

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 196  
Elementary School 196

1250 WARD AVENUE  
BRONX  
NY 10472

Principal: LIZZETTE RIVERA

Dates of review: May 8 - 9, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 196 is an Elementary school with 783 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 21% Black, 71% Hispanic, 3% Asian students, and 3% other students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's warm and caring environment is inclusive of all members, supports student achievement, and encourages professional growth for staff. (1.4)
  - o Throughout the building, students, faculty, and support staff, are genuinely friendly in their interactions, evidenced by the warm and jovial greetings of the office staff to the frequent exchanges of students and adults as they acknowledge each other in the hallways. Students and parents alike describe the school as "home" and the staff as "family". Teachers note how fortunate they are to work in a professional and collaborative environment where they are supported by the administrators and colleagues in doing their daily work. Guidance support staff and assistant principals are readily available to students and families in need of social/emotional supports and assist to ensure that students can succeed in school. A family member expressed her gratitude for the thoughtful support she received upon relocating from a southern state, thus providing her son with a successful transition. Students say they know that teachers and school leaders want them to succeed, go to college, and be productive citizens, and that is why "they push us to do our best" but also "make learning fun." As a result, students enjoy coming to school as evidenced by the daily average attendance of 93% or higher. They work towards their identified goals and demonstrate progress in their work products.
- The school's guidance support staff, established arts partnerships, and workshops for families, provide real world learning experiences for students and parents. (4.4)
  - o Guidance staff work closely with teachers to provide professional development around enhancing the social/emotional development of students, thus enabling teachers to facilitate learning for all learners and to consistently address challenging behaviors. Families are also provided workshops, organized by the parent coordinator, on supporting their children's social emotional needs and understanding how non-academic opportunities promote overall student achievement. Students are engaged in a variety of activities throughout the school day, after school, and on Saturdays, through the school's extensive partnerships with arts organizations, including Studio in a School (visual arts), Dancing Classrooms (Ballroom), LEAP (Learning Through an Expanded Arts Program), Ballet Tech, and Inside Broadway. Additionally, the school celebrates student achievement and engages families in monthly events such as Family Math Night, Authors and Artists' Celebrations, Math Bowls, Spelling Bees, and Student of the Month and Year ceremonies. These intentional supports are thoughtfully provided and have resulted in improved personal and academic behaviors as evidenced by increased student attendance, increased participation in non-academic activities, and reduced incidents in classrooms.
- The school's well-planned curriculum is aligned to key standards and includes tasks that engage all learners in higher order thinking tasks that prepare them for post secondary demands. (1.1)
  - o The school's goals, stated in the Comprehensive Educational Plan, are to raise student achievement in math and English language Arts (ELA) by engaging students in learning experiences that are aligned to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The faculty's extensive summer and

ongoing work with a literacy consultant, resulted in the production of curriculum maps designed to include explicit scaffolds and differentiation for English language learners (ELL's) and students with disabilities, (SWD's). Specifically, a focus embedded in instructional plans to Tier I, II, and III vocabulary words provides access for diverse learners to academic language and content vocabulary. Across grades, math and ELA curriculum take into account the analysis of student work products from the previous year, identified learning gaps based on the new standards, and incorporate Depth of Knowledge higher order thinking tasks. Based on data analysis of student performance, key standards in math include number sense and algebraic thinking, and using relevant and accurate details in ELA. As a result, all students engage in learning activities that consistently develop postsecondary readiness.

- Across grades and content areas, teachers make effective use of strategies that support diverse learners in accessing content and demonstrating their thinking. (1.2)
  - o "Every student has an entry point to success" is the motto, which is embraced and articulated by members of the school community as they also claim ownership to becoming researchers of every student to ensure that they teach each child in the way they learn. Teachers who hold themselves accountable for unlocking their students' learning style provide a variety of ways for them to access content and demonstrate their learning. The response to student learning styles and needs is evident from grades pre-kindergarten to grade 5, as teachers use various modes of differentiation from varied texts, scaffolded vocabulary support, graphic organizers, and peer assessments. Across classrooms, standards based learning targets are made clear to all students, as evidenced on charts and discussions at beginning of lessons. There is evidence of teachers' frequent use of higher order questions and facilitation of discussion, which requires students not just to answer questions but also to provide a rationale. In math, a teacher asks students to explain why they selected a particular strategy for calculating perimeter of an irregular shape. Small group instruction and conferences are also implemented across subjects and grades so that teachers address individual student needs within their lessons. As a result, there is a coherent approach to ensuring that all students have access to the rigor in the curriculum. The provision of necessary supports and extensions enable students to meet learning targets set in each content area and on each grade.
- Strategic decisions around budget, personnel assignments, and the use of teacher and student time are promoting the attainment of school wide goals for student achievement. (1.3)
  - o The principal and her administrative team strategically use the budget to support priorities such as maintaining small class sizes and adding educational assistants to classes with SWD's for further academic support. To address the goal of improving teacher capacity to meet individual needs of students with disabilities, an additional assistant principal with extensive experience in special education was hired to oversee and provide professional development to staff. The schedule for students and teachers reflects frequent opportunities for teachers to meet one to two times per week with grade level colleagues, and a vertical team facilitates conversations to ensure coherence across grades. Student schedules are flexible so that teachers and leaders mainstream students with disabilities for content area instruction with general education peers. This opportunity is also available for any student to receive instruction in the most appropriate setting based on needs or areas of mastery. These structures and resources, aligned to school goals, result in a school wide commitment to ensuring that all students are supported in achieving their goals as seen in student work products.

