

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Granville T. Woods School for Science and Technology

Middle School 584

**130 Rochester Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Gilleyan Hargrove

Dates of review: January 10-11, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Granville T. Woods School for Science and Technology is a middle school with 149 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 83% Black, 14% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 23% 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 90.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school community works to create a safe and respectful learning environment that nurtures and supports students' social and academic growth. (1.4)
 - In response to last year's School Survey results that indicated concerns with safety, the school has created partnerships with agencies and implemented programs to promote a positive school culture. These include collaborations with the Mayor's Interagency Task Force on Truancy and Absenteeism to improve student attendance and the Peace First Program that focuses on teaching young people the skills of peace making. The program also works with parents to teach and raise expectations of young people to demonstrate compassion and sympathy for others. In addition to sponsoring events such as "Spirit Day" and monthly assemblies where behavior protocols are discussed and reinforced and students are celebrated for improved attendance and progress, school guidance personnel are available to provide counseling as needed and requested by students, staff and families. In the case where a student demonstrated difficulty socializing with others and was not making academic progress, the principal and support personnel worked with the student and family to assist the student in making the necessary adjustments to be successful. This led to the student being motivated to focus his attention in class and achieving higher scores in class assignments and assessments. Further, in efforts to give students voice in planning and decision making, the school maintains a student government that meets weekly to provide input for school improvement. One of the initiatives of the student government was the establishment of student hall monitors who assist in maintaining calm during classroom transitions. These strategies have led to the school receiving an attendance award from the mayor's office for significant increases in student attendance and the school noting a decrease in the number of incidents so far this year causing students, parents and teachers to express that they feel safe, valued and respected in school. As a result, there is greater student participation in classroom learning activities to increase academic performance.
- The principal has made strategic organizational decisions in efforts to support school goals and increase levels of student achievement. (1.3)
 - One of the school's goals this year is to increase the use of technology in the classroom as a resource for teaching and learning. To that end, the school has provided computers, a Smart Board in each classroom and a netbook cart with additional laptops for use by classes as needed. Teachers and students have begun using the Smart Boards to illustrate concepts during lesson presentations and using the individual computers and laptops to conduct research, complete written assignments and work on tasks using computer based programs. The school has also budgeted funds to provide training for teachers in the use of computer-based programs aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English language arts that include Achieve 3000 and "Ready". This has led to increased student use of technology as a tool to facilitate learning

and promote greater engagement in lesson activities. Preliminary data from benchmark assessments and student work products indicates that students are making some progress in English language arts and math.

- The principal reassigned one of the teacher leaders to work with the Integrated Co-Teaching class teachers to improve student skills in English language arts and math and improve student performance on summative assessments. The teachers meet weekly and review assessment information to plan lessons that address skills in need of improvement for intervention. The students are organized in groups based on levels and taught the skills identified in four to five week cycles. While preliminary student data does not indicate significant progress for some students in the targeted academic areas, teachers express confidence that as a result of their instructional focus and concentration in areas of need, higher student outcomes will be noted in the next round of benchmark tests.
- Teachers collaborate in teams and participate in professional development activities to promote their leadership capacity and improve student achievement. (4.2)
 - Teachers meet weekly in teacher teams organized by content area with a focus on planning lessons aligned to the CCLS. At the meetings teachers analyze student work products and share and offer instructional strategies to enhance student thinking and learning. For example, the English language arts teacher team analyzed student writing samples of letters to the mayor requesting funding for a high school sports team. The teachers used a common rubric to determine if the students included sufficient evidence in their writing to support the claim for additional funds. For the students whose writing did not include convincing evidence, the teachers discussed possible strategies to re-teach the skill that included having the students provide more details to strengthen their arguments. These interactions are developing teacher dialogue and collaboration for improving instructional practices to increase student progress.
 - In addition to assigning teachers to leadership roles as grade leaders, the principal sends teachers to outside venues for workshops and subsequently conduct turn-key training for the school staff. For example, selected teachers attend monthly network meetings focused on aligning the curriculum to the CCLS. The teachers then share the learning with their colleagues at team and staff meetings to inform their planning. Within this framework teachers are given autonomy in the development of curricular units of study in content areas for their students. These structures are promoting teacher leadership and decision-making capacity to plan academic tasks that improve classroom instruction and increase student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop greater alignment of the school's curriculum to the CCLS in order to promote thinking and achievement for all students. (1.1)

- In alignment with the City-wide Instructional Expectations (CIE) the school has begun to implement the CCLS. The school has created curriculum maps that integrate the CCLS in English language arts, math and content areas and is in the process of identifying key standards that include the use of text evidence to support a claim. However, the curricular scope and sequence is not yet fully developed for all subject areas within the grades, and lessons inconsistently reflected key standards. Additionally, rigorous instructional activities were not evident in several classrooms. In these classrooms lessons were mostly teacher dominated with few opportunities for peer learning. For example, in one classroom students worked individually on an assignment using the class text book as reference while, in another, the students already knew the content of the lesson objective and, therefore, were able to complete the lesson assignment without much effort. This reduces peer interaction that promotes discussion, sharing and analysis, thus hindering creativity and student achievement. Additionally, in many classrooms there was little evidence of planning tasks that generate higher order thinking for student sub-groups. This decreases opportunities for a diverse population of students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, to engage in lesson activities that provoke thinking to maximize learning.
- Develop effective, consistent classroom practices and tasks that promote thinking at high levels and address the instructional needs of all students. (1.2)
 - The school's belief in providing multiple entry points and challenging tasks as a means to meet the various needs of students is reflected in the school's mantra that states, "If students don't learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn." However, this practice was not consistent throughout the school. In several classrooms, student tasks did not fully align with the lesson objectives or the stated expected outcomes, and in others instructional activities were conducted in a whole group with little evidence of in-depth learning opportunities to support student subgroups and students performing at different levels. This diminishes the understanding and skill development needed to ensure academic achievement for all students.
 - Across the school the students were engaged in lesson activities and in several classrooms the students worked in collaborative groups to complete assignments. However, tasks that generated higher-order thinking were not evident in some classrooms. In these classrooms, discussions consisted mainly of answering teacher directed questions that generated minimally thoughtful conversations and student interactions. Additionally, classroom bulletin boards included few samples of student work. Student folders contained mostly worksheets that demonstrated insufficient evidence of learning and work in notebooks was sparse. This lack of rigor adversely affects students' ability to think critically and negatively impacts their potential for progress and academic growth.
- Improve assessment analysis in all content areas to monitor student progress toward goals and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)

- School leaders and teachers gather data that includes baseline and benchmark assessments aligned to the State tests and Acuity periodic assessments to measure progress over time. Several classrooms utilize student exit slips at the end of the lessons to determine understanding of the lesson content from the students' point of view. Additionally, teacher teams analyze student work to assess progress and identify areas of need. Although the use of these results in literacy and math to measure school-wide progress toward goals and adjust curriculum and instruction is developing, this practice is not evident in other content areas. Further, the use of data to inform instruction for individual students at the classroom level is inconsistent. This lessens teachers' abilities to use the information to plan effectively to meet the academic needs of students, thus limiting opportunities to consistently provide suitable instruction and accelerate progress for all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

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|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| School name: Granville T. Woods School for Science and Technology | 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 |