

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 153 Homecrest

Elementary

**BROOKLYN
NY, 11229**

Principal: Carl SantaMaria

**Dates of review: Jan 8-9, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 153 Homecrest is a/an Elementary school with students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 25% Hispanic, 34% White, and 35% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.2%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 89.62%.

Overall Evaluation:

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders allocate resources and make organizational decisions that provide students with opportunities to make progress toward reaching instructional goals. (1.3)
 - Evaluation of student data allows leaders to make strategic use of financial resources to address the needs of a diverse population of students. For example, in analyzing performance indicators of a variety of student subgroups it was realized that there was a need for interventions for English language learners to accelerate their progress toward reaching standards. The school increased the number of teachers licensed to teach English as a second language allowing for an increase in the number of self-contained classes that service English language learners. In addition, the Foundations reading program used in Early Childhood grades was expanded into the third grade English language learner class to provide students access to targeted instruction that builds fluency and phonetic awareness. Most students engaging in this program are progressing with 37 percent of 16 English language learners making substantial gains in chapter assessments as well as a majority of students in this subgroup demonstrating progress on formative and summative classroom assessments. As a result, work product from this population of students shows increasing use of targeted vocabulary in writing pieces that are progressively more complex.
 - School leaders are thoughtful in scheduling student and teacher time, maximizing time on task and ensuring that faculty has opportunities to engage in collaborative meetings to develop curriculum, plan instruction and analyze student work. A programming model embeds the 37 1/2- minutes of extended time into the school day thereby lengthening the day for all students providing for more time for instruction and enrichment across all grades. All students have to activities that align to their areas of interest and talent and provide opportunities for demonstration of learning in alignment to the standards. Teacher programs provide for at least two weekly common planning periods for each grade in addition to weekly inquiry periods and two monthly periods for PDHQ, resulting in ongoing opportunities for teachers to develop curriculum, and assess, and adjust instruction through analysis of student work.
- Teachers use data from periodic, common and student self-assessments to understand learning, resulting in curricular and instructional decisions that support school progress toward reaching key standards (2.2)
 - Pre and post unit assessments in math and English language arts as well as Acuity periodic assessments, Teachers College running records, conference notes, student work and student self-reflection data is continually analyzed by teachers and teacher teams to measure student progress and gauge the effectiveness of teaching strategies on student learning. In addition, teacher made assessments and ongoing checks for understanding during lessons provide data toward understanding the effectiveness of teaching strategies have on the learning of all student subgroups. It is a priority for the school that students are reflective learners. All students participate in protocols that allow for self- assessment on formative and summative tasks. Teachers

collect and use the student reflective responses to understand student thinking around skill development and content to adjust curriculum and unit plans to match student needs. As a result, teachers can articulate why they are using specific pedagogic strategies and student grouping to address individual needs.

- Teacher teams work collaboratively and engage in inquiry work that supports student learning and influences instructional strategies resulting in improving student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Every teacher participates on at least one team that engages in collaborative inquiry work that monitors student progress and evaluates the effectiveness of teaching practice on student outcomes. For example, a vertical inquiry team meets weekly to study performance and progress of students at or above grade level with a focus on word problems. Using prescribed protocols, the team studies student work to understand their thinking, ensure alignment between task, rubric and overall rating and to evaluate the effectiveness of agreed upon teaching strategies that align to the content. Across grades, student outcomes show that a majority of targeted students are demonstrating growth along math and English language arts rubrics that are specific to skill and content being measured. The use of Google Docs, and Inquiry Spaces as well as communication in weekly grade meetings allows school-wide communication of team findings resulting in coherent instruction across the grades that is purposeful and targeted to meet the needs of all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish curriculum across grades and subject areas to ensure that all students have access to lessons that consistently engage all learners at a highly rigorous level that promotes cognitive challenge and higher order thinking. (1.1)
 - School created curriculum maps that align to state standards exist for each grade and subject area. These maps outline skill and content area development for all grade levels and set forth learning targets, embedded and final tasks and essential questions. However, the curricula used by the school do not consistently articulate curriculum accessibility and scaffolds for all students including English language learners and students with special needs. The school is just beginning to integrate Common Core expectations into units of study and starting work toward infusing the Citywide Instructional shifts that require emphasis on grounding reading, writing and discussion in evidence from the text into their planning. There are varying levels of rigor evident in unit plans and tasks leading to uneven opportunities for students to engage in activities that are cognitively challenging and promote higher order thinking.
- Support instructional practices so that all classes are representative of the school's instructional vision enabling all learners opportunities to engage in cognitively challenging tasks resulting in student work that demonstrates mastery of standards. (1.2)
 - The school follows a balanced literacy and workshop model of instruction where mini lessons and modeling lead to opportunities for independent learning. Expectations are that lessons include scaffolds, access points to

engage all learners and that questioning promotes higher order thinking. However, there are inconsistent levels of instructional practice across the school, resulting in uneven access to high level questioning to promote critical thinking among students and groups of students. In addition, instructional strategies limit opportunities for students to engage in complex text to develop ideas supported by evidence from that text. Although student work products show a focus on student writing, the tasks given to students do not provide opportunities for all students to express high levels of thinking and the development of skills necessary to communicate independent ideas. As a result, student work products do not consistently demonstrate higher order thinking with deep levels of cognitive engagement and comprehensive understanding of the standards.

- Enhance methods of teacher evaluation and development to ensure that effective feedback results in improved pedagogy and accelerated learning for all students. (4.1)
 - School leaders are beginning to support teacher development using a researched based framework providing teachers with feedback on their performance. Although the feedback in most cases aligns to the framework, it is not consistently effective as it is not always actionable, time bound or prioritized and does not clearly articulate expectations. Next steps are vague and do not consistently align to goals or the rubric. In addition, the impact of the frequent cycles of observation is unclear as the rounds of observations have discrete foci and do not provide teachers with follow-up evaluation that informs whether acceptable progress is achieved in areas of need. Consequently, the use of observation as a tool to improve pedagogic practice is limited in its effectiveness in improving classroom instruction and ultimately student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 153 Homecrest	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