

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. / I.S. 54

Elementary school X054

**2703 WEBSTER AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10458**

Principal: Maribelle Nunez-Pardo

Dates of review: November 30 - December 1, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Myrta Rivera

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. / I.S. 54 is an elementary school with 514 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 68% Hispanic, 2% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal uses a comprehensive range of data to identify school strengths and areas of need to improve the instructional program. (2.1)
 - o A review of data highlights the need to focus on the needs of English language learners. In addition, due to declining math scores, there is a need to modify the math program so it aligns with the Common Core Learning Standards. School and team goals support the focus on English language learners and math instruction. One team is working on strategies for front loading vocabulary across the school and a consultant works with teachers on improving instructional strategies for English language learners (ELLs). The new math program is being implemented across the school with support from a math coach. Consequently, the entire school focuses on these initiatives to improve instruction for all students.
 - o School leaders utilize a Google doc system, in which teachers' document periodic assessment and classroom data, to regularly review and analyze assessment data. Current data shows the need to focus on the fourth graders who scored poorly on English Language Arts State assessments. In order to address this issue, the literacy coach provides intensive academic intervention to fourth graders who are mandated English language learners four times a week to increase literacy proficiency. Preliminary data shows these students are making progress in their reading and writing work.
- The school and staff provide a safe and respectful environment for students that support learning. (1.4)
 - o The school provides a positive and safe learning environment that supports the social and emotional development of students through a variety of programs and incentives. Classrooms maintain effective procedures that support student's personal development. Hallways and bulletin boards carefully display students' academic work and art work, showing pride in their school. A guidance counselor provides additional support to targeted students so that all students can learn. As a result, students treat each other and their teachers with respect and are actively engaged in their school work.
 - o Students report that their teachers and the guidance counselor assist them with their academic and personal needs. One student shared that when he did not know decimals, his teacher helped him during lunchtime. As a result, student's feel that they are well known by an adult in their school who helps them with any issue.
- School leaders and teachers align the curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards and create academic tasks that meet the needs of all learners. (1.1)
 - o The school is currently revising the curriculum to merge social studies content into literacy units of study and to align the Common Core Learning Standards across all grades with a focus on main idea and supporting details. Lessons emphasize these skills in an attempt to close the achievement gap. Classes are focusing on social studies themes across grades and are in the beginning stages of implementing this strategy to create alignment and cohesive instruction school wide. The vertical literacy team aligns existing curriculum maps and creates rubrics integrating higher order thinking skills. As a result, there is school-wide

consistency of instruction and a framework for teacher teams to develop units of study that emphasize literacy skills in all subjects.

- o Grade teams are struggling with the definition of rigor but create tasks focusing on higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits. The rubrics emphasize academic rigor and lessons emphasize questioning techniques. One team shares their academic task using cause and effect as their strategy. The teams are in the beginning stages of this work and implementation is evolving. Therefore, this limited implementation of academic tasks using higher order thinking skills attempts to meet the needs of all learners.
- School leaders make informed decisions that support the work of teacher teams and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards to support the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - o School leader's have an organizational structure that facilitates time for teacher teams to meet at least four times a week through common preparation periods for each grade. Grade and vertical teams meet to review student work and monitor implementation of units of study by examining the work of low, medium and high performing students. These newly formed teams allow teachers to share instructional strategies to adjust their own teaching based on the needs of their students. One teacher reflected that she needs to focus on text structure in the fourth grade after viewing fifth grade student work. As a result, teachers confer with their colleagues to better engage students in academic tasks that support the school's literacy goals.
 - o The school revised the literacy curriculum to incorporate social studies concepts for all students, to align with the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, there is a seamless transition from grade to grade and a school-wide alignment of social studies materials. With the purchasing of more non-fiction books, students are exposed to challenging materials in graphs, maps and charts. This initiative strengthens the reading and writing work, and supports the school's literacy goals.
- School leaders utilize formal and informal feedback protocols to support pedagogical growth so that teachers receive professional development supports. (4.1)
 - o School leaders provide feedback to teachers through classroom observations, review of lesson plans and looking at student work products to provide recommendations with next steps. This analysis provides the basis for providing differentiated support to teachers, especially new teachers, to elevate their professional growth. School leaders use elements of the professional teaching standards and are selecting a research based rubric to provide teachers with clear expectations for teacher practice. Feedback practices linked to a common framework is supporting teacher development and building instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Revise school-wide goals with input from the school community so that they are clear and measurable with action plans that incorporate learning strategies so that student achievement increases. (3.1)
 - o Although improvement in literacy is identified as a goal for all students, especially the sub-group of ELLs and students with disabilities, it is not clear how these

