

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

School P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini

Elementary 21K216

**350 AVENUE X
BROOKLYN
NY 11223**

Principal: CELIA KAPLINSKY

**Dates of review: April 11, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini is a/an Elementary school with 545 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 5% Black, 17% Hispanic, 55% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 14% 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 93.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula across grades and subject areas align to key standards providing all students with opportunities to engage in learning that promotes progress toward learning goals. (1.1)
 - Intricate data analysis of student outcomes across grades, subject areas and student subgroups is the foundation of curriculum development. By focusing on key strands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), specifically text complexity, comprehension, informational and argumentative writing, number sense and problem solving, there is cohesion across grades and content areas. Units of study embed a Universal Design for Learning model to ensure scaffolds exist so 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 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, units of study offer suggestions on different graphic organizers and texts that support students with special needs and English language learners. Carefully designed questions, across content areas provide opportunities for students to think deeply about content. 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, rigorous learning with continual opportunities to complete tasks that are cognitively challenging allows all students especially students with disabilities and English language learners to demonstrate mastery of skills and their thinking leading to a progression toward college and career readiness.
- Teacher pedagogy demonstrates instructional coherence and practices that consistently engage all students in deep thinking and rigorous tasks that result in meaningful work across the school. (1.2)
 - Ongoing collaboration between teachers and administration is paramount in the instructional coherence that is evident across the school. A balanced literacy model of instruction is representative of a shared pedagogic belief that modeling followed by opportunities for students to collaboratively or independently engage in high-level tasks will result in students reaching and exceeding standards. Targeted scaffolds, including readings and leveled questions, are included in lesson plans that demonstrate vertical progression of skill and content mastery. Currently, a school-wide focus on questioning and

discussion as a pathway for students to demonstrate cognitive reasoning and higher order thinking is leading to students becoming more accountable for their learning. Across grades, tasks promote student learning by asking for work products that align to the Common Core Learning Standards. Students demonstrate an increasing ability to create arguments as well as use texts to defend their ideas and opinions, as evidenced in multiple tasks across grades that show students making progress. For example, fourth graders, after reading several articles of the benefits and dangers of children participating in sports activities, created an argumentative essay setting forth a point of view on whether or not sports are beneficial or unnecessarily dangerous for children. Classroom discussions align to the school's goals of engaging students in high level discussions. Close reading of texts results in meaningful discussions among students where questions such as, "How does the author's choice of words and the illustrations influence how you feel when reading this paragraph?" and "What event in the story is the turning point for the main character?" The Envision math program, gives students opportunities to engage in high level tasks that require use of multi-disciplinary skills in applying knowledge to solve problems with several paths to completion. Students communicate that teachers are constantly pushing them to defend their answers, to explain why they think what they are thinking and why they chose to do things the way they did. Students articulate in writing the reasoning used in constructing answers. An analysis of outcomes shows that seventy percent of students across all subgroups advanced one or more levels on task bundles that assess numeracy and reasoning in math and that all students are improving along rubrics that measure student ability to write arguments .

- Leaders make effective, strategic organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support efforts toward improved student learning. (1.3)
 - Deep analysis of student learning and outcomes revealed that students at or above grade level were not making desired progress and as a result many high achieving students were stagnating at their current levels. In order to address this concern, school leaders redesigned extended day and created a program that engages this group of students in enrichment activities and supports continual progress. This strategic decision aligns to the school's overarching goals relating to the progress of all students in reaching and exceeding the standards. As a result, an analysis of formative data, student work products and tasks shows that targeted students are improving their skills in math and English language arts. Specifically, evidence demonstrates progress in reading levels, building numeracy skills and extended response questions. The Fountas and Pinnell method of measuring reading levels indicates that third grade students should be at a level P by June. The April assessment of targeted students in this grade shows that one hundred percent of students have already reached this benchmark with fifty-four percent of this group reading at least two levels above grade expectations. Summative bundle assessments in mathematics for students in enrichment across grades three through five indicate that seventy-five percent have moved one

performance level and twenty-five percent moved two performance levels, with sixty percent exceeding grade level.

