

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Public School 66

Elementary - Middle School 066

**845 East 96th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11236**

Principal: Lucille Jackson

Dates of review: May 14 - 15, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 66 is a K-8 school with 762 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 91% Black, 6% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The development and refinement of curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, creating opportunities to close learning gaps across grade levels and classrooms. (1.1)
 - School leaders and teachers develop units of study and pacing calendars aligned with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that are focused on embedding the instructional shifts in decisive academic tasks that integrate cross-curricula connections. Science units that require students to draw evidence from informational texts, predict probability of certain traits, or math units that engage students in reasoning skills involving ratio and rate concepts to solve real world problems, promote post-secondary preparation. This deliberate curriculum planning leads to standards-based engagements such as opinion and argumentative writing, and tasks that stimulate understanding of numerical operations and demand algebraic thinking. Pacing calendars delineate the sequence for teaching requisite math concepts in order to close gaps in learning. In addition, across grade levels and content areas, interdisciplinary units of study promote Common Core Writing Standards 1 and 2, specifically evident in students' writing on demand samples in science and social studies.
 - Teachers and coaches refine curricula via alignment with EngageNY and Common Core Library units of study to meet the needs of students. As a result, academic tasks that emphasize rigor and higher order thinking skills expose all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, to opportunities to demonstrate higher order skills. Therefore, activities like Reflex Math that provoke fluency, the use of visual information, exploration of author's point of view, analysis of primary and secondary sources, and a focus on content specific vocabulary, foster improvement in the highest and lowest groups of students demonstrating growth in math applications and stronger written explanations.
- A variety of assessment tools provides clear portraits of students' strengths and challenges in order to inform instruction and meet the needs of diverse learners. (2.2)
 - Analysis of school-wide common assessments provides a clear picture of instructional needs for groups of students. Accordingly, information gathered from reading and math fluency assessments administered weekly; periodic assessments; running records; and unit tests determine lessons to be re-taught and lead to the regrouping of students based on proficiencies or their learning challenges. As noted in eighth graders' work with translations, rotations, and reflections, students used a three-point holistic rubric to evaluate their explanations. Hence, rubrics-based assessments guide teachers' adjustments to instruction. Students agreed that they use teacher grading comments and written and verbal feedback to make their work better. Therefore, the use of common assessments results in groups of teachers making adjustments to curricular and extending cycles of instruction to support progress among individual and groups of students. This work is evident in teacher notes on units of

- study titled *Overcoming Obstacles*, whereby review of learning requirements and performance-based assessment tasks resulted in a review of main idea and cause and effect with more time spent on students including relevant details in their explanatory writing.
- High expectations for student success drive school-wide efforts aimed toward college and career readiness benchmarks. (3.4)
 - The school leaders' vision and direction for the school are set forth in the distribution and review of pacing calendars, a school-wide grading policy, faculty conferences, and grade and team meetings, thus conveying clear behavioral and professional expectations. Established professional activities address pedagogical shifts demanded by the Common Core Standards such as training on principles of the Universal Design for Learning, leading to supporting teachers in achieving professional standards. As a result, teachers are holding themselves accountable for student learning reflected in English language arts (ELA) and math data portfolios that contain high-level student work indicative of next level readiness.
 - Expectations for learning communicated to parents and students through progress reports, report cards, Jupiter Grades online system, and discussions with teachers and administrators provide "meaningful feedback in the development of the whole child", as stated by a parent. Additionally, a variety of activities offered to parents foster their involvement in collaborative efforts to advance student learning. CCLS workshops, parent promotion-in-doubt meetings, Family as Reading Partners, and orientation for parents of students eligible for the Scholars Program, an in-house accelerated program, and frequent communication with the parent coordinator help parents to understand expectations toward high standards for academic success. Consequently, ongoing systems of communication with parents keep them informed and knowledgeable of efforts and initiatives that prepare their children for college and careers.
 - Teacher teams collaboratively engage in the inquiry process to improve teacher practice and learning outcomes for groups of students. (4.2)
 - The majority of teachers hone instructional practices informed by inquiry collaborations that engender the sharing of best practices. Hence, teachers work in grade and department teams to examine student work. This collective energy results in key instructional decisions aligned to CCLS work such as the authorship of graphic organizers to support improved writing skills, offshoots of pedagogical ideas that promote stronger reading behaviors in emergent readers, and the exchange of instructional and professional resources to further teacher capacity. Subsequently, collaborative structures lead to regular analysis of student artifacts used to update units of study and gauge progress of targeted groups of students. As such, the school is experiencing the positive impact of deepened inquiry approaches on teaching and learning evident in better quality adult and student work across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen teacher practices to include effective questioning techniques that consistently stimulate rich student discourse and rigorous participation resulting in advances in high levels of thinking. (1.2)
 - Classroom environments reflect articulated core beliefs about how students learn best as evidenced in visible process charts, displays of student and teacher work, coherence in organization of lessons, and the physical arrangement of classrooms. In addition, conferencing, peer tutoring, and incorporation of elements of the Six Facets of Understanding into lessons serve as a springboard for appropriate rigor. Some teachers' use of the Depth of Knowledge Matrix assists their fashioning questions of appropriate levels of complexity. Nevertheless, the level of teacher questioning and discussion techniques across classrooms do not consistently stimulate productive conversation or high levels of participation as observed during a kindergarten and sixth grade ELA lesson or noted during a lesson on the structure and function of enzymes in a seventh grade science class. Therefore, uneven teaching practices result in learning experiences that lack consistent probes that challenge student thinking and extend their understanding.

- Ensure evaluation of instructional and organizational decisions result in timely adjustments to policy and practice that support learning needs and the expectations of CCLS toward student mastery. (5.1)
 - The school has systems in place for teachers to re-evaluate and adjust curriculum and instruction leading to identification of gaps in specific teaching practice in order to improve student learning. However, school leaders do not employ a cohesive interim system to regularly evaluate the efficacy of instructional practices, thereby thwarting greater school-wide progress, especially among those students receiving intervention services. As such, alignment with CCLS expectations is hindered and timely administrative decisions relative to adjusting curriculum in order to ensure instructional coherence to meet all students' needs is not sufficiently effected.
 - This year, the school's educational program included enrichment and tutorial programs that offered extended learning time to diverse groups of students. However, due to an organizational decision, the programs did not run their full course, and they were discontinued prior to their completion. Consequently, this adjustment to the use of resources created a break in service resulting in missed opportunities to further teachers' understanding of students' needs and enabling students to attain mastery in meeting the expectations of the CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Public School 66	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed