

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Judge Charles J. Vallone

Elementary School Q085

34-25 82nd Street

Queens

NY 11372

Principal: Ann Gordon-Chang

Dates of review: February 12-13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Judge Charles J. Vallone School is an elementary school with 567 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 30% Hispanic, 41% White, and 25% Asian students and 1% other student. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The instructional cabinet sets clear goals and effectively communicates the school's improvement efforts, resulting in a shared commitment to promote student learning. (3.1)
 - The school's Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) includes a list of clear goals and action plans that focus on strengthening teacher development, implementing common core aligned units of study and improving communication. The instructional cabinet tracks the school's progress in meeting English language arts (ELA), math, science and social studies benchmarks to accelerate student learning. A review of instructionally targeted assessments in the core subjects across all grades revealed that high needs students did not meet the grade benchmarks in math. Therefore, teachers adapted and implemented math exemplar units of study from the Common Core library. Teachers also participated in monthly professional development sessions to improve alignment to the expectations of the Common Core Standards. As a result, post assessment math data and rubrics to evaluate student work reflected a positive improvement across all grades for high needs students.
 - School leaders collaborate with staff and families to determine and develop programs to improve student outcomes through school leadership team meetings and subcommittees. For example, students benefit from enrichment programs and extended day activities which offer after school opportunities for high needs students to strengthen their literacy and math skills, and for high performing students to extend their learning. In addition, high needs students work on individual computerized literacy and math programs and high performing students participate in enrichment programs such as music, dance, theatre, chess, keyboard and visual arts. A parent stated, "Everyone knows each other, it doesn't matter if the children are in the gifted and talented program. The school always ensures that all children continue to grow in their learning."
- The school leader and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer engaging learning experiences that challenge students and support their learning. (1.1)
 - School leaders reviewed citywide instructional expectations and thoroughly analyzed multiple data results from various sources such as, I-Ready, Successmaker and teacher made exams to sustain their work on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), Strand 1 analysis, inquiry and design. The second grade team created a unit of study on rocks and soil. Students read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it as well as cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. Students determine central ideas on themes of a text, and summarize the key supporting details and ideas. They identify the main topic of a multiparagraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text. In addition, students interpret words and phrases as they are used

in a text, including determining technical connotative and figurative meanings and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. Students were required to write a report that explains what they learned about rocks to answer the question: How are rocks useful to us? As a result, teachers state that student writing demonstrated the central purpose of scientific inquiry to develop explanations of natural phenomena in a continuing, creative process, thereby contributing toward closing the achievement gap by engaging in authentic research and setting a solid foundation for college and career readiness.

- The school was invited to join the New York City Department of Education Common Core Lab Team. The team consists of four lead teachers selected by the administration. The lab schools work to support and build on the Citywide Instructional Expectations through the development of the instructional lead teachers. Lead teachers develop expertise in the Common Core Standards and support school leadership in moving the school's instructional agenda forward. The Common Core instructional cabinet examines student work in order to plan and design curricula and learning activities with a focus on the needs of English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD). As a result, teachers stated they are prepared to be the voice for ELLs, SWD's, and students with particular learning needs. The team works with teachers to ensure curricula incorporates whole group, small group, independent, and center activities that are interactive, aligned to the standards and related through content themes. As a result, curricula and academic tasks are continuously modified to meet the needs of a variety of learning needs, especially ELLs or SWDs as evidenced by an increase of student informational writing pieces that demonstrate students are cognitively engaged in problem solving activities.
- The school is a safe place where students are engaged in learning and benefit from the effective level of support they receive for their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - One of the school's goals is to help students develop their personal growth, academic skills, strengths, interests and talents. To ensure that the students feel safe and comfortable and know they always have someone to talk to, the administration, teachers and parents collaborate to create a nurturing environment for all students. For example, it was collaboratively decided to create a math squad, consisting of parents and teachers to promote high interest in math. This involved monthly math celebrations, including participation in math games and awards for mathematicians of the month. In addition, the guidance counselor meets with the student council twice a month to enhance their personal skills and engage them in school-wide activities. For example, students chose to participate in the annual Penny Harvest and in fundraising activities for local shelters. Consequently, parents state that through these programs, their children are more sensitive to the needs of others.
 - The school attendance committee which consists of the assistant principal, guidance counselor, pupil accounting secretary, parent coordinator and two school aides, meet monthly to coordinate supports that align with student learning needs. The team monitors attendance concerns and reaches out to families through letters sent home, phone calls and home visits. Parents are also invited to school to meet with the

assistant principal or guidance counselor to discuss their children's social emotional development. The school provides individual certificates for students with 100% monthly attendance and presents the certificates at awards assembly programs. In addition, individual classes receive a gold, silver or bronze medal which is displayed on the classroom door. By focusing on the students' needs, there has been an increase in attendance from 95% last year, to 95.5% this year allowing more focused time for students to grow both academically and socially.

- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instruction in order to create targeted pedagogical support to increase student outcomes. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principal offer frequent recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal observations and analysis of student work products using as common instructional lens. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based framework to articulate clear expectations for teacher practice and use it to support the development of teachers' skills. The principal and assistant principal conduct short frequent cycles of classroom visits and provide clear actionable feedback with next steps and follow-up to improve instruction. The principal and assistant principal also meet with individual teachers during the year to establish expectations, discuss goals and create a professional development plan with specific supports to meet their needs and improve their pedagogical skills. The professional development plan is based on teacher data in ARIS Learn and supports school goals. All teachers have been trained to access the ARIS Learn Community and evaluate themselves and set their professional goals aligned with the professional teaching competencies. New teachers engage in activities such as; meeting with mentors twice weekly in order to improve pedagogical practices, meeting weekly with the assistant principal in order to engage in lesson planning and attending monthly math professional development sessions at Hunter College. Scheduled inter-class visitations offer teachers opportunities to share best practices. These practices promote teacher growth and reflection, resulting in improved student performance as noted in an additional 40% of students meeting benchmarks on instructionally targeted assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the use of strategic teaching strategies that embed multiple entry points in the curricula for all learners, including relevant subgroups that result in producing meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Teachers, across grades and subjects, plan lessons and use appropriate scaffolds to often provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to students' performance and interests. The school is rich with technology equipment, but visits to classrooms indicate that the technology is not always used to increase student learning. In addition, teachers use manipulatives during math lessons and ladder of feedback charts during visual arts lessons. However, lessons do not always challenge some students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, in that assignments do not consistently offer opportunities for them to

demonstrate higher order thinking skills or extend their learning, thus limiting these high performing students from having the ability to achieve greater outcomes.

- Strengthen teacher' assessment practices to reflect effective feedback in order to make instructional adjustments and provide clear next learning steps to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
 - Student work is available in well organized folders in addition to the displays throughout the rooms. It is also evident that teachers celebrate students' best efforts through checkmarks, stickers, and written comments and use this information to inform instruction. However, not all student work includes feedback for improvement. As a result, the teachers are not fully able to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum or instructional decisions or to consistently provide students with their next learning steps, thus limiting progress. Teacher teams and individual teachers use English language arts (ELA) and math items analysis information as well as Acuity predictive and interim assessments data to supplement summative data and identify student performance levels. However, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment to make immediate adjustments to lessons is not a fully embedded practice across the school. This limits the school's ability to pinpoint and address the special needs of student subgroups and modify targeted, differentiated interventions to accelerate learning. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks are not always strategically revised, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Judge Charles J. Vallone Q085	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