

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 083 Donald Hertz

K-8 school X083

**950 RHINELANDER AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10462**

Principal: Claudia Macek

Dates of review: January 10th, 11th, and 12th, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Yasmin Lugo Hernandez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 083 Donald Hertz is a K-8 school with 1723 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 11% Black, 50% Hispanic, 26% White, 12% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 15% 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 94.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school faculty works together to create a respectful environment which promotes academic and social-emotional student growth. (1.4)
 - o Students feel safe in and around the building. Even though the school is very large, the entire staff knows students by their first name and can speak about students' needs and interests without hesitation. The school uses data reports such as incident reports, the school survey, attendance trends and teacher feedback to identify students at risk. The "Adopt a Student" program started as an additional way of keeping track of at risk students. Adults in the building were responsible for checking in with a student to monitor behavior, attendance or just to see how things were going. The program was a success and school leaders decided to fully implement it again this year. As a result, students in the program have shown improvement in attendance, a decrease in negative behavior as shown by fewer incident reports for specific students and more engagement in classroom activities.
- The school utilizes school wide initiatives and community partnerships to provide students with integrated support services that foster youth development. (4.4)
 - o The school leaders feel that students need a place to discuss school and personal issues in comfort. In the middle school, students attend advisory meetings with the deans. These meetings are held weekly to discuss conflicts, respect for all and the achievement of high academic goals. Students attribute the lower number of bullying incidents to having conversations around different issues during advisory. Students also stated that they were aware of the new Common Core Learning Standards and that the expectations were now higher for them.
 - o The school administration partners with outside organizations to provide services to foster academic growth and youth development. The school works with the 49th Precinct to identify students that are at risk socially and enlists them in the Explorers Group. The Explorers Group helps students understand how to handle problems that may arise in their lives. The school also provides students with opportunities to excel in service. They participate in community food drives and the March of Dimes. These activities, in conjunction with school faculty support, have led to an increase in academic success as demonstrated by student grades and have reduced disciplinary write ups for the students involved.
- The administration provides differentiated professional development opportunities that focus on curriculum and improve classroom instruction. (4.3)
 - o The school provides teachers with targeted trainings based on school goals and teacher needs. Several teachers stated that in addition to attending whole grade or subject area professional development opportunities, they are offered additional professional development based on their pedagogical needs or students' needs. The English language arts (ELA) grade 6 team works collaboratively with the ELA staff developers and assistant principal to create, study and revisit student and teacher work based on the New York City Instructional Expectations and the Common Core Learning Standards to improve classroom practice and student work products.

- o School leaders firmly believe in allowing school staff to further develop their craft. Assistant principals and teachers are encouraged to attend outside professional development opportunities provided by the Network or other educational consultants. In alignment with the school goal to increase math achievement and continuous analysis of math data, teachers participate in a series of math sessions provided by Marilyn Burns to gain additional pedagogical strategies to increase student achievement. The participating teachers then turnkey this information to their colleagues. As a result, teacher teams embed learned strategies into the units or assessments being created. Teacher leaders are also encouraged to pursue their administrative and supervisory license. They are embraced as leaders and delegated different roles such as data specialist or grade leader to further develop their skills.
- School staff maintains open, ongoing communication with families and students to promote engagement that improve student outcomes over time. (2.4)
 - o The school offers different opportunities for families to learn about students' progress through workshops, parent meetings, assemblies and access to the school's website. Parents shared that the school has held meetings to inform them about the new "very difficult and hard" standards, referring to the Common Core Learning Standards. Parents of students with disabilities shared that the process for renewal of services or receiving services has always been a priority for the school and is handled in a supportive way. Parents stated the school has shared with them different strategies to help their children succeed through family math or literacy nights and through conversations with the teachers. Teachers also post class news and homework on the website. Parents also receive progress reports for their children allowing for earlier detection of needs. Parent teacher conferences are well attended and parents not in attendance are contacted for alternate meeting times.
 - o Parents are an integral part of the school's decision making process. School leaders engage parents in the creation of school goals. Parents stated they feel the school involves them in decision making and that they are heard when they have a concern. For example, after surveying parents they realized they had to provide English as a second language parents with translators at school meetings. The school leaders not only provide translators at meeting but also make sure most documents sent home are translated. As a result there has been an increase in ESL parental attendance at the Parent Teacher meetings.
- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions to structure student and teacher assignments that support the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - o School leaders have modified the master schedule to afford teacher teams time to meet at least twice weekly. Teachers receive instructional support from the assistant principals, coaches and consultants to work collaboratively to create curricular units of study that are Common Core Learning Standards aligned and meet key standards outlined by the school. The creation of the units has led to more rigorous and organized writing by the students.
 - o The school administration continues the use of outside math and science consultants to enhance teacher's pedagogy in these areas. The science consultant works collaboratively with 7th and 8th grade teachers and students to support units by infusing hands on science experiments. This practice has lead to an increase in levels 3 and 4 on the 8th grade state science exam. Math teachers receive guidance from the AUSSIE math consultant in the creation of assessments to support Impact Mathematics and Everyday Math. These

sessions have increased the validity of assessments as a tool for improved classroom instruction.

