

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 176

K-12 X176

850 BAYCHESTER AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10475

Principal: Rima Ritholtz

Dates of review: October 18-20, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sheryl L. Watkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. X176 is a K-12 all grades school with 722 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black, 45% Hispanic, 3% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 86% of the students enrolled and girls account for 14%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The highly supportive and mutually respectful learning environment created by the principal ensures social-emotional and personal growth for students. (1.4)
 - o Synergistic relationships between staff, students and families are the foundation upon which the school lives and breathes. Given the formidable need of the student population, the school has effectively collaborated with key members of the community to ensure the social-emotional and behavioral success for all students. Data related to social-emotional growth of students has led to the very high and continued increase the per cent of students moving to lesser restrictive environments, specifically, 11% of the school's student population for the 2010-2011 school year. This school compassionately supports students, families, and teachers in meeting the needs of the whole child.
- The administration and staff work very closely with and involve parents in decision-making, resulting in a shared commitment to higher levels of student outcomes. (2.4)
 - o Communication books serve as the basis for ongoing reciprocal dialogue between the school and home. Parents are provided with immediate information regarding their child's challenges and progress. In addition, parent newsletters, phone calls, flyers, workshops, and parent support groups ensure that there is a shared understanding of and unified commitment to student growth, which has resulted in parents reporting they are well aware of how to support their children at home, as well as the progress they are making in school.
 - o A collaborative process for developing Individual Education Plans for all students, as well as post secondary options for older students, involves parents in the process of understanding their child's functional abilities and areas of need so that goals for the document are collaboratively developed. In addition, progress report conferences, conducted two to three times yearly, or more, at the parents' request, where tools to assist their children at home is one of a multitude of vital components that serve to promote higher levels of student outcomes. Parents report the school is always willing to modify and adjust short and long-term goals to best promote progress for their child.
- Highly effective student support services provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow as learners and functional members of society. (4.4)
 - Extensive partnerships with experts in the field of Autism, neighborhood businesses, and co-located school programs strategically assist the school to support students in decreasing the challenges of the behaviors related to their spectrum disorder. For example, opportunities to engage in work study, develop supportive relationships with their non-disabled peers, and extend their learning in exploring the Arts, as they develop the skills needed to prepare for their future. Students in the work study programs, where possible, proudly describe the work they are doing, and their ambitions for their future vocational aspirations.
 - Students champion the "Best Buddies" program as the best thing about the school, in that it enables them to emulate citizenship and build deeper and more communicative connections to the world. In addition, the school is the recipient of multiple Grants that extend student learning in areas related to the Arts. Performances in the school chorus and Latin band are but two examples of how

these extensions to learning strongly support the building of greater skills related to social interactions and communication, resulting in students' exploration and celebration of their multiple gifts and talents.

- The school's commonly practiced philosophy around student learning is reflected in differentiated teacher practices that lead to behavioral progress for all students. (1.2)
 - The school's focus on enhancing communication and self-advocacy is rooted in its' philosophy of sustaining a nurturing environment, maximizing the Arts, and moving students from isolated learning experiences to larger group interactions, as appropriate. The use of programs, such as EASE (Everyday Arts for Special Education), ABA and TEACCH, using a multi-sensory approach towards learning, provide students who exhibit more challenging behaviors, specifically the early childhood and elementary students, with structures to utilize the power of the Arts to develop targeted functional and social skills. Teachers also accomplish this by leveraging intentional visual cueing systems, and augmentative communication, where needed, to assure that students can engage with their learning and are provided with opportunities to practice these skills so that they are meeting the goals set for them in this area.
- Carefully planned organizational decisions ensure that the schools programmatic focus is met, resulting in increased student behavioral outcomes. (1.3)
 - The creative use of resources has enabled the school to support the needs of students and teachers. The purchasing of updated technology, such as I Pads, has expanded the communication abilities of non-verbal students. The creation and expansion of the number of Curriculum Support Teachers, currently 11, ensures that teachers, paraprofessionals and other staff are supported in meeting the school goals, strengthening the implementation of programs to support skill building, and assuring that most students meet their individual IEP goals. Regularly scheduled meetings, twice a week, ensures ongoing and targeted supports. As a result, teachers, especially those new to the school, report that they appreciate the "push" to better their craft, and are better able to promote higher levels of achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the use and analysis of assessment data by teams of teachers so that instructional practices can be collaboratively developed and vetted to address the varied levels of student performance. (2.2)
 - o Individual and groups of teachers use baseline data, such as Brigance, and ABLLS, programmatic data, and behavioral data, to determine the academic levels and functional needs of students. This data is not systematically used to identify level of entry into academic endeavors or instructional programs. This limits individual and teams of teachers' ability to strategically plan and maximize student learning opportunities based on functional and academic ability, and readiness for more traditional academic instruction and challenge, potentially limiting higher levels of academic improvement.
- Develop a common focus around observations and feedback to teachers so that articulated next steps improve teacher practice and serve as data to determine targeted teacher supports. (4.1)

- Administrative leaders frequently visit classrooms. The feedback form provided to teachers identifies positive noticings, next steps, and teacher identified goals. However, there is not yet a common focus to guide these observations or a unified understanding of the impact of this feedback on teacher and student learning. This prevents school leaders from making decisions related to professional learning opportunities for staff that strategically and coherently work towards meeting school goals. While the school is in the initial stages of aligning this practice to a research based framework to guide the identification of these actionable next steps, there is limited ability, at this time, to make performance decisions for teachers.
- Deepen the work of collaborative teams so that examining student work is supplemented by the sharing of instructional strategies and teacher practices in order to ensure higher levels of student progress. (4.2)
 - o Collaborative team meetings are committed to the support of current instructional programs, and the review of student work products, especially around the school's focus on writing. There is some discussion related to the task assigned, but the analysis of teacher practice, strategies for instruction, the evaluation process applied to the student work, or skills related to the work is not yet an embedded practice. As a result, teachers are not able to share potential improvements to instruction, tasks or strategies across grades, teams or student ratios that might lead to higher levels of teacher practice and higher levels of student achievement.
- Establish structures and processes that utilize data to assess the effectiveness of professional collaborations and teacher development. (5.4)
 - o There is clear evidence of teacher team collaborations and individual professional support occurring throughout the multiple sites, programs and levels of the school. Frequent participation in both district driven and school-based learning is shared within and across programs and sites. However, there are not yet systems in place to determine the efficacy of the instructional programs being used, in that the school does not yet assess the impact of this learning on practices in classrooms, or on student progress. This limits administrators from determining the effectiveness of instructional programs or teacher impact on student learning.
- Extend the individual goal setting practices to groups of students in order to promote more differentiated instruction and change in teacher practice so that instruction more deeply challenges and engages all learners. (3.2)
 - o Teachers set data-driven goals for all students during the IEP process, and instruction is focused on individual students meeting them. However, differentiated learning goals are not set for groups of students within classes or service categories. This prevents most teachers from adapting instruction to meet the needs of groups of students, or with the ability to extend and accelerate learning experiences for more able groups of students, based on knowledge of learning targets.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. X176	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