

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Jose De Diego Elementary School

K084

**250 Berry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Sereida Rodriguez

**Dates of review: May 6-7, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 84 is an elementary school with 502 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 72% Hispanic, 18% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 10% 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 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration effectively uses a research based teaching framework to set high expectations and to support teacher development with targeted feedback leading to enhanced pedagogy. (4.1)

The school is participating in the Teacher Effectiveness Program (TEP) and the administration systematically observes teachers, targeting planning and preparation and questioning and providing actionable feedback that is guided by the Danielson's Framework for Teaching and the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE), thus offering on-going support for developing common professional language and understanding of the expectations for effective teaching. Moreover, the administration utilizes the framework to set clear and high expectations for instructional practice that teachers align with their professional goals as evidenced by their self-reflections listing strengths, areas to grow and next steps. For example, teachers reflect on each competency and then, in collaboration with the administration, outline next steps such as "consistently use open-ended questions and wait time" or "plan for flexible groups in social studies." Each observation is followed with strategic feedback such as "students should know and understand expectations from a rubric," or "allow the students an opportunity to answer questions and have them discuss ideas." In addition, the administration engages all teachers in mid-year self-assessment with goal setting rooted in the framework and based on student achievement outcomes as evidenced by teacher mid-year self-assessment summaries. As a result, teachers are self-reflective and demonstrate improvement of their instructional practice as evidenced by the unit and lesson plans and data collected by the principal for the Teacher Effectiveness Program showing that in April, 2013 47% of teachers were effective in planning and preparation, an increase from 29% in the beginning of the school year.

- The leadership team sets data driven goals and effective action plans for teaching and learning that are monitored and shared with the school community, driving continuous school improvement efforts. (3.1)
 - The school leaders, in collaboration with teachers and parents, clearly defined this year's coherent vision for school improvement with a short list of goals: ensuring high quality teaching by building pedagogical capacity, especially for English language learners and Students with Disabilities, by deepening last year's work with planning and implementing all units of study across all grades that are reflective of instructional shifts and fully aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS.) The School Leadership Team (SLT) initially conducted a needs assessment based on the results from standardized tests, available school data and trends in student attendance and social and emotional growth. The school's Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) is a living document where the school goals are continuously tracked for progress and action plans are adjusted as evidenced in the agendas and minutes from the SLT meetings. The leadership clearly communicates improvement plans with the SLT and the school community in teacher team meetings, faculty and

grade level conferences, mid-year conversations with teachers as well as student assemblies and parent meetings. Progress is measured with interim checkpoints such as classroom observations, student performance results on benchmark assessments and tracking attendance rates per class as on-going systems for monitoring advancement towards all goals. In addition, teachers receive Friday Focus, a weekly newsletter the principal publishes, with her research-based tips, feedback, and suggestions for improving instruction specifically targeting improvements toward assuring high quality teaching across the school. Moreover, teachers actively contribute ideas, plan professional development and participate in the decision-making process leading to accelerating student learning and closing the achievement gap as evidenced in student growth in reading measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Furthermore, the SLT collaboratively agreed on adding a goal for embracing different cultures and inclusion to promote a common understanding among diverse population of students and parents. All goals and improvement plans are communicated with families through regularly scheduled parent meetings and monthly grade level newsletters sent home. Additionally, parents and teachers agree that there is intensified effort and commitment to improve student achievement and attendance. As a result of the shared vision for school improvement, all diverse students are supported in their social and emotional growth and their learning has accelerated.

- The principal makes strategic decisions to use resources in alignment with school goals that result in strengthened instructional capacity and improved student work across school. (1.3)
 - By placing teacher development at the core of all instructional initiatives, the school has focused on the improvement of instruction. This year, the principal secured funds for extended learning opportunities for all students. For example, a unique partnership with a nationwide “Y Schools Program” and its staff supports the student lunch recess by organizing structured games and play time for the students. This partnership also sponsors teaching the Mind Up curriculum in grades Kindergarten to third grade, providing children with the framework for strengthening social and emotional well-being, by giving them strategies for positive behavior such as self-regulation, resulting in improved school tone and fewer incidents during recess as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Report System. Several other partnerships with the Community Word Project or the Visual Thinking Strategies program expose students in all grades to the works of art and provide additional opportunities for developing critical thinking and public speaking skills through integrated arts curriculum. Students also design murals and participate in arts-based discussions that are a springboard to developing higher order thinking skills. Additionally, the principal secured a grant to open the only Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Nest program in District 14 and partnered with Hunter College to support graduate coursework for teachers and administrators. Moreover, the budget is strategically aligned to expand the Spanish dual-language program to all grade levels to provide an opportunity for students to become bilingual. These partnerships and initiatives are intensifying learning opportunities and extensions to the core academic program for diverse students to ensure meeting the goals of increasing student performance. Furthermore,

students in the dual language program in grade three are outperforming their peers as evidenced by the Acuity interim assessment results.

