

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers School

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle

**MANHATTAN
NY, 10033**

Principal: Kristy Dela Cruz

Dates of review: Jan 10 and 11, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers School is a middle school with students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3%% Black, 96% Hispanic and 1% White. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 88%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has an established culture of trust and collaboration that supports student and adult learning, resulting in a safe and respectful environment that supports the social and academic needs of students. (1.4)
 - Staff members are engaged in professional development on the ongoing implementation of Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS) and peer mediation to help develop the school's ability to effectively meet the social and emotional needs of students. The student council actively surveys student opinions and needs that are conveyed to school leaders, resulting in the changing of uniform colors and the location of where breakfast is served from the classrooms to the cafeteria. The school partners with a plethora of organizations such as Computers for Youth, Police Athletic League and Urban Arts League to enhance the academic and enrichment opportunities provided to students. Efforts in addressing the social/emotional needs of students and encouraging them to have a voice in school policies has resulting in high approval ratings on the learning environment survey for safety and engagement on the part of students and parents and a reduction in student suspensions.
 - Advisory programs for all students are scheduled three times a week to allow teachers to engage with small groups no larger than fifteen, in discussion of issues that impact their social and emotional well being. The advisory period allows teachers to monitor the progress of a small group of students towards academic and social emotional goals. During grade level teacher teams, content area teachers and advisory teachers have the opportunity to discuss progress of students shared and develop intervention plans to improve student performance. Individual and school wide attendance trends are closely monitored by the attendance team and contribute to the school's overall mission of supporting the academic and social needs of students. For example, analysis of student lateness and review of literature on the sleep patterns of adolescents led the school to schedule the beginning of the school day a half hour later. As a result, the school's overall attendance rate has improved which the principal believes has led to improvement of grades from the first marking period to the second as evidenced by the school's grade analysis.
- The school gathers and analyses formative and summative assessments in order to inform instructional decisions and monitor student progress. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams have developed common grade level rubrics in all content areas, including the arts, to assess student progress towards grade level goals. In addition, teachers use reading levels, conference notes and acuity results to inform instructional decisions. Teachers group student work in categories of high, medium and low to analyze trends and norm the grading of student work. This process has enabled teachers to use a common language when providing feedback to students and as a result teachers report student are better able to apply skills learned across content areas. For example, the feedback provided by the math teachers around graphing supports students in using these concepts during science class. Student grades are uploaded into a computer program, providing access to staff, students and parents which facilitates monitoring of progress towards grade

level goals. As a result of the accessibility of student performance data, one student stated, "When you are achieving your goals, you know you are getting better and this can be seen in the difference in grades from one semester to another," which is consistent with feedback received from other students and parents.

- The principal promotes a message of high expectations for staff, students and families resulting in a shared vision that supports student achievement. (3.4)
 - The school began the school year by offering professional development on the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE), including the use of the Danielson's framework to develop a common language to describe characteristics of effective instruction. The principal and the teacher's union representative attended training on how to introduce the framework in order to develop a cohesive plan for implementation. Teachers were asked to reflect on the chosen competencies and to set goals for improvement which are used to plan professional development and to focus observations by administrators in order to provide relevant feedback. The principal continuously transmits school goals and expectations through weekly highlights and e-mails to focus school efforts. The principal also solicits feedback from staff on effectiveness of initiatives by asking teachers to complete reflection forms and questionnaires through Survey Monkey to help inform next steps. As a result, teachers report that they trust the principal as an instructional leader and value the feedback received.
 - Through monthly Parent Association Meetings and weekly workshops for parents focused on curricular topics, the school re-enforces school goals and provides parents with strategies to support their children. Parents report that they are very much aware of what students are learning in the classrooms and as a result, they are better equipped to help their children. The school also schedules career day, alumni day, community service and internships to expose students to real world experiences that foster essential skills such as independence, organization and self advocacy necessary for success in college and beyond. Parents are active partners in the school's efforts to develop students who are college and career ready through constant monitoring of their child's progress. Parents view class grades on line, and receive progress reports three times a year in addition to report cards, enabling them to have a clear understanding of the progress being made by their children. During interviews parents expressed that they are true partners with the school in meeting the needs of their children which has resulted in high parent rating of the school's efforts on the Learning Environment Survey.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the rigor of classroom tasks and questioning to engage all students and promote higher order thinking skills in order to improve academic outcomes. (1.1)
 - This is the school's second year implementing the reading and writing units of study developed by Teacher's College which are aligned to the Common Core Standards to prepare students for grade level goals. In literacy, the school has focused on reading and writing for informational purposes and citing evidence from the text read to support responses. Across content areas, students are required to support answers with evidence from texts read as evidenced by work displayed on bulletin boards and work folders. In math, the focus of the school's work has been on assisting students in understanding fewer concepts at a deeper level in order to equip them with

multiple ways of solving problems. The school has scheduled weekly teacher team meetings and reading and writing lab-sites to allow teachers to examine units of study, teaching strategies and develop tasks that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. However, classroom observations reveal that tasks implemented do not consistently challenge a diversity of learners and questions are mostly of lower level. As a result, students are not consistently producing grade level work products as evidenced by review of student work.

- Improve teacher pedagogy in order to augment the consistency effective strategies that elevate the performance of all students including English language learners and students with disabilities. (1.2)
 - The principal promotes the belief that students should be engaged in their learning and provided with voice so that they understand the relevance of what they are learning which will result in improved student outcomes. Staff has been attended professional development on the implementation of the workshop model so that students can engage in the curriculum through whole group, partnerships, small group and individually so that students can process their learning in a variety of ways. Teachers plan scaffolds for students such as visual aids, sentence starters and word banks to provide opportunities for all students to engage in common tasks. The school has invested in Power My Learning Software, which allows students to engage in activities in English or Spanish based on individual levels. In most classrooms, lists of cognates in English and Spanish are displayed to facilitate student transfer of meaning from one language to another. In most lessons observed, students are also grouped for small group instruction to allow for practice of skills with students who have similar needs. However, the tasks given to students are usually the same for all groups and as a result, students are not provided with instruction and practice that meet specific needs of individual students.
- Improve structures to support teacher teams in the collaborative review of student work that results in curricular decision that improve student learning. (4.2)
 - Departmental teams are scheduled to meet on a weekly basis to allow for the analysis of student work and to inform instructional and curricular decisions. Teachers use conference logs and summative and formative data to gauge student progress towards school goals. Cluster and intervention teachers are integrated into content area teams to promote the use of common language and instructional approaches throughout the school. For example, in order to support the school goal of improving student writing, teachers across classrooms implement journal notebooks to allow students to reflect on content learned. One teacher team observed was engaged in analyzing teacher feedback provided to students on journal entries in an effort to establish common expectations around what entries should look like and the type of feedback that would support this. However, meetings are not structured in such a way that analysis of student work is consistently grounded in rubrics developed and key standards and as a result strategies implemented in the classrooms do not always promote progress towards grade level standards.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: I.S. 528 Bea Fuller Rodgers School	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