

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Lewis Carroll School

P004Q

196-25 Peck Avenue

Queens

NY 11365

Principal: Marcy Berger

Dates of review: February 11-13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P4Q is an elementary/middle school with 406 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 50% Black, 27% Hispanic, 8% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 83% of the students enrolled and girls account for 17%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Highly developed professional collaborations continuously strengthen cohesive curriculum and classroom practices ensuring a shared commitment to increased student achievement. (4.2)
 - All teachers are active members of collaborate teams, both within and across sites, that focus on integrating the instructional shifts as outlined in the Citywide Instructional expectations (CIE), and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) uniformly into instruction across the school. Team members, using consistent protocols where staff rotates as lead presenters or facilitators, review students writing pieces generated prior to instruction on a unit of study and writing pieces generated at the conclusion of the unit. Student work samples at the end of the unit demonstrate consistent increases in writing stamina, the use of key vocabulary in content areas and the inclusion of supporting details as measured by the rubric for the task which was accessed from the Common Core Library. Furthermore, they discuss instructional strategies used, and come to consensus as to what modifications are needed to ensure curriculum maps for English language arts (ELA) provide opportunities for all students including those eligible for alternate State assessments, to practice including text-based evidence into their arguments. In addition, the team continues to modify these CCLS aligned tasks so that students in alternate assessment benefit from grade appropriate learning activities connected to higher expectations of the new standards. Teachers also present lessons plans to their colleagues prior to implementation in the classroom to receive feedback that focuses on the rigor of the task and the level of questioning as categorized in Webb's Depth of Knowledge matrix. As a result of this collaboration, teachers guarantee that cohesive practices are embedded throughout the school and ensure support to each other, improve their instructional practices and increase self-reflection.
- Consistent teacher practices in support of the school's beliefs related to student learning result in very high levels of student engagement and increased student achievement. (1.2)
 - Instructional practices supporting student learning, such as verbal encouragement, small group work, peer to peer interactions, and concrete supports, such as Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECS), and graphic organizers, were evident in all classroom visits. All teachers apply the philosophy of "I do, we do and you do" to all learning activities, and provide supports and scaffolds to ensure high levels of student engagement. In addition, professional development opportunities during cohort meetings infuse the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix and Danielson's Framework for teaching with a focus on teachers questioning and discussion techniques supporting a key element of the school's chosen research-based framework for teacher effectiveness. For example, in math classes visited, students were required to defend the processes used for solving problem using content specific vocabulary.

Students, after a social studies unit, were required to write an opinion piece on child labor laws where they supported their beliefs related to these laws with text-based evidence. To address the varied learning abilities and styles of students within classrooms, technology is routinely used to ensure all students have entry into learning and the means with which to communicate their thinking. In addition, in all classrooms visited, paraprofessionals worked with pre-identified small groups of students on differentiated learning tasks. As a result of the targeted supports provided that bolsters student learning, 75% of third graders demonstrated improvement in math, in ELA and reading, over 65% of fourth graders, 70% of fifth graders, and 70% of sixth graders made significant gains in their Scantron assessments.

- The school culture is collaborative, highly respectful and extremely supportive of student's academic and behavioral needs resulting in a safe community enabling increased engagement in learning. (1.4)
 - The entire school community theory of action focuses on social-emotional values. A highly developed system of positive behavior supports including school-wide programs such as "Steps to Success", Emotional Literacy, and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) effectively reinforce positive choices and self-regulation. The school is vigilant and responsive in how these are implemented in maintaining a strong culture for learning for all students. Positive behavior reward systems now include behavior on the school bus since data revealed a spike in incidents in that location. Bus incidents have decreased since the inclusion of these rewards, as students are granted additional choice time in recreational activities. To date, no students received level 4 or 5 infractions on the bus compared to 7 level 4 infractions and 1 level 5 infraction during the same period last school year. The students at all sites are well known due to the teaming of staff to address concerns. Related service providers constantly meet with teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators to ensure that both the academic and social emotional needs are identified and addressed. During the large group student meeting, students stated "I can go to the Principal, my counselor, the teachers and paraprofessionals for help". As a result, the school maintains an overwhelming climate of calm and a culture of respect in the classroom, throughout the school building, and on the school bus. To date, the school has reported 46 minor infractions in the on-line occurrence reporting system, compared to last year when 107 reportable incidents occurred. As a result of this support system, 11% of students have moved on to less restrictive environments.
- Strategic use of resources and extensive partnerships ensure access to learning for all students and enable teachers to meet the needs of students resulting in ongoing growth for all community members. (1.3)
 - Through effective organizational programming, in alignment with the school's overarching goals and high expectations around teacher practice and assignments, the leadership team has supported professional learning communities by scheduling weekly meeting time so that teachers can examine student progress in meeting their goals. Student data and work samples are analyzed and learning goals are determined against an

