

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 161 The Crown

K-8 17K161

BROOKLYN
NY, 11225

Principal: Michael Johnson

Dates of review: Jan 30-31, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 161 The Crown is a/an K-8 school with students from kindergarten through grade 5, and 7-8. The school population comprises 78% Black, 10% Hispanic, 2% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 86.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders are beginning to use resources and time aligned to instructional goals in order to support student improvement. (1.3)
 - Despite budgetary constrictions, the principal allocated funds to purchase more classroom library books, laptops, SMARTboards an after-school tutoring program and Saturday Academy. The principal moved extended day from the early mornings before school to after the regular school day to increase student participation. The extended day program, incorporated into every school day, creates an academic intervention period for both enrichment and remediation support. As a result, this is beginning to reflect some improvements in student work products.
 - Multiple opportunities scheduled weekly, allow teachers to meet, analyze data, and prepare instruction on and across grade levels. The school provides per session opportunities for staff to collaborate and share best practices. For example, teachers on the Grade 3 team meet frequently to discuss the skills their students need in specific strands of math. This enables teachers to have an additional professional development support, resulting in deeper grade conversations around instructional practices and creation of tasks aligned to the curriculum. They have seen some improvements in student performance as measured by rubric scores on writing tasks, as a result of this collaborative instructional planning time.
- The principal and his staff have worked tirelessly and created a positive climate that welcomes collaboration, strengthens academic growth and celebrates the importance of learning for all stakeholders in a safe environment. (1.4)
 - The staff, parents and students share during the interviews about the metamorphosis of the positive school's tone, particularly, the safety for all stakeholders. According to the OORS report, in 2011-2012 there were 169 incidents resulting in 72 suspensions. In comparison to the same time span between September and January, to date there has been a steady decrease in suspensions, resulting in 29. . In response to safety concerns, the principal reached out to the families to support new school initiatives in order to reduce incidents. The principal ramped up correspondence to all families. In doing so, the school noticed a need to address a lack of parental involvement. Consequently, the school launched "Dads take your child to school" to navigate the transition into adolescence. As a result, parental involvement has increased to more than 10% and parents expressed that the school's welcoming nature has encouraged more participation in school activities.
 - The principal and assistant principals set the tone by being visible daily. To ensure that the school begins on a positive note, students recite the school's motto daily on the public announcement system. Additionally, the principal's "open door" policy, and teachers who voluntarily come to school early and stay late, to meet and work with students to ensure that every student is well known to the school community. Students eagerly seek support from the staff and comment that they "love" their school. The school continues the good practice of celebrating their students. Students, teachers, staff and principal gather in the auditorium monthly to recognize individual student accomplishments in attendance and

academics and to reinforce students' commitment to learning and achievement this has promoted positive social relationships as well as raising academic expectations across the school by all constituents.

- The school leadership is beginning to provide quality feedback to teachers based on a research-based framework in an effort to refine and grow classroom teaching practices throughout grade levels. (4.1)
 - The school is participating in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot. As such, the talent coach, assistant principals and principal look for evidence of student learning outcomes through short and frequent cycles of observation, classroom snapshots, and an analysis of student work. The school provides feedback to teachers and there is a mutual understanding of the research based teacher effectiveness rubric, which guides this feedback. The school is beginning to build capacity and have targeted individual and school wide concerns surfaced during prior classroom observations in order to develop a school wide professional development plan, geared toward attainment of teacher goals. Last year, based on observations, the administration reviewed feedback and professional development plans and modified teacher assignments to promote the strengths and support the weakness of their teachers. The school has also begun to norm the support for individual teachers, which is changing traditional pedagogical practices and has begun to impact student learning as evident in the teacher teams.

What the school needs to improve

- Utilize a careful analysis of student needs to strengthen the alignment of curriculum and deepen the level of academic rigor in tasks across all content areas. (1.1)
 - Lower and upper grade students are provided curricula with curriculum maps guided by the Common Core units of study. Though supports are delineated, some tasks lack built-in, structured opportunities for interaction between students that promote a high level of active engagement and rigor to increase conceptual understanding for all learners. For example, a review of the 2011-2012 New York City Progress Report reflects that 37.3% of students performed at grade level proficiency on the New York State English language arts (ELA) assessment. In math, 39.6% scored at grade level on the State assessment. This data shows a decrease in students' progress in these areas over the previous year. Consequently, not all higher achievers, as well as strugglers, make sufficient and timely gains in achievement as evident on the 2011-2012 New York City Progress Report. Higher order thinking skills strategies are visible in some classrooms however, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. In a few classrooms, student group assignments were rudimentary and did not generate thoughtful discussion, or depth in student work products. While the school purchased laptops and there are computers in classrooms computer tasks do not reflect refinement from student data and their integration into classroom activities is inconsistently used to challenge and engage a diversity of students, thus limiting opportunities to challenge creativity and achievement for some students as evidenced in current student work samples and New York State assessment results in ELA and Math.

- Provide greater consistency across the classrooms in the use of questioning and discussion to provide multiple entry points for a range of learners. (1.2)
 - The pedagogical practices exhibited across the school were uneven in differentiation of tasks, teacher questioning and student discussions. While in a third grade classroom, students work in differentiated groups to find the rectangular shape of an object and each group had a different strategy to use. Students defended their answers and their peers were asked if they agree with their responses. However, in other classes observed, the differentiation of tasks and instructional strategies are not uniform. Specifically, in a Special Education classroom, students worked in groups however all students performed the same tasks using the same materials. In addition, in a few classrooms observed the learning objective did not match the task. Thus, resulting in limited opportunities students to successfully build their content knowledge and skill abilities. In addition, there was inconsistency of the school priorities to align teacher practices to the Common Core Learning Standards and to provide entry points into the curriculum for all students and to have students reflect on their work. In another classroom observed, the teacher began a discussion with the class on opinion. The conversation was directed by the teacher and students did not use evidence to answer questions. Upon further questioning, a few students did not fully understand the tasks or its purpose. Accordingly, teaching strategies do not lead to higher order thinking and students are not always actively engaged in meaningful, well-suited activities resulting in uneven teacher practice and dismal student outcomes.

- Ensure that classroom teachers across grades employ strategies to monitor comprehension and make appropriate instructional adjustments to meet student needs. (2.2)
 - Grade level inquiry teams and individual teachers use and develop multiple sources of assessments such as Acuity, Ed Performance Series, conferencing notes, Fountas & Pinnell and rubrics to periodically monitor student learning. Teachers use data compiled to evaluate student performance. While teachers provide students with feedback based on these assessments, students interviewed across the grades report that the information is often not clear or detailed enough for them to understand what they need to do to evaluate their own work and progress toward the next level. Consequently, they state that they did not understand the skill, or, for some, the task. Additionally, across classrooms there was limited use of ongoing assessments that measured student understanding during the lesson, narrowing the opportunities for teachers to modify and adjust their plans as needed.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 161 The Crown	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