

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 170

Early Childhood school X170

**1598 TOWNSEND AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10452**

Principal: NANCY RAMOS

Dates of review: January 25, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ina Solomon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 170 is an Early Childhood school with 234 students from kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 24% Black, 72% Hispanic, 0% White, 2% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 19% 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 92.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school developed and utilizes a comprehensive data tracking system to inform and guide teacher practice, including goal setting, which supports on-going curricular decisions. (2.3)
 - An extensive Google Docs data collection and organization system tracks each student's performance in math, reading and writing both within their current grade and as they move from grade to grade. The system groups students according to performance level, providing faculty with a detailed picture of student achievement. An analysis of the data on this system revealed that English language learners and students with disabilities consistently perform below the general education students. To fill this gap in performance, the school implemented an afterschool Response to Intervention (RTI) program to support these subgroups in literacy and math. Students participate in six week cycles of intervention that include a pre-test to indentify a specific area of focus, a goal setting process and a post-test to determine if learning goals were met. Sixty-five students enrolled in the RTI program; approximately 10% of the students met their learning goals after completion of the first cycle. The ongoing use of effective data tracking informs key curricular and instructional decisions for other students as well. For example, the data showed that second grade students were consistently performing below grade level expectations on end of unit math tests in base ten operations. In response, the school developed lessons and activities to reinforce the concept of base ten in all math units across grade levels.
- School leaders and staff are a group of dedicated professionals that set and communicate high expectations for all and provide on-going support and guidance that ensures professionalism and student achievement. (3.4)
 - Learning goals for the students reflect above grade level benchmarks. For example, typical Fountas and Pinnell Running Record System expectations state that by the end of kindergarten students will read at level C and by the end of first grade student will read at level I. In contrast, the school communicates the expectation that by the end of kindergarten students will read at level E and by the end of first grade students will read at a level K. Through small group and differentiated instruction students are provided with the necessary supports to achieve those goals. The faculty partner with parents in assuring that students meet the high expectations by providing weekly profile sheets that include learning goals and progress towards those goals. The school's "open-door policy" that allows parents to meet with either the principal or their child's teacher without an appointment gives parents and school faculty an opportunity to continue a dialogue about student progress. The schools' website also provides a vehicle for parents and teachers to discuss student progress, further supporting the school-wide culture that communicates high expectations and provides the supports necessary to achieve them.
- Teacher teams have systems in place to examine student work and data, leading to revised curriculum and tasks that increase student outcomes (4.2)
 - All teachers participate in weekly grade level team meetings to analyze student work, develop and discuss Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks, share professional learning and/or refine curriculum and instructional strategies. The math coach, literacy coach and principal participate in each teacher team

- meeting to provide additional guidance and support. Three times a year teachers analyze student work in reading, writing and math to determine student progress towards baseline, midline and endline goals. The results of the analysis are recorded and used to inform curricular next steps and refine goals for each student. Last year's inquiry team focused on developing students' ability to respond to higher order thinking questions. This year teacher teams extended that work by developing a narrative text literacy unit aligned to the CCLS.
- Embedded within the teacher team structure is a shared facilitation model that supports leadership development by providing an opportunity for each teacher to showcase best practices and share learning. Because no one teacher leads the process of inquiry the voice of each teacher is equally valued and considered when making school wide decisions.
 - The faculty utilizes a data-driven approach to develop and analyze professional development opportunities that align with the school goals and lead to improved teacher practice. (4.3)
 - The principal devised an individualized professional development program, aligned to each teacher's professional interests as well as the school's instructional goal to raise the achievement level of students with disabilities, English language learners and newcomers. Each teacher completed a professional goal/action-plan survey that included measurable goals and necessary resources to meet those goals. Teachers, in consultation with the principal, chose outside professional development sessions to attend as well as in-house supports such as interclass visitations, trainings with the Special Education Teacher Support Services staff, English as a second language teachers and coaches. Staff reported that sessions with Universal Design for Learning and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol have resulted in more explicit teaching leading to improved student outcomes. The most recent New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test data show that 65% of the students assessed met the Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives. In addition, the Common Core team that attended Learning Centered Initiative trainings has developed math and literacy units aligned to the CCLS, as well as the Common Core Aligned Tasks. The literacy Common Core Aligned Tasks will be implemented in January and the math Common Core Aligned Tasks will be implemented in February. The teachers are responsible for sharing all information from outside trainings with the rest of the staff, thus establishing a system for school wide accountability.
 - Extensive partnerships with outside agencies contribute to a safe, inclusive culture that values and recognizes the arts as a vehicle to promote social-emotional well being and academic growth. (4.4)
 - Every Tuesday for one period during the day students participate in the School Enrichment Model (SEM) program. Faculty collaborates to instruct grade 1 and 2 students in activities like yoga, bead making and fencing. The SEM program motivates learning by allowing student choice in selecting an activity that meets their area of interest. In addition to the SEM program, the school has had a 15 year partnership with Marquis Studio (to expose students to percussion, visual arts and the art of circus performing), the New York Twirling Organization (to teach baton twirling -- the school has ranked first place for three consecutive years in the citywide baton twirling competition) and the Ballet Extended Time Program. The school has a theater and dance program that celebrates student accomplishments at the end of each school year through stage production.

