

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S./M.S. 280 Mosholu Parkway  
K-8 school X280

3202 STEUBEN AVENUE  
BRONX  
NY 10467

Principal: JAMES WEEKS

Dates of review: May 23- 24, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Yasmin Lugo Hernandez

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S./M.S. 280 Mosholu Parkway is a K-8 school with 864 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 13% Black, 69% Hispanic, 8% White, 10% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 13% 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 93.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well-developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's curricula are well aligned to selected Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and reflect planned and refined academic tasks. (1.1)
  - o School leaders and faculty began looking at the CCLS last year in an effort to align their current curricula to the new expectations and shifts. Additionally, staff attended professional development provided by the network focused on capturing gaps between the current curricula and the CCLS. As a result, curricular maps are consistently updated based on the findings and current student data. To facilitate the process, the school uses Google Docs to ensure the documents are constantly updated and all stakeholders have immediate access to them. Furthermore, the adaptation of the New York City Department of Education bundles into the curricular units was based on the units of study for each grade, the performance of students on unit and teacher made pre-assessments and teacher team conversations. The purposeful and strategic way of aligning the presentation of the bundles to the students' strengths and needs resulted in an improved overall performance as evidenced by the students' pre- and post- scores on Rigby assessments and teacher pre- and post-unit assessments.
  - o As part of their teacher team meetings and inquiry meetings, teachers look at student work collaboratively to ensure there is an alignment in curriculum, performance tasks and the rubrics used to measure success with the CCLS. For example, the upper grade math teacher team realized that the rubric they were using was not as rigorous as the task they were assessing. This understanding led to a change in the rubric so that there would be more rigor in the expectations as well as in the performance task. This work also leads to refinement in the targeted skills and tasks for all learners. During classroom visits several lessons observed included rigorous performance tasks that cognitively engaged all learners.
- School leaders make strategic organizational decisions that are aligned with the school's instructional goals and impact student performance. (1.3)
  - o In an effort to track and vigilantly watch the growth of student performance, especially the bottom third, the principal has increased the use of technology in the school to support teacher pedagogy and student performance. The school has embraced the use of Google Docs as an online place for all data gathering and tracking. Additionally, each classroom is equipped with a SMART board and during classroom visits it was evident teachers use the equipment effectively to supplement the teaching. The school has also purchased an additional 68 Lenovo laptops for student use to accommodate the demands of the CCLS. Furthermore, the school also hired an AUSSIE technology consultant to assist teachers in tracking and analyzing data using the technology provided. As a result, teachers and coaches stated that the use of an online data organizer helps with the monitoring of student progress. Student work shows a high level of research. Students stated they have access to the internet and use of computers in the classroom as well as in small groups.
  - o In order to provide the specific attention students in the bottom third need, each grade is provided a support teacher in English language arts and math. Consequently, during these subjects there is usually another teacher in the

