement. (4.2)
 - o All teachers participate in multiple professional collaborations using an inquiry process. Teachers in the upper grades collaborate at a minimum of twice a week to analyze student and teacher work with a particular focus on students in the lowest third. An embedded expectation in the school is the rotation of facilitation of these professional collaborations. Each year, the grade team leader rotates in order to support the leadership development of each member of the team. Team leaders meet regularly with the school administrative team to share findings and discuss larger, school wide implications. As a result, all teachers on the grade have various opportunities for their voice to be heard and for their ideas to play in integral role in key instructional decisions.
- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions to support movement towards the school’s instructional goals and students’ learning needs. (1.3)
 - o After careful analysis of the school’s Progress Report and overall data trends, the principal and assistant principals made a bold decision to reprogram the school so that AIS support teams could push into math and literacy classes in the upper grades. In doing this, funds had to be reallocated and coaches re-positioned. As a result the neediest students in the upper grades are able to receive small group, targeted assistance for double periods. The school has also invested in computer based reading and math programs such as Achieve 3000 and Math Skill Builder. All these decisions are directly connected to the school’s goal of raising ELA and Math scores and has begun to show movement towards meeting them as evidenced by student discussion and work products across classrooms.
- School leaders provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to regularly evaluate and revise classroom practices. (4.3)
 - o Professional learning opportunities are embedded in the school culture. According to the School Survey 95% of teachers agree that school leaders place a high priority on the quality of teaching at the school and 100% of teachers work

together to improve their practice. The school has a five year strategic plan for implementing the Common Core Learning Standards as well as weekly structured professional time built into the school day that enables teachers to build their expertise and track it in their professional binders. Teachers, coaches and assistant principals are regularly invited to participate in learning walks using the Danielson Framework as a lens to provide feedback to colleagues as well as reflect on their own practices. New teachers to the school and those new to the profession are further supported through the use of coaches and self-selected learning buddies. Assistant principals attend network sponsored professional development on various topics including the Common Core Learning Standards and new assistant principals participate in the Executive Leadership Academy. As a result according to the School Survey, over 90% of the staff understand what is expected of them and feel supported in their efforts to improve professionally.

- Individual teachers and teams of teachers regularly analyze student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classrooms level. (2.2)
 - o Throughout the school, grade level teachers have developed specific learning targets aligned to the standards. The school has also chosen to focus on written responses to informational texts and the development of opinions and arguments based on the text. Across grades teams of teachers use assessments from programs such as Everyday Math, Reading First, Trophies, DIBLES, and WRAP to progress monitor and provide feedback on effectiveness of classroom level curricular and instructional decisions particularly with a focus on the bottom third student population. In one meeting the 6th grade teachers used a Looking at Student Work Protocol to examine student work from a student in the target group. Together the group brainstormed appropriate teaching strategies and next steps for the teacher and the student with a clearly defined timeline and goals for re-checks for understanding.
- School leaders use various observation and reflection structures to promote professional growth with a special focus on teachers new to the school or profession. (4.1)
 - o Teachers express gratitude for the feedback provided through classroom observations, walkthroughs, one on one and small group coaching meetings with school leaders and most particularly at teacher team meetings. The school has adopted the Danielson Framework to clearly articulate expectations for teacher practices. This framework is used during the walkthrough process as well as in the goal setting process for teachers. There are multiple means of support through structures such as goals setting, buddy collaborations, classroom observations, opportunities for authentic action research and mentoring of new teachers. Teachers describe the collaborative nature of the school and the unending opportunities to learn as one of the major incentives to stay throughout their teaching tenure. As a result there has been a very low teacher turnover rate. With a range of 76-105 teachers on staff in the last four years, teacher turnover averaged approximately 6% each year.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to build on existing examples of tasks that involve higher order thinking to promote greater consistency in designing cognitively demanding and coherent curriculum across the all grades in order to ensure all students make progress in their learning. (1.1)
 - Grade teams work closely to develop student learning targets in each content area to emphasize key standards. The school has also made purposeful choices to focus on selected standards based on the 2011-12 Instructional Expectations. These choices however are not necessarily and strategically addressing needs to close the achievement gap. As a result students with disabilities and English Language Learners are not making significant progress or academic gains.
 - While there were some very strong examples of student work products that required high levels of cognitive engagement, academic tasks across grades did not consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills particularly for students with disabilities. Similarly, the essential questions in teacher unit plans were highly inconsistent, often repeating in different grades and at times low level thinking and short quick answers. As a result, there are missed opportunities to strategically build skills through the grades and genuinely challenge students with cognitively demanding work.
- Further develop consistency in teaching strategies to ensure that questions and routines are differentiated to enable all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities to produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Although students are routinely on task completing assigned work and following the teacher's instructions and across classrooms teachers are using data to group students for small group instruction with differentiated work assignments , it isn't always clear how the work for each group strategically targets students' specific needs. Assistant principals are working with teachers using Depth of Knowledge to further push task development to further cognitively engage students and teachers are continuing to build their capacity to develop questioning strategies, authentic student discussion opportunities and routines that consistently engage all students. However, there is inconsistent evidence of strategic supports and extensions that help engage all students in high levels of thinking, conversation and work. For example in one science class students were completing a lab by following the procedure step by step. Similarly in a math class students completed a chart to demonstrate the lattice method. After questioning students there wasn't clear evidence that they had the conceptual understanding of why they were doing what they were doing. As a result, there are limited opportunities for students including students with disabilities to be challenged to their highest abilities and produce meaningful work products.
- Sharpen the school wide goal setting process by including benchmarks for short and long-term measurable outcomes in order to monitor progress and narrow the achievement gap between general education and students with disabilities. (3.3)

- Goal setting is an important aspect of the school culture. Students set goals in their classes and teachers set very detailed goals for each of their classes and their target students. This process however is not mimicked on school level. School level goals contain year end targets without clear benchmarks for meeting those targets. The school does not have a clear action plan for all goals including those aimed at narrowing the achievement gap for students with disabilities. Without these measures school leaders and then teacher team members cannot consistently track progress to make strategic and measured adjustments along the way.
- Deepen and expand communication and collaboration with parents to increase their capacity to understand their child's strengths and areas of growth in order to assist in the learning and enable them to track progress towards learning goals. (2.4)
 - This year the school moved to a trimester schedule to provide more regular opportunities to communicate progress to parents and students. In lower grades, parents receive detailed reports with information about skill development. Upper grade families receive reports with numeric grades for each class. These reports are not yet aligned to the students' ability to master the learning targets used in the classrooms, minimizing school's ability to help parents understand what they can do specifically to support mastery towards these students at home. Teachers continue to use an on-line grading system, EdLine, to provide regular communication to students about their grades and this year they are expanding that practice to include parents, however, due to the initial stage of this expansion, parents are currently unable to monitor grades and assignment completion. Without further alignment, school's ability and efforts to help students and families clearly understand the skills students are acquiring through their coursework will be hindered.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 20 P.O.George J. Werdan III	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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