- goals will improve instruction. Action plans revolve around improvement of tier I teaching but it is not clear what strategies will be incorporated to improve literacy instruction for all students. The school community is focusing on improving the academic achievement for English language learners however the strategies the school would use to reach their goal were not evident. Without explicit goals that focus on accelerating student learning, student growth is hindered.
- o Even though the Comprehensive Education Plan is an update from last year, the school community was not involved in the planning process. This action limits support from key players in creating a document that describes actions that address deficits and strategies to improve instruction. A lack of involvement during the planning process, limits valuable input from the school community and impedes full support in reaching attainment of the goals.
 - Enhance communication with families regarding the curriculum, student progress and student expectations so they can become partners in education to increase student outcomes. (2.4)
 - o Although parents receive feedback from teachers at parent teacher conferences, on-going discussions around student performance are minimal. The school provides monthly calendars, workshops, a book club and a curriculum night. However, parents lack a clear understanding around curriculum decisions. Although student performance data is presented at school leadership team meetings, parents do not use tools to help them understand their child's academic performance. Consequently, lack of parent knowledge in student performance inhibits their understanding and participation in decisions that support student achievement.
 - Identify interim checkpoints that enable the school to regularly monitor and evaluate progress towards goals throughout the year so that modifications to increase student outcomes are made. (5.3)
 - o Evidence of alignment between planning processes from one year to another in goal setting is missing, thereby affecting the impact of long term goals. In addition, interim checkpoints to monitor progress so that adjustments can be made during the school year are not present. The Monitoring for Reading is a new tool to assist in collecting assessment data, however there are no scheduled times during the year to monitor progress of these goals. The lack of monitoring structures inhibits the school's ability to make timely modifications so that student progress is accelerated.
 - Develop a system to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaborations that supports the development of teacher leaders to increase student outcomes. (5.4)
 - o Although teachers involved in collaborative teams create agendas and take notes which are shared on the school's Google doc site, there is no system to evaluate their effectiveness on improving student outcomes. School leaders do not use data to evaluate teacher team work and lack of a feedback system inhibits teams from flourishing in order to improve the quality of their work.
 - o School leaders are knowledgeable in identifying teacher experience and in making assignments accordingly. However, the use of student assessment data to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher hiring and tenure process is not utilized. As a result, the monitoring systems that evaluate the teacher effectiveness struggle to provide a comprehensive understanding of trends.

- Enhance pedagogy so that teaching strategies are differentiated and data-driven to provide a range of entry points that engage all learners, at all functional levels, to produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - o Most classes use the workshop model with large group and small group work and teachers use activities to teach lessons. However, these activities are not differentiated based on the needs of the students. Small group instruction provides academic intervention to targeted students but there are no extensions for high performing students. Teachers are actively involved while students are sitting passively listening to the lesson with little student to student interaction; thereby affecting student's ability to practice new skills and share their understandings. A few classes use strategies to assist English language learners, such as translation of new words into Spanish, however this is not a widespread practice. Consequently, students' needs, especially ELLs, are not being met, affecting their ability to produce meaningful work products and hindering their academic achievement.
 - o While students seemed engaged in most classrooms, assigned tasks consist of completing work sheets with little authentic student work, which limits student thinking from producing high level work products. One class incorporated student presentations where students used rubrics to assess each other's work however, this is not a school-wide practice. These uneven levels of instructional practice affect the assessment of student thinking that influence how teachers modify instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. / I.S. 54	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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