

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Lorraine Tuzzo /Juniper Valley School

Q128

69-10 65th Drive

Queens

NY 11379

Principal: John Lavelle

Dates of review: December 11-12, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S./I.S. 128 is a K-8 school with 798 students from Kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 0.6% Black, 18% Hispanic, 75% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 96.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the School Does Well

- A teacher-designed curriculum including the Arts, is purposefully aligned to key standards and CIE instructional shifts, offering a range of rigorous learning opportunities that promotes high levels of student learning. (1.1)
 - Teachers are proud of their accomplishments with regard to curriculum writing. Coherence across the grades and subject areas is evident with alignment to key standards identified as areas for growth in order to close achievement gaps. Teachers have a high stake in this curriculum and create content rich knowledge through research and collaboration. Pacing calendars have been designed in all core subjects, to align with the standards and the citywide instructional expectations. As a result of this work students in 8th grade feel very prepared to achieve their goals in high school. This is evidenced by an average score of 87% on Regents exams last year promoting college and career readiness.
 - Curricula and tasks, across grades and content areas, challenge and engage all students including students with disabilities and English language learners through scaffolding and critical thinking. Student work demonstrates evidence of extended thinking throughout the year. Eighth grade math goals are derived from the acronym *SMART* in order to develop a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely assessment of what is needed to accomplish by different times of the year. The product of this endeavor is that 35% of 8th grade students were able to move a minimum of two math benchmarks since September.
- School leaders make effective decisions to align resources with the instructional goals of the school in order to provide students with optimal learning experiences. (1.3)
 - A major initiative of the school has been to improve academic capacity in the area of content specialty knowledge. Highly qualified teachers, in all core subjects, were hired in addition to full time technology teacher, librarian, music teacher and two art teachers. The impact has been noted in the high level of thinking and execution of students' content area research projects. The highly successful art program is enabling students to move on to specialized, competitive art programs throughout New York City. As a result students are proud to display their work and are excited to talk about the connection that art has had on their improved math skills in analyzing proportions, angles, and geometry based word problems.
 - Teacher teams have meet at least two times a week to discuss a universal definition of rigor in order to implement an effective protocol where they plan and revise tasks relating to their beliefs prior to classroom use. This process has improved instruction in ELA and math classrooms resulting in all students being able to show improvement in their ELA and math goals. A certified AIS teacher (academic intervention specialist) sits on the Core inquiry team so that the work being done with small groups of students is fully aligned to the school's expectations and the students' individual goals. More than 30% of students receiving AIS have moved up 2-3 benchmarks since the start of this year. Further impact of this work is a heightened awareness among all staff and parents of the CCLS transition.

- The culture of the school is welcoming and inviting, reflecting a philosophy that supports a safe environment that promotes good attendance and collaborative relationships resulting in a strong focus on student scholarship. (1.4)
 - The culture of PS 128 is healthy and vibrant in all the ways that a school could be considered a second home. This is best demonstrated by an analysis of the school's Learning Environment Survey where 92% of students believe that adults at school look out for them and 94% of parents posit that there is an adult at the school whom their child trusts and can go to for help with a problem. Parent workshops on expectations, CCLS and knowledge of what students need to learn for future grades are plentiful and well attended. An extensive email communication system is maintained that parents appreciate and say is a useful link between the home and the school. Middle school students shared that teachers and administration are always available to them. This has resulted in a 15% decrease in behavior occurrences from the year before.
 - Guidance Counselors and Project Friend (SAPIS worker) are available to all students and facilitate a weekly Group Guidance section for grades 6 and 7 to create an open forum for discussions on a variety of social issues. The students know these staff members as their "go to" people for emotional and/or social support. Students agree that because they feel "at home" at their school they are able to take risks, ask questions and receive lunchtime and after school tutoring in a calm, informal setting. Lunchtime tutoring has helped all participating students improve their scores on benchmark unit assessments.
- Teaching practices across the school reflect a coherent set of beliefs about student learning, consistently providing purposeful strategies to meet varied needs in order to engage students in appropriately challenging tasks. (1.2)
 - The school culture supports the belief that students learn best when they are able to develop individual goals and then work with peers to achieve them. Teachers maintain timetables to conference with students and stimulate deeper levels of thinking so that students are able to share their use of strategies and ideas in varied subject areas. The findings of these practices indicate that students are well prepared for the next grade and even the youngest students are significantly challenged to produce strong work samples enabling the school to maintain high levels of student progress.
 - A myriad of strategies like project based and collaborative learning, critical thinking, scaffolding, questioning, the use of graphic organizers and student facilitated technology resources are utilized throughout the school to provide multiple entry points for all students. As a result, student-to-student dialogue infusing academic vocabulary and evidence based accountable talk have shown an increase in higher order thinking skills in the work of middle school students with disabilities as indicated based on scores of writing rubrics.

Areas for improvement

- Refocus the analysis of data gathering at the grade and school level to develop a stronger understanding of subgroup patterns and trends to improve student outcomes. (2.2)

- Assessment practices are consistent throughout and across each grade. Teams of teachers use Acuity assessment in ELA in order to analyze specific skill deficiencies per grade level and then create skill based CCLS tasks that are individualized for students as an additional support. Although teams of teachers and individual teachers regularly diagnose student specific needs and are very articulate about the progress and next steps for individual students there is a disconnect in tracking trends for groups of students, making it difficult to determine the progress that each subgroup is achieving from skill to skill.
- Teacher designed rubrics and pre and post assessments aligned to the curriculum and school goals are used school wide throughout the content areas. Individual student reflections in all content areas, and the Arts, serve as a useful resource to determine students' level of knowledge and understanding of the unit. Although instruction is being modified as a result of what teachers are able to compile from students' checks for understanding it is not always transparent if the adjustments are being linked to students' next learning steps.
- Enhance the level of feedback to teachers to include targeted next steps aligned to professional development supports, and a timeline for re-evaluation to determine progress of teacher practice and improved effectiveness. (4.1)
 - Administrators promptly provide feedback to teachers after formal and informal observations, with suggestions for the improvement of classroom practice. The school has provided all teachers with professional development regarding the school's chosen competencies (culture for learning, questioning and assessment) and teachers know that these are the lens for learning rounds. Although effective feedback and next steps are provided to teachers in order to improve their instruction, the connection to student work is sometimes difficult to pinpoint, making it hard to ascertain whether or not the feedback provided is aligned to the immediate academic needs of students.
 - Professional development is designed based on teacher data reflected in formal and informal observations. Teachers engage in professional development through interaction with the school's coaches and outside consultants as well as the network personnel. Teachers posit that their professional development is useful and helpful in refining their craft however, trends in teacher feedback are not yet leading to a differentiated plan for all levels of teachers. This results in a limited approach of understanding how professional development supports individual teacher growth leading to improved student performance.

School Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Lorraine Tuzzo /Juniper Valley 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