

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Francisco Oller School
Elementary School 061
1550 Crotona Park East
Bronx
NY 10461

Principal: Patricia Quigley, Principal

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Francisco Oller School is an elementary school with 395 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, and 73% Hispanic students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Relationships across the school are warm and supportive of students, teachers, and parents, who take pride in being part of the school. (1.4)
 - Frequent celebrations take place and provide opportunities for school leaders to provide student incentives help the school promote excellence. During morning line-up, the principal seizes the opportunity to engage students in conversations about attendance, students' academic goals, and behavioral expectations. Certificates and awards handed out during this time inspire students as they vie to be the next one to receive praise. The principal's Honor Roll chart, Student of the Month and Perfect Attendance bulletin boards filled with beaming faces of students recognized for improved behavior and learning, confirm positive attitudes. One student shared, "We have rules to follow, and we are encouraged to be leaders and not followers."
 - Students feel that the school supports them in every way. Just walk through the halls with the principal and before long students warmly greet her with a big smile. The school's intervention programs, assemblies, and partnership with the Children's Aid Society, (CAS), further promote expectations for learning. Staff from the partnership maintain a continuous contact with school leaders, teachers, the special education department, and school psychologist both during the day and after school, thus ensuring that students receive appropriate social, emotional, and academic support resulting in academic outcomes significantly improving. One student exclaimed, "You have to be on top of your work." Another student shared, "Teachers are inspiring. They push us forward because they want us to excel in the future."
- School leaders and faculty engage families in an open exchange of information keeping parents apprised of their children's progress. (2.4)
 - The school's open-door policy enables families to discuss the academic, attendance, and behavior issues of students. In addition to trice yearly report cards, each student has an education plan inclusive of his/her learning goals across all subject areas that is sent home twice a year. This enables families to have a meaningful parent/teacher conference. Reading and math workshops for parents help them understand the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. One parent shared, "Teachers work with parents and teach us new math strategies so we know how to help our kids."
 - Parents as part of the decision-making process were able to express to the principal their concern over lunch selections. Subsequently, after some research, the school instituted a wellness program, which has resulted in a chef serving healthy food, complemented by a salad bar complete with fresh vegetable choices. In addition, The CAS is instrumental in forming a partnership with the New York Botanical Garden, who, together with parental support, will transform the roof's outdoor space into a vegetable and herb garden allowing students to

continue to explore the benefits of making healthy food choices and engage in fun hands-on learning experiences.

- The school's internal systems and effective external partnerships support the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. (4.4)
 - The school's two full-time social workers and one part-time social worker support teachers, students, and families. In their roles, they plan and lead workshops and professional development sessions around bullying, attendance and academic behavior. Bullying workshops, anecdotal training, and meetings with families, support teaching and learning. In addition, the social workers attend teacher meetings and provide suggestions and intervention strategies to ensure that student's social, emotional, and academic needs are addressed, thus preparing students to tackle the academic requirements required in the Common Core Learning Standards.
 - For over ten years, the school has sustained an important partnership with the Children's Aid Society (CAS) whose members work daily at the school with individuals and small groups of students providing focused, academic support to ensure progress. After-school, weekend, and holiday programs provide additional opportunities for students to engage in extra-curricular sports activities while providing academic opportunities to accelerate learning. CAS members who meet with teachers, share behavioral techniques and strategies as well as facilitate workshops regarding classroom management. As a result of ongoing CAS interventions that also include home visits, attendance has improved, referrals have gone down, and students are taking more responsibility for their learning.
- School leaders make informed organizational decisions that support teaching and learning. (1.3)
 - The school allocated resources to enhance its technology program allowing for Smart boards in every classroom, laptop carts on every grade, and a new technology center. This emphasis on technology provides multiple opportunities for students to engage in research, create power point presentations relevant to their learning, and sharpen their technology skills preparing them for postsecondary academic responsibilities.
 - The principal's revamping of the school's 37.5 minute extended day program from student support in the afternoon when attendance was spotty, now provides daily small group focused instruction for upper grade students. Related teacher assignments are determined based on his/her expertise and students are grouped according to instructional needs. The school's on-line data system, confirms that 80% of students receiving small group instruction are showing improvement.
- Teachers and teacher teams use collaborative, data-informed processes for goal setting across the grades. (3.2)
 - Teachers and teacher teams engage in data analysis to set suitable goals for students. They use team meetings to present students' learning

outcomes with a focus on progress. For students who have not advanced sufficiently teachers determine needed instructional strategies, review and reestablish suitable goals for students. As a result of on-going collaboration and analysis, teachers maintain a vested interest in meeting the needs of students and foster a collegial and collaborative atmosphere supportive of helping students attain set goals.

