

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Dr. Evelina Lopez-Antonetty Children's Literacy Center

Elementary School 277

519 St. Ann's Avenue

Bronx

NY 10455

Principal: Cheryl Tyler

Dates of review: February 2-3, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Eileen Waters

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 277 is an elementary school with 522 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 71% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian students, and 4% other students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created a learning community that embraces student and adult learning to foster a collaborative approach that strengthens students' social-emotional needs. (1.4)
 - Classes participate in 'Talk Now', a program that allows students to openly discuss personal concerns over a structured 5-day cycle. Students are able to discuss realistic issues on bullying, gang violence, and civil rights, using information gleaned from various sources and by sharing their personal opinion with others. The results of this program extend to further student learning in the inquiry room.
 - The 'Child Study Team' examines data on new students to understand what they bring to the school, and reviews information on students who are identified by teachers for specific concerns. Each child discussed by the team receives service that is followed by the team overtime to ensure student's needs are continuously addressed.
- The school supports students' academic and personal growth through partnerships that offer real-world experiences in preparation for higher education. (4.4)
 - The 5th grade team and parent coordinator communicates with families and students regarding the middle school transitional process, including relevant information around middle school fairs and tours available, thus helping them in the selection process. Additionally, middle school staff visit the school to speak with students and families. Parents feel the support and workshops provided around the middle school selection process helps them to better understand the necessary procedures.
 - The school's partnering with organizations provides students with after school programs offering academic support, trips to local museums, and opportunities to meet performing artists, and exposes students to non-typical activities such as ballroom dancing, swimming, and tennis lessons. Students interact with various adults during Career Day to learn about different careers and educational expectations to achieve said vocations. Through these partnerships, students are exposed to learning activities that support their future educational experiences.
- Some teachers incorporate instructional strategies that provide opportunities for students to engage in learning that fosters independent thinking. (1.2)
 - Teaching practices that use leveled reading texts and graphic organizers offer opportunities to address broad needs of students. More intentional practices have students completing a common skill of finding least common denominators while varying the task of either adding or comparing fractions. Small group and individual instruction provide student support along with task scaffolds for peer collaboration. Some teachers confer with students; others check-in on student retention of reading skills; others provide simple directions. A portion of pedagogical practices results in some student ownership of learning.