- classroom to offer individualized instruction to small groups of students. In addition, the support staff joins in inquiry team meetings and grade level teacher team meetings. This practice ensures ongoing communication between the support staff and classroom teachers. Teachers review student data together and plan appropriately for future lessons. They plan for alignment among the curriculum, the CCLS and the students' needs and strengths. This aligned planning is evident in challenging tasks visible in the different classrooms visited.
- Teacher teams and individual teachers effectively use data from various sources to improve instructional practices across the school. (2.2)
    - o The use of rubrics is a school-wide practice. After analyzing student work in collaborative teams, teachers realized the rubrics being used did not meet the rigor the task contained. Consequently, they began reviewing and revising the rubrics they used. The adapted rubrics were from sources that provided rigorous tasks such as the New York City Department of Education bundles and Exemplars resources. Teachers also created their own rubrics based on the unit of study, chosen CCLS, performance task and student needs. As a result of this practice, feedback to students is actionable and allows for a clearer understanding of the targeted skill and standard. The continuous use of rigorous performance tasks and rubrics has allowed teachers to become consistent and aligned as a team in providing feedback and scores across the grade.
    - o Teacher teams and individual teachers have data binders that are used strategically to plan for individual students and small groups. Individual teachers use summative data as well as item analysis from Acuity, end of unit assessments and running records from Rigby to gauge a better understanding of the needs of all students. Teacher teams and support teachers collaboratively look at student work together using the Consultancy Protocol. As teachers continue to measure the progress of students they gather and aggregate the data onto Google Docs. This systemic way of gathering and analyzing data assists teachers in strategically adjusting instruction. For example, after analyzing student writing pieces, teachers found that students were not approaching the task with enough facts and evidence. After much discussion around the reasons why, they concurred that the teaching prior to the task had not given students enough understanding and mastery of the skill. Consequently, students were not able to complete the task. Teachers amended their lessons and re-taught the concepts, leading most students to be successful after the re-teaching.
  - School leaders use a strategic and consistent system for observing and analyzing teacher pedagogy that has resulted in improved teacher practice. (4.1)
    - o The practice of providing strategic actionable feedback to teachers has been at the core of the school leaders' agenda. The school uses the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching. School leaders schedule meetings with individual teachers to review teachers' self-evaluations based on the rubric and student data. The principal, assistant principals and teacher support staff conduct learning walks to gauge additional information about the teachers pedagogy. The trends found during learning walks are shared with the school community and become the focus of the follow up visits. Peer teachers visit each other's classrooms for the purpose of learning and giving each other feedback. Teachers are then given rapid feedback based on the observations and follow up support is provided. New teachers receive additional support through targeted professional development, coach in-class support and a new teacher mentor. One new teacher stated she felt she had been held by the hand her first year and

that she feels comfortable approaching any of the school leaders to ask for assistance.

- Across the school teacher collaborations are inquiry based and guided by a strategic analysis of various data that leads to improved student learning. (4.2)
  - All teachers are involved in collaborative teacher teams with a focus on analyzing student work and ongoing data. Several teacher teams meetings take place during the week. Teams are composed of support teachers, classroom teachers or both. They use the Tuning Protocol to review and analyze student work. After analyzing the work or data teachers use the school-wide grid to organize the students according to needs and strengths, specifically noting the skills that were mastered or not. Trends are analyzed by entire grade, individual classrooms, student subgroups and individual students. Identified grade-wide needs are embedded within the next unit of study. Teacher teams also review student work, teacher lesson plans and assessments to capture gaps between current work and the expectations of the CCLS. Understanding the needs of the students and the curriculum has allowed them to make strategic decisions about when to infuse the New York City Department of Education CCLS aligned bundles. The analysis of the work prior to the bundles has led teachers to change their instruction so that it is more aligned with the CCLS. For example, in the lower grades, after an analysis of the bundle, teachers realized that they needed to pre-teach sentence starters that would allow the students to go deeper with their answers using Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge. This thorough analysis and actionable next steps has improved student performance as evidenced by midyear and end year Rigby and end of unit assessments, as well as increased performance from pre- to post-unit assessments.
- School leaders have systems in place to regularly aggregate, evaluate and organize data so that there's maximized student learning. (5.2)
  - School leaders, coaches and support teachers meet weekly to review data used in classrooms throughout the school. They review English language arts predictors, end of unit writing tasks with respective rubrics. The different data is organized in Google Docs so that all constituents have access to it for review prior to meetings. After the executive team reviews the data they identify the trends in student needs and strengths. These trends are shared with the support staff. The support staff and teacher teams use the school wide data analysis in conjunction with grade level and classroom level data to plan further the alignment of the units in math and English language arts to the CCLS and the identified needs. The targeted needs become part of the focus for upcoming professional development or learning walks. As a result, school leaders and staff are attuned to the needs and strengths of the school body and are constantly adjusting professional development, unit planning and assessments. Consequently, there's evidence of increase student performance as seen on English language arts and math predictors.
- The school has a safe and nurturing environment that supports student's academic and socio- emotional learning. (1.4)
  - Students, teachers and parents shared they feel safe in the building. They stated that there is a sense of family and unity even though they share the building with another school. Each student is known by at least one adult. One teacher stated, "students belong to us all." The school has incorporated the Respect for All (RFA) anti-bullying system to alleviate any sense of concern about bullying.