- During a fifth grade team meeting, teachers engaged in the analysis of student learning outcomes from a recent math performance task assessment. They follow a protocol where one teacher shares assessment data relevant to a struggling student. Colleagues then review the data and identify areas of concept confusion, share possible instructional strategies, and determine a realistic learning goal. This collaborative time together has resulted in teachers being able to elicit advice about effective practice from their colleagues and pinpoint strategic instructional strategies resulting in targeted learning goals for students and groups of students. One teacher stated, “I get ideas for my practice here.” Another teacher said, “I am more self-reflective. I go home and think about what else I can do tomorrow.”

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich the curriculum to ensure that academic tasks are challenging and that questioning extends student thinking to maximize learning. (1.1)
 - The school has begun to integrate the Common Core Learning Standards into its current curriculum maps. Teachers across the grades have administered the two performance tasks, are analyzing student data, and revising their curriculum accordingly. However, instruction that emphasizes higher order thinking is inconsistent across classrooms and subjects. Questions posed by teachers in most classrooms do not push students’ thinking and do not actively engage students in academic discourse. Moreover, students with disabilities are not engaged in rigorous tasks. In one classroom, although the content was aligned across the grade, the teachers’ questioning was at the word level as the task required students to jot down a word describing character traits; while in another class, the students determined a character’s trait by going back into the text and finding evidence to support their thinking. The lack of rigor in tasks results in students being insufficiently cognitively challenged, thus hampering their ability to tackle complex tasks.
- Promote greater consistency in planning differentiated instruction so that all students have access to grade level texts. (1.2)
 - Academic tasks and teaching strategies that provide differentiated and enriched learning experiences for all students are not embedded across the grades and content areas. In an early childhood classroom, students were strategically grouped for math learning. While engaged in the same content, each hands-on task was differentiated, based on the teacher’s assessment data. However, this practice of planning and creating challenging extensions for higher performing students is not common practice. Teachers routinely group higher performing students with struggling students, resulting in the higher performers not being sufficiently challenged to maximize their learning potential.

- Strengthen teacher feedback to accurately capture strengths and instructional expectations aligned with the school's chosen rubric. (4.1)
 - At present, school leaders have developed an informal observation checklist that has some alignment to the school's chosen teacher effectiveness rubric. This checklist, used during short cycles of classroom visits, assists school leaders in recording their observations of teacher practice and student learning. However, during the observation process, current and on-going student work is not consistently analyzed and evaluated by school leaders. Thus an accurate picture of teacher effectiveness and impact on student learning is hindered. Furthermore, a system to manage school offered staff development opportunities is not yet fully developed. While the school has a yearlong log of staff development provided by outside trainers and a list of attendees, school leaders do not consistently monitor the implementation of new learning in the classroom, therefore minimizing knowing the impact of each professional development on classroom instruction and teacher expertise. Furthermore, administrators are limited in making informed decisions about teacher assignments, tenure, and retention decisions.
- Expand teachers' assessment practices to consistently include the use of on-going checks for understanding to meet students' needs (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers create assessments and rubrics aligned with the school's literacy program. However, most rubrics are loosely aligned to the standards and focus on writing organization, sentence structure, and the mechanics of grammar and spelling, rather than content, thus preventing teams of teachers from effectively evaluating their curricular and instructional decisions.
 - Currently, most teachers do not use quick, on-the-spot checks for understanding during a lesson to determine the level of students' understanding relevant to the concept being taught. The lack of on-going checks for understanding, prevent teachers from accurately and effectively adjusting their lessons mid-way thus ensuring that all students' learning needs are met.
- Create a structure to regularly evaluate instructional and organizational decisions in response to the expectations of the CCLS. (5.1)
 - Although teams of teachers make adjustments to the curriculum and their practice, school leaders do not have a structure in place to regularly evaluate instructional practices across the school regarding the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and teachers' impact on student achievement. Additionally, school leaders do not have structures in place to evaluate their organizational decisions such as teacher assignments and student groupings. Thus school leaders are hampered from making timely and relevant adjustments to ensure further student progress and are at a disadvantage in determining the appropriate and specific levels of content and/or pedagogical support teachers need in order to be effective and accelerate achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Francisco Oller School	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