

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The School of Science and Applied Learning
Elementary School 300

2050 PROSPECT AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10457

Principal: VENESSA SINGLETON

Dates of review: –February 29-March 1, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School of Science and Applied Learning is an Elementary school with 602 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 38% Black, 57% Hispanic, 0% White, 0% Asian students and 4% other students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 89.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a safe environment and highly inclusive culture that supports the academic and personal growth of students, faculty, and staff. 1.4
 - o The school focuses on attendance, using data from various sources including the Progress Report and Learning Environment Survey, as a guide for its improvement efforts. The leadership and teacher teams collaborate to address attendance concerns with families, including students in temporary housing, which results in a steadily improved attendance rate year-to-date.
 - o Parents concur that the adults in the school provide child development support in the form of community programs that address family social-emotional needs, such as Generation On. Groups and individual students indicated that they know at least one adult who they can speak to for guidance if they have social-behavioral issues. Many students also indicated that they are supported to achieve academically, and proudly showed their work, such as writing samples, as evidence.
- Families are consistently engaged in school activities and decision-making that provide an open exchange of information regarding expectations for student achievement. 2.4
 - o Students and families access information regarding homework, grades, and attendance, through the school's ARIS Parent Link, a school-specific web site, and wiki space. As a result, parents gain valuable timely information regarding their children and are able to monitor both academic progress and behavior.
 - o Through her open-door policy, the principal accommodates families whenever needed to discuss relevant data to help their children succeed. The leadership and staff encourage parents to engage in reciprocal conversations about their children's progress, next learning steps, and provide feedback via parent letters, parent book club, and afternoon meetings, resulting in a well-informed parent body supporting improved student achievement.
- The school aligns its professional development, support services and community partnerships to school wide goals to accelerate academic and socio-emotional growth of students. 4.4
 - o The school's guidance, advisement supports, and activities for students, accelerate academic growth by promoting college awareness and career orientation. The school's "College Road Tour" program enables each class to adopt and research information regarding the college of its teacher, and then visit other classes to share information regarding the colleges. Outside partnerships including Generation On and Good Shepherd, support academic and youth development during and after school by integrating life skills and career awareness. As a result of these efforts, students are engaged in their own learning to find a path to postsecondary readiness.
 - o Teachers are engaged in professional development with outside support from two community-based organizations, which target students' social and academic needs. Through gift incentives and public recognition, the school promotes positive behaviors, which results in low levels of suspensions and improved

student progress as evident in the class and school data collected on targeted students.

- School leaders and faculty consistently gather and analyze a range of summative and formative data to identify strengths and areas of need at the classroom level. 2.1
 - o The school gathers and analyzes information from Progress Reports, Quality Review, Periodic Assessments and in-house surveys to make decisions such as adding more professional development support in literacy. Network and outside consultants have collaborated in establishing reading and writing lab sites for teachers, and the school has a school-based option to incorporate three additional days of professional development. Special attention is given to the strengths and weaknesses of subgroups including students with disabilities, who are targeted by incorporating strategies from relevant areas to support learning. As a result, areas of need at class levels are identified and suitably addressed.
- The school leadership and faculty have a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused data based goals that are supported and understood by the community. 3.1
 - o The school focuses on a short list of goals including stamina in writing, reading progress, and vocabulary acquisition, with various action plans aimed at improving student progress. These goals are evident in the Comprehensive Education Plan, and embedded in professional development action plans and curriculum maps, fostering student achievement in academic and social-behavioral areas.
 - o The leadership develops goals and learning outcomes for the school, and works with teams of teachers led by the assistant principals to generate action plans. The school revises goals on a monthly basis within each grade, advising individual and teams of teachers on next steps, resulting in revisions of actions plans to improve student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further align curricula for a variety of learners that integrate the Common Core Learning Standards tasks in order to close the achievement gap. 1.1
 - o The school aligns its curricula to the State standards, embeds the CCLS tasks, selecting writing and reading standards in response to student needs. However, across classroom a variety of learners are not sufficiently cognitively engaged, hindering the closing of the achievement gap.
 - o The school has made it a priority to revise and align its curriculum and programs to incorporate rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. By increasing frequency and analysis of assessments for the lowest performing students, the school works to revise teaching strategies to improve performance and is focusing math revisions on extended response questions. However, effective levels of questioning to engage in higher leveled thinking and work products are inconsistent across grades, subjects, and for English language learners, resulting in uneven levels of student achievement.

- Ensure that teacher pedagogy is engaging and differentiated to enable subgroups, including high achievers, to engage in high levels of thinking, discussions and tasks. 1.2
 - o In all classes teaching strategies and practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and reflect the school's beliefs that students learn best using the workshop model, balanced literacy, and higher order questioning. However, these practices are unevenly developed across classrooms resulting in individuals and subgroups, including English language learners and high performing students, not being cognitively engaged in learning. Students are asked if they understand and chorally respond that they know what to do. However, in some math and reading classes the work that students produced indicated that they did not understand what was being taught which results in uneven levels of learning and work products.
 - o Across classes questions and tasks inconsistently offer differentiated learning opportunities for all students. Multiple entry points, supports, and extensions into the curricula are not developed in many classes and subject areas as evidenced in student work products, discussions and uneven levels of student understanding of what is being taught. High achievers have few opportunities to extend their knowledge because the additional tasks that are assigned in some classes do not result in rigorous and engaging thinking processes.
- Further align strategic organizational decisions to support the schools' goals relative to meeting student-learning needs, as evidenced in student work products and achievement. 1.3
 - o The school is aligning the use of resources with its instructional goals as evidenced in student work products, which are based on CCLS tasks. The school has increased the number of tutoring and after school providers, professional development days, teacher teams, and lab sites for teachers, to support the schools' goals of impact on classroom teaching and learning. However, as noted supports and resources have not yet consistently led to improved student work products, understanding their impact on student performance is hindered.
 - o The use of staff and student time is structured so that teams meet weekly in grade and inquiry teams, and periodically during lunchtime on a volunteer basis. However, the result of these collaborations are not consistently effective across all grades, classes, and subjects, which show inconsistent evidence of improved instruction, checks for understanding, and multiple entry and extension tasks, which results in some students not being engaged in their own learning or producing high levels of academic tasks.
- Further analyze student-learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the class and team level to assure the use of on-going checks for understanding, and include student self-assessment so that teachers make adjustments to meet students' learning needs. (2.2)
 - o Teams of teachers and individual teachers use school and class data to identify strengths and weaknesses in order to adjust goals and teaching strategies. However, some teaching strategies do not sufficiently target relevant subgroups, such as English language learners and high performing students, resulting in smaller achievement gains and improving in reading and math.

- o Across classes teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of checks for understanding effectively. In some classes, the use of chorally asking students if they understand limits the ability to discern what students know or understand, and it was evident by the quality of the student work. Therefore, students are not ready to move on to their next steps and are not able to produce meaningful work products.
- Develop systems for managing staff development, actionable feedback, and making informed decisions about teachers' practices. 4.1
 - o The school uses the Danielson framework for providing observation feedback to teachers. However, there is still a gap between articulating clear expectations and implementation of effective teacher practice, as in some classes teacher pedagogy evidenced inconsistent cognitive engagement of students and limited rigor of student work products, leading to low levels of student learning.
 - o The school uses teacher goals to guide observations, and uses that information to develop a system for managing staff development. However, as currently, the school does not sufficiently monitor the effectiveness of staff development on teaching practices, there is limited understanding of the impact of professional development on student engagement and student work.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The School of Science and Applied Learning	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		
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

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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