- Student thinking is most prominent in the inquiry room where students work in groups to develop strategies to guide them in successful methods to respond to high-order questions. In some classrooms, questioning practices are often teacher directed and require low level thinking by students around recall with some opportunities for students to apply skills and concepts. Some teachers utilize instructional practices that scaffold the various writing steps so that a limited number of students express their thoughts coherently in essays.
- Teachers' assessment practices support instructional decisions that target literacy needs and incorporate reflective practices to increase students' awareness of learning. (2.2)
 - Teachers are using rubrics linked with instructional programs to assess students' reading and writing abilities. From the informational text performance pre-assessment, teachers identified that grade 3 through grade 5 students' grapple with main idea, supporting details, and summarizing in the literacy work. The reading assessment teacher team identified vocabulary and language as an area with which students struggle. First grade teachers detected through spelling and concepts of print assessments that students were not meeting benchmarks, which resulted in refinements to the literacy program to incorporate more guided reading, word work, interactive writing, and phonics.
 - Some teachers incorporate quick checks for understanding, by using thumbs up, thumbs down, while other staff members pop-in on turn and talk discussions between peers, thus gathering information relative to student participation and understanding. Students share that they self-assess their work in a small group with their teacher, or for their writing by evaluating their work against a rubric. In an integrated co-teaching (ICT) class, the teachers have groups of students complete a math word problem before introducing a rubric, which students use to self-assess their work. Students refer back to the rubric for guidance when computing additional word problem.
- Some teacher teams collaborate to support the adoption of new programs and initiatives to target student deficits, resulting in the advancement of student learning and teacher development. (4.2)
 - An upper-grade teacher team is transitioning into using a whole book reading assessment in order to accurately measure students' strengths and needs in reading, addressing the large discrepancy that was noted between students' previous reading levels and State assessment results. Another teacher team, studying non-fiction text, is tracking the progress of five students, per class, with a specific focus on main idea and summarizing. From this work, teachers share instructional practices, such as color coding the main idea and monitoring students' reading volume, supporting an improvement in students' non-fiction reading scores.
 - School administrators' identification of two teachers as instructional leaders has resulted in support for colleagues via planning and modeling of lessons. The sharing of expertise has strengthened pedagogical skills and allowed opportunities for peers to openly ask questions or seek guidance, thus improving instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide relevant feedback on pedagogical practices that explicitly captures teaching strategies and includes areas for growth, thus identifying teacher performance needed to advance student progress. (4.1)
 - The administration's selection of three focus areas from a researched-based framework to move pedagogical practices is being used to norm written feedback practices that includes compliments, praises, and some recognition of instructional techniques. However, suitable next steps targeted to improve teaching practices are not consistently provided. Additionally, feedback that links pedagogy as measured against authentic student work and outcomes is not included in the artifacts shared with teachers. Furthermore, the management system for teacher performance is not evident. As a result, the current feedback practices struggle to provide school leaders with pedagogical data linked to student outcomes, minimizing opportunities to increase instructional routines and effective classroom teaching, and make informed decisions on the management of staff.
- Create effective tracking methods to monitor on-going progress towards attaining school goals that are adjusted as needed to enhance academic progress. (3.3)
 - School-wide goals have been developed for the 4th and 5th grade English language learners and students with disabilities populations that will be measured by 2011-2012 State assessment results. School leaders do not feel there is enough data to currently monitor students' progress. The lack of a tracking structure, and insufficient data collection, hinders the school's ability to monitor students' yearlong progress.
 - A minimal number of teachers track student progress within their teacher teamwork; others capture student-reading levels on a monthly basis. Although various initiatives allow some teachers to track student achievement in selected segments, the practice of consistently tracking student data across curriculum areas for all students and sub-groups of students is not yet an embedded practice. Thus, teachers are restricted in making the necessary adjustments to curriculum and instruction that would sufficiently target students' needs and accelerate their learning.
- Enhance data analysis practices that intentionally capture performance outcomes of all students over time and leads to actionable feedback around pedagogical practices to support school-wide decision-making. (2.1)
 - By reviewing the State assessment results, compared to student running record levels, school leaders identified a disconnect between the summative and formative results, and they gained a partial understanding of the school's academic areas of need. While the administration collects teachers' running record data each month, an understanding of how many students are currently reading above, on, or below reading level, was unknown. Although an assessment binder with formal representations of State and formative assessment results, by grade and specific populations was shared, it is not evident how school leaders scrutinize the various data sources to gain an extensive understanding around the school's strengths

and needs, thus missing out on developing targeted action plans to increase student and teacher performance.

- Modify curricula to purposefully embed academic tasks that promote rigorous thinking and target school trends so that student learning is accelerated. (1.1)
 - Although the school has various curriculum structures that stem from a new math program, reading and writing units, and the New York City Scope and Sequence for science and social studies, it is not clear how the school has molded the curricula to target school-wide data trends. While the principal shares a disconnect in students' reading levels and summative assessment results, it is not clear how the literacy curriculum is being refined to address the specific deficits of the student population in a fashion to ensure all students meet proficiency benchmarks.
 - The range of rigor incorporated across academic tasks inconsistently targets higher order thinking skills, missing out on opportunities for students taking ownership of their learning. Some tasks ask students to read and understand famous quotes, develop an action plan with their small group to determine what type of research they will be conducting, identify reading distractions, and color in a world map. Although some lesson plans exhibit planning to engage student thinking, students engaging in well-matched, refined academic tasks was not evident.
- Strategize organizational decisions so the utilization of resources purposefully aligns with school-wide instructional goals to leverage growth in student achievement. (1.3)
 - School leaders shared that ELL's and students with disabilities struggle with answering constructed responses on State exams. Although, the school utilizes the ITAs (Instructionally Targeted Assessments) throughout the school year, they have not opted to administer the constructed response assessments in order to gain additional evidence around students' performance and progress. School leaders have invested in new materials and programs, however evidence around how these decisions are aligned with and lead towards the attainment of the school's instructional goals is absent.
 - The principal's allocation of smaller class registers across the grades, which decreased the bilingual program to one class, increased the register of a monolingual class to have 65% ELL students. Reorganizing with at least one ICT class for each grade, has altered class registers so that some ICT classes have up 50 or 67% with students with individualized education plans and a grade 4 class includes 42% holdovers. Although school leaders feel smaller classes sizes allow teachers to know their students better, and gives teachers a feeling of value and trust, these decisions are not showing evidence of impacting student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Dr. Evelina Lopez-Antonetty Children's Literacy Center	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