- School leaders use data from formal and informal observations to align meaningful feedback to teachers about pedagogy and elevate instructional practice school wide. (4.1)
  - o Administrators provide meaningful feedback to teachers based on the clearly defined expectations of a research-based framework. They articulate clear next steps in well-written observation reports that focus on elevating pedagogical practices across the school. Teachers use the feedback to gauge their own progress by assessing their work against the competencies in the research based Danielson framework. A school wide focus on Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques, Engaging Students in Learning, and Using Assessment in Instruction, allows administrators to provide feedback capturing strengths, differentiated needs, and is aligned to professional goals mutually agreed upon at the beginning of the year. Teachers are also able to participate in professional development and intervisitation to colleagues' classrooms to observe the areas of focus and then implement suggested next steps in their own classrooms. This process, supported by the Talent Management Pilot project initiatives, has resulted in increased reflective practices and improved instruction as evidenced by higher order questioning, strategic grouping of students for instruction, and increased student engagement across classrooms.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Refine the process of data analysis and the use of data tools by teachers so that performance trends more consistently inform curricular and instructional adjustments. (2.3)
  - o Some teacher teams use the data that is provided to them by the data specialist in their discussions and to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and planning for individual students. Each grade also has a representative on a vertical planning team where tools for assessing student progress, including school level excel spreadsheets, item analyses and ARIS, trends across grades and subject areas, are beginning to inform a wider school level conversation about necessary adjustments. However, the practice is not yet embedded or consistent across teams hindering the ability to fully capture school wide data about student performance trends and mastery.
- Enhance the teacher team process so that teachers use summative and formative data to offer a clear portrait of student mastery of standards and assess student understanding in order make necessary instructional adjustments. (2.2)
  - o Various data sources, including both formative and summative data, related to student performance and progress is available, as evidenced by the data specialist's resource binder of information shared at team meetings and with individual teachers. During team meetings, teachers assess student work and are able to refer to the provided data to monitor how students are working towards particular goals. However, teams do not clearly articulate the trends in student performance for subgroups, by grade, or subject areas, nor how the trends connect to overarching school wide goals. Thus, their ability to make timely and effective decisions about adjustments to instruction is hampered.
  - o Although most teachers utilize a variety of methods to check for student comprehension and concept development, including turn and talk, group share-out, and individualized questioning during conferences, these practices are not fully embedded in every content area. Consequently, teachers' ability to provide

clarity in a timely manner within lessons or to make needed instructional adjustments is minimized.

- Ensure that the system for measuring student progress towards school wide goals and the studying of this information includes increasing teacher accountability for student progress and learning. (5.3)
  - o School leaders meet frequently throughout the year and during summer months to determine the status of student progress and performance, how these relate to the goals and benchmarks set for the school year, and how this information is captured in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan and other action plan documents. Teachers also are provided with their class and individual student's progress in specific skill areas within their grade and content areas. The data specialist is able to articulate these conversations well both for school leaders and teachers. However, the process of analyzing the data and identifying the next steps does not fully include classroom teachers, limiting how teachers study or value this information as part of their collective accountability for the improvement of student achievement.
- Develop further the engagement of families in school decision making so that they are able to more aptly support their children in meeting set learning goals. (2.4)
  - o Parents state that they receive information periodically both formally through progress reports and informally through ongoing and frequent conversations with teachers about the work that their children are doing, reading levels, mastery of skills, and the end-of-year goals that have been set. They state that the school is open to having conversations about academic and non-academic issues affecting them, and feel encouraged to support their children in attendance, behavior, and participation in activities. However, although parents feel engaged in the school with regard to various initiatives, such as the recent addition of the pre-kindergarten to grade 1 classes and the support offered early childhood students, the sharing of the CCLS expectations and the influence on assessment of progress and performance has been restricted. Thus, there are limitations in how parents are provided with suitable information relative to further supporting their children in accelerating learning focused on set expectations.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 196	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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	
<b>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.</b>				
<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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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