

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Joseph R. Drake

Elementary school 048

**1290 SPOFFORD AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10474**

Principal: ROXANNE CARDONA

Dates of review: December 13-14, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Joseph R. Drake is an elementary school with 875 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 65% Hispanic, and 8% other students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school delivers an engaging and rigorous curriculum to address students' academic needs. (1.1)
 - o The principal mentors the development of effective teacher created curriculum maps and unit plans that emphasize the school's key standards of writing, solving opened ended math problems, and increasing student stamina. These key standards are integrated with Common Core Learning Standards, (CCLS), tasks to ensure a cohesive academic program that prepares students for high school and college. The school uses a research-based rubric and State standards as their guide to identify best practices enabling them to consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. As a result, all subgroups attained 75th growth percentile or higher in English language arts on the 2010-11 Progress Report.
- Administrators make key organizational decisions well aligned to the school's academic goals enhancing instruction and student performance. (1.3)
 - o The excellent allocation of the school's budget provides for scheduling teacher teams and coaches meeting on a regular basis to analyze data, evaluate the effectiveness of CCLS tasks, and reflect on best practices to increase student achievement. Students apply learned skills to project-based tasks as evidenced by students designing a flowerbed using geometric shapes and measurements to explain their work. Consequently, students are currently performing at or above grade level as evidenced by report card grades.
 - o Assistant principals, coaches, and consultants, are strategically included in instructional phases, including teacher teams that meet two times per week, and cabinet collaborations. This initiative is pivotal in establishing rapid and effective communication to ensure timely updates in all areas of instruction leading to all students being involved challenging tasks as evidenced by student work products. As a result, the majority of students demonstrate a year or more of academic progress in English language arts and math as measured by the 2010-'11 Progress Report.
- The principal and faculty establish an educational community that prioritizes student outcomes with a focus on continuing to accelerate learning. (3.1)
 - o Comprehensive intervention plans to address student performance are a result of direct attention to the attainment of annual and interim databased goals. Objectives are a result of the sound utilization of quantitative and qualitative results, which propel the school's planning documents such as the Comprehensive Educational Plan, Progress Report, and the Learning Environment Survey, as evident in the school attaining an A on the 2010-11 Progress Report.
 - o The principal's effective involvement and communication with the school community includes a monthly newsletter that shares the school's academic, social, and emotional objectives. All goals including the principal's, the Comprehensive Education Plan, teacher, grade, class, and student goals are aligned thus providing a continuity of instruction. Teachers, effectively sharing and analyzing student work and assessment results to identify explicit next learning steps, and whose work is focused on attaining set goals, is evidenced in

documented increases in student's independent reading levels across all grade levels.

- Utilizing a wide range of data, the administration, coaches, and teachers, have a consistent understanding of the performance and progress of students across all grades, which inform curricula and instruction. (2.2)
 - o Grade-level teacher teams' collaborative review of their students' assessments around improving writing across the curriculum has been enhanced by the guidance of a coach. The grade 4 team utilizes a protocol to prioritize student writing and a writing rubric aligned to the curriculum. The majority of student work displayed evidences this school-wide focus. Rubrics and tasks are continually reviewed and adjusted in a cooperative effort that leads to improved student learning as evidenced by student writing samples.
 - o As periodic assessments are limited in identifying students' writing strengths and weaknesses, the school administers a variety of summative and formative assessments such as simulated tests, unit reviews, teacher-made tests and conference notes. Consequently, there is a better understanding of students' writing skills enabling staff to adjust the delivery of instruction and promote greater achievement in answering questions that require extended responses. The majority of parents' and teachers' positive responses to the 2010-11 Learning Environment Survey indicates students are learning what they need to know and is evidenced by the school attaining an A in student progress on the most recent Progress Report.
- The school is utilizing a researched-based rubric to improve instructional practices and has effectively aligned its professional development activities to guide pedagogical growth. (4.1)
 - o Feedback to teachers' using a research-based rubric is consistent to school wide and teachers' professional goals. Observations are sequential in that they provide teachers with clear guidance for next steps to improve the delivery of instruction to positively impact student learning and is evident in the high quality student-work products.
 - o The school wide focus of improving student writing is effectively supported through targeted professional development and collaboration with the network. Inter-visitations and common planning time enable teachers to learn together and from each other. As a result, there is a deepening of practice and teachers provide targeted instruction for subgroups of students. Rigby data around comprehension skills and the use of conventions when writing, and results from periodic assessment of ELL's, demonstrate growth in the mastery of the English language.
- The school regularly reviews and modifies curriculum and instruction to propel student performance. (5.1)
 - o Ongoing investigations of data during cabinet and teacher team meetings have led to curriculum mapping revisions in math and science that now include the integration of writing skills with content mastery. In addition, there is a focus on vocabulary development, which is a result of collaboration of content area teachers. These initiatives lead to the improvement of student performance as evidenced by conference notes and tracking sheets to improve student comprehension and writing skills.

- Partnerships provide students with high level of extended learning opportunities encouraging them to participate in numerous activities increasing their academic, social, and recreational skills. (4.4)
 - o The principal's enlisting the collaboration of City Year, The Police Athletic League and Respect For All, anti-bullying programs, has provided mentoring for students and parents in dealing with social-emotional concerns. As a result, principal suspensions have decreased this year.
 - o Teachers helped students write lyrics and create a video submitted for consideration for a "GLEE Give a Note" campaign. As a result, the school was awarded a \$50,000.00 grand prize. Students now have instruments, sheet music, a piano, and risers for the chorus. Consequently, students' learning experiences are highly enriched through music.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in instruction to reflect high levels of student thinking and extensions into curricula to maximize student learning. (1.2)
 - o Using assessments, in concert with teacher judgment, English language learners are provided multiple entry points in order for them to spend less time determining the context and increased time on completing the task. Students state that they understand their subjects better because "they use their knowledge to make things." However, as project based tasks are just beginning to be set in place in all subject areas not all students are benefiting in all subjects from these productive learning opportunities.
- Expand correspondence with the school community regarding student learning needs and outcomes, focusing on specific subgroups so parents can assist their children in a timely manner. (3.4)
 - o A monthly newsletter from the principal, progress report information from classroom teachers, and ARIS workshops, enable parents to gain awareness regarding the performance of their children on a regular basis. However, some parents are unclear regarding short- and long-term academic goal expectations. Consequently, not all parents can effectively assist their children to perform to their full potential.
 - o Student work, including products from students in all relevant subgroups, that is on display and in portfolios and notebooks is detailed with teacher comments highlighting commendations, recommendations, and next steps to realize a higher level of student academic achievement. However, guidance supports are not fully integrated, thus missing further maximizing student potential.
- Strengthen the engagement of families with an open exchange of data to ensure continued improvement in student standardized test scores. (2.4)
 - o While the school makes many efforts to inform parents, there is not yet a specific focus on extending programs sufficiently for parents of relevant student subgroups, to ensure their children achieve minimally on grade level and are prepared for middle school and beyond. The school's coordination with parents to use computers to log their Work Experience Program hours along with a new initiative around ARIS workshops provides opportunities for families to view the school as a resource. However, current structures do not fully support families to utilize these tools in a timely manner.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Joseph R. Drake	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