understanding of developmentally appropriate skills as seen during an academic team meeting. The principal has added a literacy school-based coach to provide support for the implementation of the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). Additionally the coach provides professional development for teachers based on areas of need as previously seen in classrooms, EdPerformance and Acuity Assessments. Students report that they have learned to speak “more clearly” and they now have the ability to refer to references in their text. Thinking Maps (specific graphic organizers) were purchased to assist students to become more organized and be able to cite details from a paragraph to support opinions. During a class visits, students were able to indicate which “map” they were using and why, to assist in organizing their writing assignment. A lead instructional team was created to participate in collaborative meetings at the main site and share their “learnings” at their site’s weekly meetings, thereby, guaranteeing a coherence of instruction. Staff time is also structured to allow for interclass visitation that has resulted in consistency in pedagogical practices, as evidenced in different classes. There is a shared committed responsibility by teachers to revise their teaching practices, as needed, to reflect effective instructional strategies as evidenced during a collaborative team meeting. To ensure all students have access to technology, the school secured a Reso A grant to equip each classroom with Smart Boards and additional computers. The school also allocated funds to provide Academic Intervention Support (AIS) services for those students who scored Level 1 on New York State exams and purchased Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned materials to help teach strategies for test taking during AIS. In addition, to supporting its goals of student independence and post-secondary outcomes, the school has reached out and established partnerships with extensive organizations such as Schneider Children’s Hospital, Steinway Medical Center, Big Brothers and Sisters and the Bereavement Fund to address their students’ and families’ academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs. The school has also partnered with Ballet Hispanico, New Victory Theater, and Project Arts Storytelling which encourages students to have increased access to the visual arts resulting in students having an outlet for expressing themselves and feeling valued. As a result of strategic management of teacher and support staff schedules and securing partnerships to enhance learning experiences both inside and out of school for adults and students the school has ensured a continued commitment to growth.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the use of assessment data to continue informing instructional decisions, grading practices and provide feedback to students to enable them to take more targeted ownership of their learning. (2.2)
 - The school routinely administers curricular based pre- and post-assessments from the school’s chosen ELA and math curricula, Scantron and Acuity. These results lead to adjustments in instructional plans. Consistently, student work products are graded using rubrics. This provides teachers with targeted information related to student performance from specific learning activities, and guides instructional

decisions such as whether re-teaching is required. However, feedback to students does not always include next steps connected to the specific skills that learning tasks require students to demonstrate, preventing them from understanding what they need to improve in order to increase mastery of learning standards. All lessons are presented grounded to an explicitly stated learning objective that is aligned to the curricula. There are substantial opportunities for teachers to assess what their students understand through questioning and checklists that accompany learning tasks. Teacher generated rubrics are attached as the grading system for all student writing tasks and tests. However, the forethought of providing students with opportunities to self-assess is not always in place, limiting the consistent ownership of progress.

- Continue to engage in designing rigorous, coherent curricula across all content areas to state standards including school defined key standards to increase student performance in all subject areas and grades. (1.1)
 - Core curricula, aligned to State standards, for a range of students of varying intellectual ability levels have been strategically chosen. The targeted focus on speaking and listening and writing has included teachers and teacher teams collaborating to enhance units of study to ensure there are embedded opportunities for all students to engage in purposeful discussion about different content areas. The school has created curriculum maps aligned to the District 75 Literacy Units of Study and Unique (for students in alternate assessment) and have integrated appropriate grade level themes in social studies and science. The school-wide focus on using Webb's Depth of Knowledge in the design of rigorous tasks engages all students, as seen during class visits, as they work to get answers from texts. Work products, for both standardized and alternate assessment students steadily demonstrate the infusion of higher order thinking skills, where students must validate their opinions. The students who are cognitively impaired, the use of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECs) are used to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge. Lesson plans are modified to meet each child's entry point. The school uses Everyday Math for students in standardized assessment and Equals for students in alternate assessment. By using the same curriculum and following the CCLS across all sites, common language is used among staff and the "modeling" of this practice ensures students are building their English language arts academic vocabulary as evidenced in their classroom discussions. However, these skills are not fully embedded across all grades and classes resulting in missed opportunities for student use of academic language in discussions and student writing.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Lewis Carroll School P004Q	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