Quality Review Report

2012-2013

Public School K368

Elementary School-High School 368

Principal: Jocelyn Nedd

Dates of review: Mar 19-21, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Adrienne Edelstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 368 is an elementary-high school with 274 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 57% Black, 34% Hispanic, and 6% White, students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 79% of the students enrolled and girls account for 20%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 82.88%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and includes a range of learning experiences meeting the needs of its diverse population and facilitating student engagement. (1.1)
    - The school makes purposeful choices about curricular using a gap analysis of skills based on past student performance and school-based bench mark assessments. Curricula is planned through professional learning teams (PLT) that target a cross section of students and ensure academic tasks and data are focused on students with a range of learning needs. The school uses the Unique Learning System, a CCLS aligned curriculum for students with intellectual disabilities and the Common Core Gates Foundation Reading Program which provides a coherent set of CCLS aligned units of study for students in standardized assessment programs. Interdisciplinary collaboration is ongoing between content area teachers. Planning is evident in curriculum maps across grades and results in teachers engaging all students in a robust curriculum that develops critical thinking skills and concrete content knowledge through meaningful units of study. Student thinking and work products are reviewed and measured to determine curriculum adjustments and teaching strategies. School teams created a student friendly language booklet that contains all the CCLS for each student's specific grade so that students make connections to what they are doing. Rigorous standards-based rubrics are created and adapted to meet the needs of relevant subgroups. Faculty across grade levels conference with students at the end of each semester, using a clearly defined rubric, to ensure readiness and student understanding of key skills needed for college and career readiness and articulation to the next grade level. During team meetings, teachers analyze student work and data using rubrics to refine instructional tasks and determine next steps for students. As a result, teachers report students are performing at increasingly higher levels and tasks are modified along a continuum of rigor. This work has ongoing impact increasing communication, speaking, listening, reading, writing, and math skills for students in standardized and alternate assessment programs. This steady movement is closing the achievement gap as evidenced by improvements indicating that of 129 level 1 students, including English language learners, 12% moved into level 2 in the English language State test and 19.5% increased in math. This steady movement is also reflected in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for 47 students who took the alternate assessment and show an 8% increase from level 3 to level 4 in English languages arts and an 18% movement from level 3 to level 4 in math.
- The school aligns assessments and its grading policy to curricula to analyze information on student progress creating a full spectrum of the school that enables teachers to make instructional decisions at team and classroom levels. (2.2)

- Teachers build on the prior year's practice of aligning assessments to curricula and use ongoing assessment practices to pinpoint areas of need and strategically adjust instruction that supports student learning. The school reviews data from Scantron, Acuity, Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) and the Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI). Unit assessments linked to school wide literacy and math programs are expanded via use of teacher conference notes, anecdotal records, extensive use of rubrics, a school wide grading policy, student self-assessments and reflections. After conferencing with students, teachers fill out and distribute a "Glo and Grow" form, aligned to the task specific rubric, which gives feedback and next steps to students. Students self-assess using rubrics, and partner with peers to review and revise work, leading to effective adjustments. Thus, written work revised by students prior to publishing and display evidences high levels of student class work, bulletin board displays and portfolios. All student specific data is submitted to the data coordinator and entered into a school data base that provides a clear portrait of student growth and needs. This data is shared and analyzed with the school community in various venues; instructional team meetings, inquiry team meetings, faculty conferences, collegial review of student work and one-on-one conferences with the principal. This enables teachers to adjust instructional supports and resources and provide ongoing feedback to students.

- School leaders make organizational decisions with an emphasis on program scheduling and professional development that support instructional initiatives and maximize student progress. (1.3)

  - School leaders and staff analyze student data to make strategic use of financial resources that address the needs of a diverse population of students. In analyzing student performance teachers found that data indicated a need to target student writing improving proficiency, and comprehension. The investment in the Common Core Gates Foundation curriculum provides resources and support so struggling students gain access to targeted instruction that meets individual needs. Students demonstrate work products in their portfolios that show continual improvement toward reaching learning targets. For example, essays on the "Medieval Times" unit is showing higher order thinking skills in cross content curriculum including the arts. The Gates consultant provides extensive professional development that begins on July 1, 2012 and carries through the school year. Furthermore, to support this investment plan, block programming for math and English language arts is scheduled to ensure progress for all students and raise the level of achievement. Teacher assignments are based on strengths in a particular curriculum area. For example, a teacher who has an extensive background in social studies is now a social studies coverage teacher. In addition, an F-status teacher was hired to work three days per week to provide academic intervention services to targeted students. Through the use of multi-sensory techniques, four of the targeted students have been recommended for a less restrictive environment.

