

# **Quality Review Report 2012-2013**

**P.S. 165 Edith K. Bergtraum**

**Elementary School Q165**

**70-35 150 Street  
Queens  
NY 11367**

**Principal: RAQUEL VICTORIA DEMILLIO**

**Dates of review: March 4-5, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 165 Edith K. Bergtraum is an elementary school with 691 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 23% Hispanic, 18% White, and 43% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has effectively aligned curriculum and tasks within and across grades that address key state standards, the instructional shifts and the needs of all learners, resulting in more rigorous work products for all students. (1.1)
  - For the past two years, teachers have engaged in collaborative studies around unpacking the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), understanding what their students should know within the expectations of these standards and the long-term implications on student learning outcomes. Aligned to this work, CCLS-aligned units of study have been designed in every content area that center around big ideas, essential questions, key instructional shifts and specific skills and strategies that scaffold within and across grades and address varied topics, text and content. Key skills in math center on students developing speed and accuracy, applying math content to the real world, expressing an understanding of concepts through writing and discussing the process by which they tackle problems with their peers. In literacy, science and social studies, curricula focus on increasing text complexity, managing a balance between fiction and nonfiction text, engaging students in multiple perspectives of the same topics through a deep understanding of author's purpose and developing and supporting claims using multiple sources of text-based evidence. As evident in student writing and math portfolios and pre- and post-assessments within each unit of study, this rigorous curricular design has resulted in the school closing its achievement gaps in both English language arts and math, and students are gaining academic knowledge and higher-level work habits.
  - Within the culture of curricular planning and design, teacher teams manage their work electronically using Rubicon Atlas. This tool provides all teachers with access to school-wide curricula, including academic tasks and assessments, identifies gaps and repetition within curricula and provides a forum for consistent analysis and sharing of instructional resources, such as parallel text, sentence starters and picture cues to support English language learners and students with disabilities. As teachers assess student responses to units of study and tasks, they make modifications to the curricula to better support the needs of students to improve alignment to the standards and to increase rigor. Through consistent analysis of the standards and content being taught, teachers make effective decisions that meet the needs of all learners, resulting in improvements in student performance across all grades, including students in the lowest third school-wide, as indicated in literacy and math post-assessments and reading benchmarks.
- Strong belief systems that focus on access to a rigorous curriculum and inclusion of academic and personal behaviors drive pedagogy so all learners engage in challenging tasks, leading to improved student work products. (1.2)
  - Classroom learning environments at all grade levels are structured so that tasks allow for student-initiated inquiry and peer discussion that promote metacognition, respect for learning and full access for all

learners. Multiple entry points such as tiered tasks, graphic organizers, and visual cues, and rubrics and checklists to use as resources throughout the classrooms provide all students with opportunities to engage in higher-level learning. Additionally, both teachers and students have been trained in the use of high-level questioning that promotes deep thinking. As a result of this focus, students have become fluent in discussing authentic work with their peers and challenging one another to support claims and opinions using evidence from a variety of resources. For example, in one Integrated Co-Teaching class, students were engaged in a discussion where they were asked to compare two texts read in class, gather text-based evidence and determine how similarities of authors' purpose can help a reader identify a story's theme within a story. Elsewhere, students worked in groups to compare fractions by making decisions regarding their size. The activity was intentionally scaffolded and included guided questions and manipulatives for particular groups. The students challenged one another by asking clarifying questions and requiring their peers to demonstrate their reasoning as to the mathematical concepts used to determine their answers. As a result of these school-wide pedagogical expectations, all students are consistently engaged in their learning, have increased their communication, collaboration and academic vocabulary skills.

