

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**I.S. 313 School of Leadership Development
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school X313**

**1600 WEBSTER AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10457**

Principal: LAUREN WILKINS

Dates of review: March 06 - 07, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

I.S. 313 School of Leadership Development is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 445 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 29% Black, 69% Hispanic, 0% White, 2% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 88.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is developing alignment between organizational decisions and school goals to meet student learning needs. (1.3)
 - o The principal negotiated space for her bilingual/English as a second language classes as part of the leadership change in the co-located school in order to provide a well-equipped classroom for English language learners, a major sub-group in the school. As a result, students in these classes experience a learning environment that is expansive, bright and organized for effort such that student portfolios, assignments and leveled text are readily available to students. The administration has made decisions around teacher assignments in consideration of student needs and outcomes. A teacher looped from one grade to another with students in order to replicate the previous year's successful, summative English language arts outcomes. Another teacher was moved from one educational setting to another due to improved mathematics outcomes in the previous year. As a result, some English language learners and students from bilingual classes are beginning to produce work that shows improvement and increased ability in written communication in English as evidenced by student writing assignments and products.
- The school is working towards maintaining a safe and caring learning environment that supports academic and personal growth of adults and students. (1.4)
 - o The tone of the school is generally calm and respectful. The principal serves as the "go to" person who single-handedly addresses student conflicts. She takes the lead in ensuring that there is follow up on the social-emotional needs of the students and follow-up on attendance by a school aide and attendance teacher. In an effort to address the supports needed for academic and personal student needs, the school implemented an "Adopt a Student Initiative" through which students initiate contact with the teacher and seek support when needed. Recent, close follow-up by the administration, with the help of an attendance teacher and school aide, has resulted in a 2% increase in attendance over a two-year period.
- School leaders gather and analyze data to identify school strengths and areas of need. (2.1)
 - o School leaders maintain a monthly progress report of student skills attainment in periodic assessments that complements the summative assessment results. This data collection has focused the school on select skills that were indicated as areas of need in summative data and are followed up on as students engage in ongoing classroom assessments. This provides the school with a month-to-month trajectory of how all students are faring on these identified skills.
- The school has developed tools to aggregate and organize data that captures student performance and skills' mastery. (2.3)
 - o The school provides teachers with data sheets that capture information around mastery of skills. The math coach and English language arts assistant principal have utilized an Excel tool to make this data visually accessible and organized for all. There is a school-wide expectation that every homeroom teacher

maintains a data folio including Individualized Education Plan information in order to gather information on students and make student information accessible to teachers, administration and students. As a result, student performance trends on Acuity and classroom assessment are captured.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish focused and clear school goals as well as action plans that are created, supported and understood by the school community. (3.1)
 - o Although broad goal setting and general action planning take place at the school level, the school goals rely solely on summative assessment findings and have yet to be expanded to include a wide range of data including feedback from existing instructional and organizational practices. There is school-wide recognition of student writing as an area of need, however action plans do not involve use of student work to determine whether the existing programs or plan of action are supporting this goal. Furthermore, the goal setting and action planning process take place at the administrative level and does not involve or include teachers, parents or students. As a result, the school community can only articulate their goals as earning "more 3's and 4's" on summative assessments and "increased writing" or improved practices that can be "seen in the classrooms". There is no wider range of supports to deepen content and pedagogical knowledge of staff, resulting in misunderstanding of the school goals and how they are being addressed. As such, there are missed opportunities to inform instructional practices and leverage the curricular revision process for improved outcomes, particularly for key student subgroups.
- Develop teacher capacity to design and facilitate effective instruction that offers authentic learning opportunities, resulting in student thinking and active participation. (1.2)
 - o The school articulates beliefs around how students learn best as the workshop model, project-based learning, scaffolding and skills-based differentiation. However, most classrooms visited did not reflect the school's beliefs. Scaffolding efforts were limited to teachers reading text out loud, or three levels of text for independent student reading around the same skills. Questioning across classrooms was minimal and only required yes/no or short response answers to the teacher. Substantial portions of instructional time do not involve students in talk related to big ideas. As a result, classroom interactions are mainly teacher to student, leading to minimal levels of cognitive engagement and discussion. Hence, there are missed opportunities for students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, to engage in higher levels of thinking and participation.
- Redesign the curricula through teacher planning to emphasize rigorous habits and critical thinking skills in an effort to cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
 - o The skills-based pacing calendars drive classroom, instructional and assessment decisions. This has led to unit and lesson planning that, for the most part, does not emphasize rigorous habits or higher order skills. The school has not identified key standards to emphasize and currently follows elements of three distinct curricular resources in English language arts. There is no connection between the strategies, themes and skills in each program. The pacing calendars created from these programs, lack a connection with State standards and do not adequately support the integration of CCLS tasks or address the

needs of the school's subgroups. As a result, students have minimal opportunities to engage in critical thinking and problem solving.

- Align rubrics to curricula and key standards and incorporate ongoing checks of understanding so that instructional decisions are adjusted for increased student outcomes. (2.2)
 - o Teachers have begun to look at student work and classroom assessments. However, this emerging practice is centered on scoring of student work around the previously identified skills in summative and periodic assessments and does not align with the standards indicated on each unit of study. The skill-based focus of classroom assignments contributes to teacher confusion around next steps as skills outcomes fluctuate from unit to unit. Furthermore, teachers are given a generic rubric to assess all student writing, regardless of the assignment or the genre. This results in an inability to accurately diagnose student strengths and weaknesses as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.(a)
 - o Across classrooms, there are no ongoing checks for understanding during classroom instruction. Few teachers conference with students to assess progress; most merely asked closed-ended questions requiring short, limited answers. As a result, knowledge of student understanding is not successfully utilized to adjust instruction as a school-wide practice, limiting the potential for additional, specific student support. Student self-assessment currently involves students checking to ensure correct responses to primarily multiple-choice questions. As a result, students are unsure of what they will learn, how they will learn it, or what qualifies as good work.
- Establish feedback practices around pedagogy to include student data analysis and a common language of clear expectations to increase professional growth and teacher leadership. (4.1)
 - o The feedback provided in formal observations and through use of a checklist in the informal observations of some teachers lacks a direct link to student data analysis and the clear expectations around improvement of pedagogy. There is currently no framework used as a lens to provide feedback that emphasizes the school's common beliefs about what effective instruction and planning looks like, resulting in teachers having unclear expectations about how practice should develop in their classrooms.
- Provide ongoing, consistent and job-embedded professional development that supports school goals, promotes professional reflection as well as growth in order to improve teaching and learning. (4.3)
 - o The school does not have a formal professional development plan. Teachers are made aware of their network and the Department of Education's professional development opportunities but are left to choose on their own based on self-selected needs. There is a loose expectation that they keep logs of professional development they have attended. Teachers are paired with master teachers but supplemental supports for both are not provided. The principal admits that she does not know what teachers are learning but she looks at where they were and if their practice has improved during the year. This absence of a formal plan for teacher development and support has diminished the school's ability to ensure that a consistent approach for professional growth of staff, aligned to school goals, is maintained or that leadership development of teachers is continuously addressed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: I.S. 313 School of Leadership Development	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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