There is evidence of the RFA system across the school and classrooms. Students shared that they have witnessed very few cases of bullying or disrespect towards other students or teachers. To continue support for all students and engage older students in a positive way, the school created the Student Mentoring Team composed of 8th grade students. The team goes to different classrooms and performs anti bullying skits and performances based on the theme for the week. Students that were having difficulties in behavior management have shown great improvement in academic progress as evidenced by their report cards after joining the team.

## What the school needs to improve

- Strategically increase the rigor of questioning and differentiation of targeted skills so that there is ample opportunity for all learners to successfully complete tasks and maximize student performance. (1.2)
  - o School leaders and teachers share that students learn best by providing them differentiated instruction and engaging in work that will promote higher levels of thinking. Across classrooms there was consistent evidence that teachers differentiated their lessons and asked different level questions. During a guided reading lesson observed, the teacher asked questions that required students to reread the text and make inferences supported by text evidence. There was evidence of tasks having multiple entry points to ensure all learners could enter the task and be successful. Teachers continuously use data to plan their whole group, small group instruction. While there is a strong use of data to differentiate instruction and have students complete tasks, there was not enough evidence to show that there were additional supports or extensions that would enhance the learning and would lead to high levels of student thinking.
- Strengthen parental relationships with the school and engage families in strategic conversations around student performance and expectations. (2.4)
  - o Parents are provided with a variety of opportunities to acquaint themselves with the school's expectations and the tools that can facilitate learning about their children's progress. Parents participate in the School Leadership Team, Parent workshops, parent teacher conferences, and student and parent activities. Additionally, they use online tools such as Engrave and ARIS. Parents stated they were aware of the new expectations. Some said their children had to do more research and more homework. Teachers and parents shared they had access to teachers at any moment and most teachers responded in a timely manner. Furthermore, parents stated that if students were constantly absent, late or had behavior problems, these issues were given attention in a quick matter. While opportunities for parents to attend Parent Teacher Association meetings, parenting workshops and instructional expectations forums are frequent, parents state the times of the services may hinder attendance by many more parents. Sign in sheets show that very few parents attend the workshops. Though this information is also sent home via mail, low attendance may hinder a majority of parents from being well informed and equipped with tools to enhance their children's performance in school.
- Strengthen the practice of reviewing and analyzing attendance, safety, discipline and academic data to track progress of student performance and feedback to students and families. (3.3)

- o Teacher teams and individual teachers consistently review and analyze a variety of data to ensure students are on track for meeting their specific goals. Aggregated data and school-wide excel sheets track the progress of all students. Additionally, subgroup data is extrapolated and also tracked for progress. In a teacher team meeting it was evident that teachers use this data to adjust student goals and plans for instruction based on the review of performance tasks. While the use of effective and strategic academic data analysis has improved student performance, there was little evidence to show that teachers use other data such as behavior and attendance to adjust student goals and plans, thereby missing opportunities for targeted instruction and support based on these data points.
- o School leaders state that all teachers effectively communicate with parents and students about student progress. The 2010- 2011 School Survey shows that 95% of parents are satisfied or very satisfied with the way the school and teachers communicate with them. Teachers consistently return student work with actionable feedback based on a known rubric. Students state that their teachers constantly give them feedback about their work in all subject areas. While there is ample confirmation that parents and students receive constant feedback about their learning, there is only some evidence of parents and students understanding the feedback, but the evidence indicates they are moving closer to meeting the expectations. However, lack of understanding may hinder opportunities for parents and students to apply the feedback, thus minimizing the effects of the feedback on student performance.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S./M.S. 280 Mosholu Parkway	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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