

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 095 The Gravesend

K-8 21K095

**345 VAN SICKLEN STREET
BROOKLYN
NY, 11223**

Principal: Janet Ndzibah

**Dates of review: Mar 5, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 095 The Gravesend School is a K-8 school with 962 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 8% Black, 32% Hispanic, 34% White, and 21% Asian students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

What the school does well

- Curricula across grades and subject areas align to key standards providing all students with opportunities to engage in rigorous learning promoting progress toward goals. (1.1)
 - Comprehensive data analysis of student outcomes across grades, subject areas and student subgroups provides a foundation for curricula development. A focus on key strands of the Common Core Learning Standards provides curricular and instructional coherence across grades and subject areas. For example, in English language arts, the curricula deeply focuses on text complexity, to move students to read at or above grade level, and informational and argumentative writing to provide students opportunities to demonstrate their thinking and reasoning skills. Universal Design for Learning is the model for providing scaffolds within curricula to ensure that all learners including students with disabilities, English language learners and high achieving students are engaging in content that is appropriately challenging and provides opportunities to make progress toward reaching and exceeding standards. Curricula clearly articulate skill development at each grade level, with an understanding that students must achieve learning targets in order to be on a path toward college readiness. Curricula embeds differentiated access points for student engagement through flexible grouping where all tasks align to the chosen standard and give all students appropriate entry to target specific skill development and formulate a clear path for every learner to progress toward the learning goal. For example, in mathematics Exemplar problems give students opportunities to articulate their mathematical thinking and justify the strategies they use to solve the problems. Across grades and subjects, all students have opportunities to engage in paired and class discussions that forge student thinking toward high-level concepts, leading to the formulation of ideas and arguments supported by facts. As a result, students have opportunities for rigorous learning including access to tasks that are cognitively challenging and are purposeful in aligning to the school's vision of what it means to be on a trajectory to college and career readiness.
- Teacher pedagogy demonstrates instructional coherence and differentiated practices resulting in improving student performance across the school. (1.2)
 - Collaboration between teachers and administration results in instructional coherence that is evident throughout the school. A workshop model of instruction permeates all content areas and is representative of a shared pedagogic belief that modeling followed by collaborative or independent engagement in high-level tasks for all student results in progression toward reaching and exceeding standards. Targeted scaffolds informed by Universal Design for Learning including questions that align to Depth of Knowledge levels of complexity, are included in lesson plans with clarity of vertical progression of skill and content mastery. A school-wide focus on questioning and discussion as a pathway for building cognitive reasoning and higher order thinking gives students and student subgroups access to opportunities for rigorous engagement. Student work products demonstrate increasing ability to create arguments as well as foundational understanding of referencing text is a tool in defending ideas and opinions. Daily math problems and the use of Exemplars gives students ongoing opportunities to engage in high level tasks that require use of multi-

disciplinary skills in applying knowledge to solve a complex problem with several paths to completion, then articulate in writing the reasoning used in crafting their answer. Students communicate that teachers are supportive of them and are always available to assist them in doing better. "They keep us motivated and help us build a positive attitude toward learning." There is ownership among students relating to their work and their progress, as stated by an eighth grade student who said, "We set our goals in all subjects and we track that we are making the right moves to reach them. The teachers help us, but we have to be responsible." An analysis of outcomes shows that students across all subgroups are making gains. Results of the mid-year Acuity benchmark assessment in English language arts shows that school-wide 35% of students have moved at least one level, with 52% of these students moving from below or approaching the standard to reaching or exceeding the standard. Deeper analysis demonstrates that 21% of students with special needs are at or above level in English Language Arts and that 24% of this subgroup made progress from below standard to at or above standard. English language learners are also showing gains, with 42% making progress and 36% making gains from below grade level to at or above grade level in English language arts.

- Leaders make effective, strategic organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals resulting in outcomes across grades and subject areas that meet and exceed learning targets. (1.3)
 - Deep analysis of student learning and outcomes revealed that students across the school were not making progress in English language, specifically, that students were not reading at or above grade level. The school implemented Teachers' College (TC) as a method of instruction in English language arts and a decision to support this model with a TC partnership provides for in house professional development for teachers in grades Kindergarten to second, third through fifth and sixth through eighth. There are three cycles of support where teachers meet with TC coaches to enhance practice. Teachers engage in professional development that aligns to student needs, not necessarily by the grade they teach. For example, a teacher of gifted and talented students meets with coaches and teachers of the grade above her class to focus on close reading of complex texts, as the supports on her grade focus on meeting the needs of struggling readers, a stream not applicable to the needs of her students. This flexibility ensures that teachers are engaging in work that is relevant to their students and promotes improving outcomes across the school. Across the elementary school, reading levels are improving with gains from 58% of students reading at or above grade level in September to 66% of students reading at or above grade level in February. In addition, data also indicates that there are gaps in math skills relating to numeracy and problem solving. School leaders worked collaboratively with faculty and other stakeholders to discover and evaluate programs and teaching strategies that would best support student needs. The school implemented the use of daily math problems to focus students on extended response and to enhance problem-solving abilities. This strategic decision aligns to the school's overarching goals relating to math and students' ability to demonstrate reasoning, problem solving skills and numerical fluency. As a result, an analysis of formative data, student work product and tasks shows that students across all grades and sub-groups are improving their skills in math. Specifically, evidence demonstrates that all students are making strides in building numeracy skills with 60% of students moving at least one rubric level on extended response and Exemplar math tasks, demonstrating progress toward learning goals.