- School leaders schedule instructional teams and inquiry team meetings to specifically assess student learning needs, such as, weakness in converting fractions to decimals. Grade level inquiry teams meet twice weekly, examine student work and develop strategies implemented grade wide. Teams use a protocol, creating agendas, writing minutes, and using a collaborative teacher team rubric. Each team submits documents to the principal who provides feedback to every team. As a result, teachers have many opportunities to improve instructional practice via data analysis, review of student work, and development of curriculum and lessons. Furthermore, these strategic decisions provide opportunities for articulation between teachers and school leaders.

- School leaders and faculty communicate high expectations for all students and partner with families to support student progress linked to college and career readiness so all students are ready for the next academic level. (3.4)

  - The principal confidently articulates high expectations for school faculty, through faculty conferences, principal communications and individual and team discussions. Professional development for faculty, including supervisors, teachers and support staff continually raises the bar for the level of work expected by adults and students at the school. At a student meeting one questions was, “Do your teachers expect a lot of you in all your classes?” One student responded, “Oh yea…the teachers are teaching different from the way they did a few years ago…we really have to work!” Faculty receives comprehensive support in building pedagogic skill around imbedding technology and vocabulary development to expand teacher capacity in high level, engaging instruction that motivates students and sets the highest expectations. Conference notes, unit and lesson plans, supervisor feedback and student work products demonstrate that the culture of the school promotes a belief that whatever a students’ level, they are supported in moving forward. As a result the school is a strong professional community that strives to elevate its practice and uses student outcomes to better understand the effectiveness of instruction and specific needs so students continually improve as evidenced by 40 students referred to a Less Restrictive Environment (LRE) which is a 24.4% increase from the past year.

  - School leaders, teachers, students and families engage in a partnership to hold every student to high standards. Workshops are about a clear path toward achieving learning goals and college and career readiness and use of augmentative communication devices, understanding the CCLS and dealing with behavioral issues at home. When asked about home-school communication parents, overwhelmingly responded that communication was excellent. They cited communication books from teachers that go home daily, e-mail access to the principal and the open door policy the principal has to meet with parents. During the parent meeting, parents were asked to use one word to describe the school. The responses included the following: “awesome, powerful, outstanding, trustworthy, safe, and lovable.” Support staff provides parent monthly workshops, covering a variety of topics selected from a needs survey at the beginning of

the school year. As a result, these workshops provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities for families, support and guidance in specific skill developmental areas, such as toileting and communication skills for students with autism, as well as partnering parents with social agencies to assist them with planning for the future. Students successfully progress both in school and at home in developing academic, social and physical independence as evidenced by an increase in communication and on task behaviors at home as reported by parents.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher questioning and student discussion during the delivery of instruction in order to enrich student participation, thereby increasing opportunities for further development of critical thinking skills. (1.2)
    - The school's belief that students learn best when tasks challenge for deeper thinking, is supported by collaborative planning during team meetings. Planning has resulted in differentiated lessons that incorporate Depth of Knowledge, and are CCLS aligned. Challenging tasks are evident in student work products displayed throughout the school, which include graphic organizers and the integration of technology. Planning is visibly demonstrative in the majority of classes. Furthermore, the school is in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP) and through the support of a TEP coach, improvement in questioning techniques is apparent. Students are encouraged to explain the rationale for responses. In one lesson students were asked "That's a great answer! Tell me how you came to that conclusion?" However, in some classes the level of questioning did not universally lead to high levels of student thinking. Literal questions did not give students opportunities to expand on concepts, limiting the level of discussion. As a result, some students including relevant subgroups were not challenged to meet high levels of thinking and student engagement.

- Extend processes and systems to regularly evaluate and adjust curriculum, instructional and organizational practices that meet the needs of all students and expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. (5.1)
    - School leaders and faculty have an effective process in place to regularly evaluate and adjust curriculum and instruction to meet learning needs of all students and expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Data collection shows on an average week six less students per day are referred out of class to the individual assistance room and therefore allowing students more time on task. Although the school regularly reviews student work and data, and makes instructional adjustments for students who take alternate assessments and are cognitively delayed and functioning at an extremely low level, teachers struggle with aligning practices to appropriate age/grade level CCLS. Hence, structures lack processes needed to maximize evaluation of student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 368	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	

Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly…	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

To what extent does the school …	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

To what extent does the school …	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