- School leaders and staff have created structures to ensure the constant evaluation of data so that there is a cohesive school wide practice of analysis and refinement. (5.2)
 - o School leaders and staff developers analyze data to find patterns in school's needs and strengths by grade and subject. Through the use of ARIS reports, an online grading system, benchmarks and performance tasks from refined units of study they are able to go deeper in the analysis by looking at the individual students and student subgroups. As a result, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) are provided to specific groups of students based on those needs. The data specialist provides teachers with different venues to collect data, thus making a visible tool to gauge trends in student performance. These data trails are collected and analyzed by the school leaders. This has led the school to look at student performance data alongside behavior and attendance data. This detailed, frequent way of looking at data has allowed for leaders to make informed decisions about matching students to teachers based on needs and informed the creation of tasks that are more aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards.

What the school needs to improve

- Unify teacher practice across classrooms so that teachers consistently use effective teaching strategies and resources to engage all learners. (1.2)
 - o Across the school, there is strong implementation of Common Core Learning Standards through curricular units of study. The work in several classrooms was rigorous and cognitively demanding. For example, in a few classrooms teachers were observed using the Fountas and Pinnel guided reading program. Students were reading books on their independent level while teachers circulated through the room conferring with individual students focused on targeted skills. We also saw a few classrooms where lessons were differentiated by content and level. However, there was inconsistent evidence of differentiated student tasks within the units to allow all learners to have multiple entry points into the curricula across the school. In several classrooms students' independent work was the same for all and did not call for student to student discussion leading to an uneven level of student participation and thinking. In several classrooms there wasn't enough evidence to show sufficient scaffolds and supports to engage English language learners and students with disabilities in the lesson limiting their ability to produce meaningful work products.
- Deepen the continued development and refinement of curricular units to ensure that all learners are cognitively engaged and progress academically. (1.1)
 - o School leaders understand the need to create and revise curricular units for English language arts. They are also involved in the alignment of Everyday Math content with the Common Core Learning Standards and the city's Instructional Expectations. This has become the primary focus of teacher team meetings. Their conversations around these units have focused around what rigor sounds and looks like. Although many of the units created demonstrate academically challenging work, there is inconsistent evidence across classrooms that all learners are able to articulate their thinking and can remain cognitively engaged.

Schools leaders shared they will be reviewing and revising the units of study to ensure the scaffolds and supports for all learners are available at all times.

- Strengthen the feedback to teachers to articulate clearer expectations around areas of growth for teacher practice that will increase the levels of teacher effectiveness. (4.1)
 - o School leaders conduct formal and informal visits to classrooms. Feedback is mostly written. Suggestions are offered according to teacher's needs. However, feedback does not always give specific next steps for teachers deemed effective, hindering the movement to higher levels of teacher pedagogy.
 - o School leaders have shared the Danielson framework with all teachers through professional development. The school administration conducts frequent visits to classrooms that are focused on a pre-selected domain. Feedback is discussed with teachers as a reflective tool. However, there isn't currently a system in place to ensure that these suggestions are revisited and that there's a continued action plan around the needs and strengths of teachers.
- Ensure the correlation between the analysis of student data and the identification of strategies to adjust instructional practices for all learners. (2.2)
 - o Teachers analyze student work in teacher teams and Professional Learning Teams (PLTs). However, there isn't sufficient evidence to show that this analysis has led to improved identification of the needs of student subgroups, thus limiting the ability to adjust instructional strategies across classrooms to meet the school goal of raising the achievement of English language learners, students with disabilities and high achievers.
 - o Teacher teams and individual teachers continue to use rubrics to assess student work. As curricular units are created, teachers develop rubrics directly related to the units. However, the rubrics created do not always capture the content or specific areas particular to the units or task. The feedback given to students does not always align with the rigor of the task or the expectations of the rubric, thus minimizing opportunities for student self assessment and revision.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 083 Donald Hertz	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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