- Strategic scheduling allows teachers to meet at least twice weekly 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. Teacher leads act as the conduit of information between the administrative team and the grade 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. This ensures that all students work toward the same standard and that planning is explicit with extensions and multiple entry points for specific subgroups of students including English language learners and students with special needs. Summative assessments ensure that all students are assessed at the same standard, but individual and groups of students have appropriate access points to perform the task, including leveled readings, choices for graphic organizers and several strategies for note taking. Lead teachers and administrators support the teams by assisting with agenda development, providing professional development and guidance on evaluating student work and curriculum development and effectively evaluating data, resulting in cohesive planning and high level teacher accountability. Across all classrooms, students are demonstrating increasing elevation in their ability to think critically, as evidenced in discussions and in their ability to explain their learning and produce work products in all subject areas that show advancing academic achievement.
- The school culture is extremely collaborative, supportive, and caring of student needs academically, socially and emotionally, resulting in an environment that is safe and conducive to high levels of learning. (1.4)
 - The principal makes it a priority to maintain a positive environment that is supportive of teachers, students and families. Every day, at the end of daily announcements, the principal reminds students to “work hard and be kind to one another.” This sentiment is at the core of the school’s philosophy on how to ensure a culture that promotes excellence. Members of every constituency articulate an understanding of expectation that everyone gives their all every day and that everyone values the contributions of others. Students have leadership roles in maintaining a safe and supportive culture. Peer mediation, where students with guidance from staff facilitate the working out disagreement among each other gives student leaders the responsibility of assisting the student body to resolve differences in a manner that promotes accountability and respect and does not lead to rising tensions or ongoing distraction that interferes with learning. Being part of the positive environment is rewarded, when students “get caught doing the right thing”, they receive school dollars that they can redeem for prizes. A large part of the culture of the school is the belief that students need to be sound in mind and body and that education goes beyond the classroom. The school houses the only “Edible School Yard” in New York City, a fully functioning garden where students grow produce all year and participate in cooking and

nutrition classes so there is understanding from pre-Kindergarten through grade five that nutrition and academic achievement are connected. In addition, the school uses a variety of resources and community collaborations to provide arts education that supports student learning. "Puppetry in Practice led to every second grader participating in building a scale model of the Brooklyn Bridge. This project aligned math and the arts resulting in all students on the grade having the opportunity to apply math concepts in creating something tangible. Parents express their appreciation for the opportunities students are given, stating, "Nowhere else in the city will you find the programs students get at this school. Students and parents benefit from what the school has put in place. I wouldn't send my children to any other school." Therefore, the school is building a reputation for unique opportunities for students and the community thus; enrollment is increasing with the school adding approximately one hundred students to its register in the past year

- The school's philosophy is that "every kid is everyone's kid" and there is a shared responsibility for the wellbeing and social emotional growth for all students. To meet the needs of every student, classroom teachers work closely with the guidance counselor, school social worker and psychologist. Structures are in place for teachers to report concerns, behavioral patterns and at risk behavior. The School Achievement Team works with faculty to understand student progress and create academic and social intervention plans for students. The Response to Intervention team examines student outcomes and behavioral progress and provides individual and in class supports, and closely monitor student academic and social behaviors. Parents are very involved in the intervention process, understand, and can articulate how the school is supporting students to reach goals. A review of data indicates that although the student population is rising, there has been a decline in referrals to special education and students deemed at risk show improving attendance, reduced behavioral referrals and most are making academic progress on par with their peers.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the manner that teachers use assessments and rubrics to evaluate student work so data accurately informs feedback to students and adjustments to curriculum improving academic outcomes across the school. (2.2)
 - Across grades, the school uses common assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell Running Records, Acuity, ECLAS, Envision Math and Writing Bundles to assess student understanding of the standards. Administrators, teachers and teams analyze the data to guide curriculum revision and planning. Across classrooms, teachers embed assessment in daily lessons, continuously collecting data to understand student progress in real time and adjust planning to accommodate student needs. Teachers create and use rubrics that align to individual tasks and to the standards. Although teacher feedback is actionable and relates to student achievement, teachers are working on norming their assessments of student work products along the rubrics to ensure reliability and accuracy in grading that

creates a clear portrait of student mastery, and builds uniformity in communicating next steps for students regarding overall outcomes.

- 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 based professional collaborations that meet across grades, subject areas or vertically to engage in work that integrates Common Core standards into curriculum and instruction. Lead teachers meet at least three times a week to study student work, revise curricula and develop supports for individual teachers and teacher teams to build capacity in implementing the expectations of the standards and instructional shifts required to move students along the new expectations. Protocols to study student work lead to an understanding of how individual students, groups and whole classes are progressing along skill and content strands. The information collected at team meetings result in adjustments to curriculum, lessons and student supports. However, using this data as a tool to understand the impact of instruction on student outcomes is at different levels across teams. As such, while there is improvement in teacher practice and students are moving forward in efforts to achieve goals, it is not yet clear the influence of the teams on overall progress and full attainment of school goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: P.S. 216 Arturo Toscanini | 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 |