- Teachers are strategically assigned to purposefully match their strengths with identified student needs. After a careful review of teacher capacity, the principal changed grade level teacher assignments and programmed English as a second language (ESL) and special education teachers for push-in services. For example, ESL teachers are servicing students alongside grade level teachers, thus enabling additional small grouping and collaborative planning for the same groups of students. Additionally, the administration formed a hiring committee with general education teachers to recruit two new special education teachers for the ASD Nest program. As a result, the student-teacher ratio this year is 12:1 and all students, including English language learners, special education students and other identified students receive academic supports that address their needs.
- Across grade levels the school leaders and teachers plan and align curricula with the Common Core Learning Standards leading to rigorous academic tasks for all students preparing them for college and career.
(1.1)
 - Grade level teams create year-long curriculum maps in literacy with 50% emphasis on informational text. In mathematics, the school follows the New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence of instructional units of study highlighting real-life applications. Furthermore, all units of study in English language arts (ELA) and math are aligned to the CCLS while social studies and science curricula and lessons integrate content standards as evidenced in lesson plans. A review of curriculum artifacts revealed that the school uses multiple resources to plan rigorous academic tasks for all students. For example, teachers in upper grades integrate units of study from the Expeditionary Learning, the New York State Common Core ELA Curriculum, available on the website engageNY.com, thus providing the students with opportunities to experience text complexity and practicing reading closely. In mathematics, teachers across grade levels include high order questions for struggling and advanced students that are embedded in lesson and unit plans. For example, independent tasks in Grade 1 to solve real-life math problems include questions like, “How can you represent the number 43?” or “How can you verify (check) that you have represented the answer correctly?” Moreover, unit plans are inclusive of academic vocabulary, essential questions, ESL Standards and Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice such as “construct viable arguments” or “attend to precision.” As a result, all teachers plan and implement the CCLS aligned instructional units of study intended to develop high order skills. Curriculum artifacts also reveal intentional planning for independent student practice and thinking. As a result, all students, including English language learners in general education and dual language classes, are provided with an opportunity to experience rigorous tasks and standards based curriculum. In addition, their stamina and time on task have increased as evidenced by their use of strategies for longer conversations and observed in classroom visits and measured by stamina charts displayed in every room.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance instructional practices across the school to consistently provide multiple entry points and opportunities for all students to demonstrate higher order thinking and standards mastery. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teachers are beginning to plan essential questions for every day instruction and use high order questioning techniques in lessons. In some classrooms we visited, teachers used the Depth of Knowledge and Visual Thinking Strategies to ask students open-ended questions. For example, in many classes we heard teachers ask “What makes you say it?” or “How do you know?” However, in a few classrooms, teachers asked questions that were mostly recalling information. Similarly, in most classes, students are grouped for learning and engaged in discussions about tasks and we saw students participating in turn and talk during mini lessons and independent small group discussions. In one class, all students were discussing the meaning of science vocabulary words by using different strategies such as context clues and prior knowledge and identified students were provided with a graphic organizer with synonyms. In another class, an ESL teacher was working with a small group of students but the task and materials were the same as for the rest of the class. As a result, although most teachers engage students in discussions, the use of strategic scaffolds or extensions and multiple entry points varies across classrooms thus limiting student acceleration of learning.
- Increase teacher understanding and use of data from common assessments to determine student progress and inform instructional adjustments to meet student needs. (2.2)
 - The school collects student achievement data from multiple assessments and grade level teachers receive class data reports, such as the lowest third grouping in ELA and math or class profile of interim assessments results from Acuity and reading running records measured by the DRA. Additionally, teachers administer pre- and post- unit assessments, aligned with standards, and begin analyzing them and outlining next steps. For example, the school data specialist presents individual class achievement profile based on a mid-point unit assessment to teacher teams that also engage in measuring student work against benchmarks as observed in teacher team meetings. As a result, teachers begin making lesson adjustments and outlining next instructional steps. Moreover, teachers meet regularly across grade levels and analyze trends in student performance, share gaps in meeting the standards, and device action plans. For example, a team of math lead teachers from Kindergarten to 2nd grade identified an instructional focus on mathematical vocabulary and language based on student work results and Grade 3 item skills analysis that was shared with them. However, these efforts are not yet yielding desired outcomes in providing actionable next steps to the students. Similarly, the school is beginning to use standards-based 4 point writing rubrics, but feedback to students is mostly general, thus not providing students with next steps and strategies to achieve grade level benchmarks.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Jose De Diego Elementary PS 84	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