

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Mohegan School
Elementary School 067

2024 MOHEGAN AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10460

Principal: EMILY GRIMBALL

Dates of review: June 01 - ?, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mohegan School is an elementary school with 731 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 76% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school effectively integrates Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks into the English Language Arts (ELA), math, and science curricula that are aligned to key standards and provide engaging tasks for a variety of students. 1.1
 - The leadership and faculty design the curricula to emphasize high order thinking using non-fiction and informational texts in all core subjects, with an emphasis on building writing stamina across all grades. Student work from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade shows a steady growth in increased rigor as identified in the CCLS. Student work products including that of English language learners (ELL's) and Students with disabilities (SWD's) exhibit steady levels of growth in organization, development, length, reflections on writing and peer revisions, thus supporting improved student outcomes.
 - Teachers develop academic tasks within grade and subject teams using tasks from the CCLS and use the data from the student work products to determine how to revise or adjust tasks to ensure that all students, or groups of students, improve academically.
- Teachers share a set of beliefs about how their students learn best and develop strategies and practices to engage diverse learners through the curricula with rigorous academic tasks so that students produce meaningful work products. 1.2
 - The workshop model is used in most classes in order to engage students in-group and independent work with the teacher acting as facilitator, by modeling writing or reading, and then allowing students time to write, review, revise, discuss with teacher checking for understanding, thus allowing students to develop independence in their learning. Teachers in self-contained, integrated co-teaching (ICT) and regular education classes share in the development of lessons, thus supportive of allowing all classes on each grade to align work for and engage diverse learners. As students are exposed to the same curricular, the achievement gap is being steadily bridged as evident in student engagement and work products.
 - Teacher questioning generally leads students to think on higher levels, such as asking students to change the end of story, or put themselves in the position of the character in order to write an opinion piece such as "should zoos exist?" As a result, students are engaged in their own work and in-group work demonstrating high levels of collaborative discussions, group products, and individual achievement.
- The leadership makes strategic organizational and instructional decisions that support data informed goals. 1.3
 - The school determined that even though students are steadily improving their reading as proven by benchmark outcomes throughout the year, the data, based on State and class assessments and student writing, indicated that students had little writing stamina and produced quality work inconsistently. Thus, the school added more instructional support through the work of literacy consultants to help groups and individual teachers on a weekly basis to strengthen writing strategies across the grades. Students in kindergarten are now able to describe a plant

using various sentence structures, as opposed to only one or two word structures and student written work across the grades is showing evidence of increasing in length and quality.

- School teams are organized vertically to allow teachers to gain an understanding of school wide goals, curricula, and expectations leading to an awareness of the instructional concepts needed grade-by-grade. Teachers state that knowing what students are expected to know in prior and future grades helps them to increase the rigor of their lessons and tasks so that students are prepared for each year's challenges. As a result, student work from one grade to the next builds on prior skills, knowledge, and rigor, as evidenced by a third grade writing task about a social studies event that is more rigorous and challenging than a first grade task.
- School leaders and faculty ensure that assessments are aligned to curricula and that student outcomes are continuously analyzed to assess team and class practices and strategies 2.2
 - Teachers develop rubrics, and have common assessments for each grade, aligned to the CCLS tasks and the Department of Education (DOE) core instructional expectations in reading and writing. Student outcomes provide the leadership and faculty with weekly feedback about the decisions that teams are making when adopting or adapting assessments and rubrics and help to determine the need for targeted professional development to strengthen teacher pedagogy. As a result, the school community is continuously evaluating their work through student outcomes to ensure student achievement and improved instructional practices.
 - Teams of teachers supplement the analysis of State and periodic assessment data with student work, including observations of peer-to-peer discussions, class work, group dynamics, and writing and reading assessments. Staff analyze individual student strengths and weaknesses and disaggregate data about special needs students who are mainstreamed and Ell's to determine groupings. In several classes, teachers grouped Ell students with native speakers and regrouped them according to mastery in different subject areas, thus ensuring that all students have varied entries into the subject areas and supports to help them achieve as evident in student work products and discussions.
- The leadership uses short cycles of observations to evaluate effectiveness of professional development, through the analysis of student outcomes. 4.1
 - The school provides teachers with varied opportunities for professional development, class intervisitations, and modeling of diverse strategies by professional developers, from the Network and/or literacy consultants. Teachers who have been exposed to the Danielson Framework since last year state that they get targeted feedback emphasizing their strengths and weaknesses, thus allowing them to reflect on their practices and next steps. New teachers have several mentors from the Network and school to assure they are well supported in meeting school goals. As a result of the short cycles of observations, the leadership communicates high expectations for teacher practice, and teachers work to improve their pedagogy, which is reflected in improvement in student work products and assessment data.
- Professional development and team collaborations promote opportunities for leadership development, and reflective practices enable teachers to continuously review and revise teaching strategies and practices to increase student achievement.

- o A majority of teachers belong to several professional learning communities, including grade and vertical teams. Teacher leaders are empowered to make decisions regarding instruction, which motivates teachers to improve their instructional practices as they engage in their own learning. The grade 4 vertical team allowed a fourth grade teacher to work with third and fifth grade teachers to identify and address rigorous and challenging tasks to prepare students for the next grade. In grade teams, an inquiry approach allows teachers to target sets of students such as Ell's, and study student outcomes of a sub-set of these students to determine what strategies are successful or needed in order to improve achievement for the subgroup as a whole. Results are shared within the teams to determine if all students will benefit from the targeted strategies. As a result, tasks that require higher order thinking skills as students progress from grade-to-grade are uniformly developed and students are demonstrating academic improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Further analyze and develop action plans targeting subgroups in order to improve academic outcomes to close the achievement gap 3.2
 - o School leaders collect and analyze a wide range of data which captures the school's strengths and weaknesses of some subgroups such as Ell's and SWD's. However, the school does not collect and analyze sufficient data regarding high achievers, students in temporary housing (STH), and students with low- to mid-absenteeism. This prevents the school from having a full picture of all relevant subgroups in order to develop differentiated goals and action plans that take into account specific needs to close the achievement gap for all students.
- Ensure that data is organized, aggregated, and analyzed to determine performance trends and mastery levels of groups of students to inform instruction and curricula. 2.3
 - o The school uses tools such as ARIS to gather and update data information in order to analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curricula. However, the school does not capture sufficient data to develop enrichment tasks and activities that will lead to higher levels of student performance for high achievers. As a result pockets of students are not meeting their full academic potential because their needs are not being addressed through differentiated instruction and curricula.
- Improve processes to track achievement of learning goals at the school, teacher team and class level. 3.3
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use student work products and periodic and common assessments to track achievement of learning goals for student subgroups such as Ell's and SWD's. However, high achievers, students in temporary housing or living doubled up, and students with infrequent attendance are inconsistently categorized as subgroups. As a result, differentiated goals and adjustments in instructional tasks or activities to support or enrich these groups are not sufficiently evident across the school, addressed during teacher teams, or reflected across all grades so that all subgroups of students master their learning expectations.

- Evaluate systems for organizing data making adjustments as needed and sharing information with students and families. 5.2
 - School leaders and faculty regularly evaluate data but do not organize or aggregate sufficient data on high achievers, sheltered and students living doubled, and low to mid-level absentees. As a result, information is not readily available to address the academic needs of all groups of students.
 - Although the school's various structures and procedures, such as progress reports, and monthly assessment information, inform families and students about performance and progress, the school has not set up sufficient systems to communicate information about students' progress, assignments, and learning goals. Currently, access to all teachers is not in place, therefore limiting some parents ability to gain a full understanding of their children's work and parents are not as actively engaged and informed about student work or expectations as needed to help further learning outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Mohegan 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	
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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