- Strategic scheduling allows teachers to meet two to three periods a week in professional groups across grades and vertically to collaborate in inquiry and planning. Deliberately structured meetings have teachers use protocols to examine student work, identify gaps in learning and adjust curriculum and instruction. Teacher leaders act as the conduit of information between the administrative team and the grade and vertical teams ensuring that inquiry work is consistent and instructional practice is cohesive across the school. The teams work to develop curriculum and create high-level tasks that are inclusive of access points for all learners. Consequently, all students are working toward the same standard and planning is explicit with extensions and multiple entry points for specific subgroups of students including English language learners and students with special needs. In addition, student programs are thoughtful and strategic ensuring that all students receive the necessary supports to meet learning goals. Changes to a push-in model for special education teacher support services (SETSS) provide students with deeper engagement of class content and skill development and promote equity of opportunity for all students. Push-in teachers meet regularly with the primary teacher to plan instruction as well as to receive professional development on best practices in working as teacher teams. As a result, mid-year benchmark assessments in English language arts articulate that 34% of students with special needs are performing at or above grade level and an additional 26% of this group made gains of at least one performance level since September.
- School leaders are supportive of teacher practice and use highly effective methods to build teacher capacity resulting in increasing progress and improving performance across content areas and standards. (4.1)
 - School leaders are extremely explicit in their expectations for pedagogic practice. Administrators expect teachers to employ the workshop model of instruction in order to provide students with multiple opportunities to be deeply engaged in cognitively challenging tasks that demonstrate high order thinking. All teachers collaborate with supervisors to set pedagogic goals that align to the school's overarching goals and individual competencies determined by evaluation along with a rubric connected to a researched based framework for teaching. Frequent cycles of observation measure progress toward reaching pedagogic goals and teachers receive effective feedback that detail next steps for improving instructional practice. School leaders continually analyze data from observation cycles to understand teacher skill and impact on student outcomes. Professional development plans for the school, supervisors and for individual and groups of teachers align to data and result in improved teacher practice. The culture of the school is one of professional learning, where supervisors and teachers articulate feeling extremely supported by the principal and recognize that they are accountable for building their pedagogic skill to meet the expected instructional shifts that align to the Common Core Learning Standards. Consequently, an analysis of formative and formal observation data, as seen in written reports and evidenced in classroom visits, indicates growing competency among teachers to craft and implement effective mini-lessons, resulting in more than a majority of teachers meeting their professional goals. In addition, there is evidence that teachers across grades and classes are using modeling as an instructional tool and offering high level questioning to engage students in meaningful discussion, thereby moving the school toward reaching its professional and overall goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the manner that teachers use rubrics to evaluate student work ensuring that data is accurate in informing effective feedback to students and appropriate adjustments to curriculum improving outcomes across the school. (2.2)
 - Across grades, the school uses common assessments such as Teacher's College Running Records, Acuity, Exemplar Math, Everyday and Impact Math and Writing Bundles to assess student understanding of the standards. Administrators, teachers and grades and vertical teams analyze the data to guide curriculum revision and planning. Rubrics align to the standards, however, there are inconsistencies in how they are applied and interpreted, limiting the effectiveness of the feedback to students as well as the validity of some of the data garnered by the assessments. As a result, the manner in which assessments and grading practices influence instructional decisions and pedagogy is uneven across grades and individual classrooms, limiting the impact on student achievement.
- Expand the work of teacher teams to ensure that analysis of student work and data results in an understanding of how pedagogy affects outcomes toward ensuring mastery of goals for all students. (4.2)
 - All teachers participate in inquiry teams that meet across grades, subject areas or vertically engage in work that is integrating the Common Core Learning Standards into curriculum and instruction. Protocols to study student work lead to an understanding of how individual students, groups and whole classes are progressing along skill and content strands. Although the use of this data as a tool to understand the impact of instruction is a priority for the teams and protocols are in place to evaluate practice, it is not yet evident that the practice is continuous enough to garner a full understanding of how pedagogic choices are influencing student progress and overall outcomes on a school-wide level.
 - Teacher teams use data to determine a group of students to focus their inquiry work. At each teacher meeting, analysis of student work and assessment data leads to understanding of student learning and teachers discuss instructional supports that target specific areas of need. However, the methods of analysis of student work are not systematic to ensure coherence between standards, task, rubric and grading, resulting in some pieces of student work to receive grades that do not accurately represent individual student growth toward reaching the standard. As a result, the data generated for in-depth analysis to understand student outcomes is in some cases not sufficient. While the work is typically impacting teacher practice and student growth across the school, it is not yet reliable to sustain results in shared improvement and teacher practice.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 095 The Gravesend	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