- Parents and community members attend performances that in the past have included “The Nutcracker,” “Annie” and “The Wiz.” Parents report that the rich arts program has bolstered their children's interest and commitment to school. One parent said, “both of my kids were very shy [but] the arts and drama program has given them a more positive attitude toward school.” While another said, “I had no idea that my child could sing and dance until she came to this school. Now she wants to do well in everything.”
- The entire school participates in a “Bucket Filling” activity designed to promote tolerance and respect for all. Children are encouraged to nominate classmates that exhibit kind behavior during the course of the week. Nominated students receive an award that celebrates their positive behavior. The results of this school-wide focus on respect for all have impacted student work. For example, one second grade student, in dance class, choreographed, and wrote about, a routine called, “A [Ferocious] Bully and Scared Kid” to illustrate the negative effects of bullying students.
 - School leaders have systems to evaluate and adjust data collection and grading systems that offer teachers, students and families actionable information that leads to improved learning. (5.2)
 - Through weekly teacher team meetings, the school leadership and faculty review systems for collecting, analyzing and reporting data and make adjustments to provide a more precise picture of student performance. The Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System requires that students be assessed during the fall and spring term. The school administers the assessment one additional time during the school year. The results of this assessment are analyzed by teacher teams, in conjunction with other formative data, to track progress and set interim goals for students. Through in class student-teacher conferences, students are made aware of these goals on a regular basis. Weekly progress reports communicate student performance data to parents. In addition to these weekly progress reports, the school website has been updated to include teacher web pages where parents can access homework and communicate with their child’s teacher about performance and progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to analyze student work to systematically provide scaffolds in the curricula and academic tasks so that all students can be cognitively engaged and demonstrate their thinking. (1.1)
 - The school has effectively worked to develop Common Core Aligned Tasks as well as a plan for implementing those tasks and refine existing curricula to meet the CCLS, including supports for English language Learners and students with disabilities. However, rigorous tasks and higher order thinking skills that incorporate appropriate scaffolds for English language learners and students with disabilities are not embedded within the curriculum This leads to missed opportunities to cognitively engage all students in academic tasks, limiting the school’s capacity to close the achievement gap.
- Further develop teacher pedagogy to include effective direct instruction and questioning techniques that result in multiple entry points for all students to be engaged in learning and discussions. (1.2)

- Teachers provide opportunities for students to work in small, differentiated learning groups, participate in project-based activities and receive targeted intervention services. However, direct instruction does not strategically incorporate questioning techniques or model strategies that provide entry points for all learners, including struggling students and high achievers. As a result, there are limited opportunities throughout the day for all students to engage in rich quality conversations that would raise their level of thinking and participation and contribute to an overall higher standard of learning.
- Incorporate ongoing checks for understanding, including self-assessment opportunities, so that teachers may monitor student progress towards learning goals and adjust instructional strategies. (2.2)
 - Staff members consistently analyze student work using rubrics, teacher-made assessments and formative assessment data to determine strengths and areas for improvement of all students. This information is used to plan curricula and academic tasks that support student learning during classroom instruction. However, across classrooms, rubrics, teacher assessment practices, checklists and other tools that are used to support student self-assessment and assessment in general do not provide a clear picture of student accomplishments, thus limiting teachers' ability to extract actionable information about the effectiveness of curricular and instructional decisions. In addition, teachers do not consistently include checks for understanding within the direct teaching portion of a lesson. This minimizes a teacher's ability to correct course and provide a meaningful learning experience for all students.
- Sharpen the system of providing teacher feedback to consistently align with professional goals and improve the delivery of instruction. (4.1)
 - The Danielson framework was introduced in the beginning of the school year and serves as the criteria for effective teacher practice. Teacher goals were developed using the framework. The principal is well aware of all teachers' professional goals and frequently visits all classrooms to provide feedback on classroom environment, instructional techniques and academic tasks. Although feedback encapsulates strengths and areas for improvement, the system does not currently provide teacher feedback that is aligned with professional goals. As a result, the staff does not make specific instructional adjustments to improve their practice and align it with the school-wide goals, thus an opportunity to directly impact student achievement is missed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 170	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

P.S. 170 X170: January 25, 2012