- The school has effectively aligned assessments and rubrics to accurately gauge student progress school-wide and uses these tools to adjust instruction to support continued student achievement. (2.2)
  - Currently the school uses pre-, midline and post-assessments to measure student understanding within the framework of the CCLS units of study that teams have developed, implemented and revised using student work. Additionally, before moving on to the next stage of the curriculum, all teachers administer an exit task to measure levels of mastery and make adjustments to prior and future units. Teacher teams also use Acuity, running records and conference notes to assess student progress throughout the year. This data helps the school to refocus their plans in order to meet school-level needs. For example, a school-wide study of math assessments and student work products aligned to the CCLS led to a cross-grade focus on increasing fluency and content-specific vocabulary skills in math. Classroom and recent Acuity data revealed student growth in these areas.
  - Within the framework of improving questioning and discussion techniques, teachers have been trained in and have implemented the school-wide assessment strategy of asking higher-order questions within their lessons to determine student understanding and then guide modifications to instruction. Additionally, at the end of lessons, teachers have transitioned from the share out to asking clarifying questions and listening for student responses to check for understanding and drive future planning. Finally, as part of teacher/student feedback protocols, students respond to teacher comments and craft unit goals based on targeted recommendations generated from rubric-aligned feedback. This culture of reflective analysis of student work and responses arms teachers with clear understandings of students' varying needs and provides multiple opportunities for students to engage in a reflective process around their work products leading to increased persistence and self-regulation of their learning.

- Teacher teams engage in consistent and systematic analysis of student work products, curricula and instruction to evaluate impact of student learning, resulting in improvements in pedagogy and student outcomes. (4.2)
  - The school has clear, school-wide systems to evaluate the impact of curriculum and pedagogy on student learning. All teams analyze student work and document low inference “noticing” about student skill base or academic habits and align them to the expectations defined within common rubrics. They then engage in discussions around strengths and weaknesses that their students demonstrate within the CCLS and to determine next steps for improvements or extensions. Finally, teachers engage in discussion around how the data collected and next steps will translate and inform their practice. As a result of one cycle of data and student work study this year, one group of teachers determined the need to expand upon the work students were engaged in around elaboration of their writing. Together they crafted lessons and developed resources that addressed key ideas and details to help students use the text to provide relevant evidence to support their claims and to use multiple resources and grade level texts to support their opinion. Classroom teachers and service providers collaborate to evaluate and uploaded model texts, references and multiple supports into Rubicon Atlas to meet the needs of all students. By gaining a collaborative understanding of instructional trends and challenges throughout the school, teachers make specific adjustments to lessons that have led to a deepening of student understanding of nonfiction writing as evident within student portfolios and teacher data that demonstrates growth within the framework of aligned rubrics.
  - Teachers have developed a collaborative culture of professional learning and have built high levels trust and teacher leadership within teams that allow for consistent intervisitation within and across grades. Weekly professional development provides teachers with the lens of instructional focus for those observations. Teachers visit classrooms, take low inference transcripts and then present the low inference data to the teacher. During one team meeting, teachers discussed how they used training around effective questioning strategies and the Danielson rubric as a reference during intervisitations. They met as a team to review teacher data, share instructional strengths and weaknesses and determined ways to craft questions that would invite students to give their own opinions. This work is evident throughout the school and in feedback to teachers from administrators that demonstrates improvements in the area of teacher questioning.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Refine school-wide goal setting procedures to include focused, data-informed goals that align to student needs and are tracked for progress in order to build a cohesive vision and understanding of school improvement targets. (3.1)
  - Although it is evident that the school aligns their work to the Citywide Instructional Expectations around leveraging instruction to improve pedagogy and planning, school-based goals are not yet developed through a process by which all stakeholders understand and include a focus that addresses the specific needs of the school as revealed by a comprehensive study of student data. As a result, the school community

cannot clearly articulate the rationale behind the work they are engaged in and how it relates to ensuring optimal student achievement. Additionally, because goal setting practices have a cursory connection to school outcomes, there are gaps within school-wide, teacher team and individual teacher and student goals, limiting the school's ability to engage in long-term planning and in building capacity around their current work to better prepare students to be college and career ready.

- Expand upon current feedback practices to utilize teacher feedback data to align professional development opportunities to pedagogical trends and teachers' professional goals to support their growth. (4.1)
  - The school has developed strategic feedback and observation systems that began with frequent cycles of observation and feedback highlighting pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and have evolved into consistent opportunities for conversations about effective pedagogy aligned to the Danielson framework and other professional development opportunities. As a result, teachers say they receive effective feedback and next steps from both the administration and their peers that is strengthening their practice, particularly in the areas of question and discussion techniques and using assessment to tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. However, at this time, school leaders have not yet fully implemented an effective system that compiles teacher observation data in a way to triangulate feedback, individual professional learning goals of teachers and professional learning opportunities. As a result, it is not clear how the individual needs of teachers are met to further elevate teacher effectiveness and impact on student learning outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 165 Edith K. Bergtraum	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed