

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Elementary School X306
40 West Tremont Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453

Principal: Darryl Harrington

Dates of review: March 6 – 7, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Sonia Menendez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 306 is an elementary school with 765 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 30% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian and 4% other students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 21% 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 93.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal strategically directs resources and makes effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in student learning. (1.3)
 - Based on the analysis of data, budgeting decisions are made to meet the educational needs of the students. For example, a literacy coach was hired this year to better support teachers by modeling lessons, providing guided reading resources, developing a curriculum newsletter and facilitating professional development activities. An additional assistant principal was hired to support the early grades since the data showed that these grades were lagging behind. The school purchased additional iPads to better engage boys since their data demonstrated that girls outperform them. As a result, the most recent formative assessment shows progress from the September baseline, increasing the percentage of students in Levels 3 and 4 as well as increased time on task by boys.
 - In order to bring about improvement in student achievement, the principal has made careful staffing and scheduling decisions. When hiring new staff, the principal was diligent in selecting experienced teachers who demonstrated a commitment to the school's vision. Several teachers looped with their students from one grade to the next in order to build on teachers' knowledge of students' strengths and needs minimizing new grade adjustment period. English language learners are clustered in classes and receive push in English as a second language instruction to better align interventions with classroom instruction. As a result, the school is on track to meet its instructional goal of making annual yearly progress as evidenced by the latest predictive assessment where English language learners have demonstrated progress.
- Teachers benefit from ongoing focused observations and feedback that result in improved teacher practice and increased student outcomes. (4.1)
 - The school has a comprehensive approach to classroom observations and walkthroughs through regular review of teaching methodology in order to promote best practices. Administrators engage in professional development on how to write better observation reports, which has helped their observations to better capture teacher practice and provide more accurate feedback. The administrative team uses a common framework and template for providing feedback to teachers and has identified instruction, classroom environment, planning and preparation as key areas of focus. Consequently, administrators efficiently gather information about staff professional needs, identifying gaps in specific teaching practice and use the data to build its effective professional development program that results in positive gains on formative assessments with less than 35% of students in Level 1.
 - School leaders use student assessment data and information gathered from their formal and informal classroom visits to inform performance evaluations. The constructive feedback given to teachers includes

specific next steps, professional articles, peer classroom visits and lessons modeled by coaches, among other resources. The principal then uses this information to make informed decisions about assignments and professional development needs. As a result, teachers state that the professional development they receive is improving their practice leading to student writing that shows improvement from the baseline sample.

- Administrators gather a wide range of relevant data to gain an understanding of individual and subgroup performance in order to inform instruction and make organizational decisions. (2.1)
 - The principal effectively reviews various data tools such as end of unit data, periodic assessments, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA), predictive and state assessments for an up to date understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom and grade level. As a result of this review, the principal recognizes the need to better engage boys whose performance lags behind girls. Consequently, the principal purchased iPads and identified educational games which have motivated boys to better engage in reading activities and increased their time on task, leading to increased gains on end of unit tests.
 - The data specialist works closely with coaches to assist teachers in the collection, understanding and evaluation of student achievement data. In grade meetings teachers discuss trends and teaching strategies to address needs. Administrators review data results with teachers and use the information as the foundation for professional development, feedback, goal setting and in-class support. This collaborative review ensures that teachers understand students' areas of strength and needs and the associated implications for instruction. As a result, teachers adjust strategies to meet the needs of students, resulting in a decrease of students performing in Tier 1 on the latest predictive assessment.
- The school maintains an extremely supportive environment with high expectations for student learning, resulting in a caring and nurturing culture that promotes personal and academic achievement. (1.4)
 - The school has made excellent progress in supporting positive behavior across the school. The school boasts of high compliance of students wearing the school uniform that students feel encourages them to behave better. The school day begins with students reciting the "PS 306 Scholar's Creed" that promotes positive behavior and high expectations. This year the school is implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports that provide students with strategies and incentives for good behavior. As a result, students' behavior has improved as evidenced by a reduction in student suspensions in comparison to last year.
 - Students feel very well supported and state that their teachers care about them and help them learn. Students are proud to show and discuss their work, citing that they are given feedback that helps them to improve their skills and products. On a recent literacy unit, students accurately used a variety of graphic organizers as scaffolds for their writing. As a result, student writing shows improvement from their baseline as assessed using a common rubric.

- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to analyze student data, share best practices and plan interventions that result in increased outcomes for students. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams, assisted by the data specialist, use robust mechanisms to gather and analyze data. In addition to state summative data, Acuity, DRA and student authentic writing with rubrics, teachers use end of unit assessments provided by the literature-based reading program implemented by the school. The information provided gives teachers a clear picture of skills mastered and the effectiveness of instructional practices. As a result of this review, the end of unit assessments demonstrate that students are making progress from one unit to the next.
 - In the teacher team meetings, student assessment data is carefully analyzed and discussed to identify grade trends and next learning steps for students. The implementation of consistent assessment tools across the grades supports teachers' understanding of specific students' needs across classes and leads to an investigation of strategies that will ensure improved outcomes. For example, teachers identified underlining key ideas in reading passages as a strategy that particularly supports English language learners and special needs students' understanding of main idea. As a result, these subgroups of students demonstrated improvement on this skill in an end of unit assessment.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the alignment between the chosen curriculum and the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) so that lessons emphasize rigorous habits, resulting in improved outcomes for students. (1.1)
 - The school has made a commitment to a prescriptive literacy and mathematics program for its delivery of the curriculum. Although the chosen research based programs provide for extension activities designed to critically challenge English language learners, students with special needs and higher achieving students, some teachers do not consistently use these tasks. Instead, teachers sometimes develop learning activities that are not as rigorous. As a result, not all students benefit from lessons that aptly challenge them to think critically.
 - The mandated curriculum is aligned to state standards with a suggested pacing guide to support teachers to stay on track as they complete the scope and sequence. End of unit assessments provide teachers with a detailed profile of what each student has mastered or in what areas the student needs additional support. However, this information is not yet effectively used to refine lessons so that English language learners and students with special needs are sufficiently cognitively engaged. As a result, there are missed opportunities to adjust and align the curriculum to fully meet the needs of subgroups of students.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data to provide appropriate challenge for all students. (1.2)
 - Teachers design lessons that incorporate the use of graphic organizers to scaffold learning for students. However, teachers do not consistently

implement differentiated activities or strategies to address varying learning styles or questioning that elicit higher order thinking skills. As a result, some teaching is routine rather than stimulating and there is limited engagement for all students.

- Teachers are consistently held accountable for following the prescribed curriculum that focuses on skills development and are expected to provide small group instruction based on student data. However, differentiation does not go beyond intentional student grouping. As a result, some lessons do not always offer sufficient challenge or multiple entry points to meet the needs of student subgroups, limiting their potential to make academic progress.
- Extend the communication and collaboration with parents to increase their capacity to engage in school decision making and use educational tools in order to assist in their child's learning. (2.4)
 - The principal makes a concerted effort to communicate with families via newsletters, calendars and monthly progress reports. However, parent involvement still lags behind with low turnout at monthly meetings. As a result, not all parents are well versed in the use of ARIS and many do not understand the next learning steps for their children, limiting their ability to help their children at home.
 - Several parents serve as volunteers in the school, particularly during lunch time, to assist students with the new salad bar in the cafeteria. However, broader parent voice in school-wide decision making and planning is limited. As a result, the school lacks full community support in its improvement efforts and is missing opportunities for families to make significant, positive contributions to school-wide decisions and activities.
- Sharpen strategic planning by making adjustments to the chosen curriculum in response to students' needs and the expectations of the CCLS in order to close identified gaps in student learning. (5.1)
 - Teachers are expected to specifically follow the scripted literature-based program adopted by the school. The administration carefully monitors instruction and adherence to the program, using this information to make recommendations for professional development. However, teachers are not yet fully secure in the implementation of the program or make the appropriate modifications to the prescribed lessons in response to the CCLS. As a result, revisions to the curriculum or use of the program in response to student needs are not always evident.
- Enhance differentiated learning goals for student subgroups to include precise short term checkpoints in order to accelerate student learning. (3.2)
 - End of unit performance assessments are used well to identify strengths and gaps in students' mastery of skills. Working collaboratively and with data as a guide, administration and teachers develop long term goals for students. However, these goals are not sufficiently differentiated for student subgroups and lack interim benchmarks by which to gauge progress towards meeting long-term goals. As a result, there are missed opportunities for specific modifications to curriculum and

instructional strategies in order to accelerate student learning, particularly for student subgroups.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Public School 306	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 student 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