

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Public School 280

Elementary School Q280

**34-20 94th Street
Queens
NY 11372**

Principal: Lenia Matias

Dates of review: November 20 - 21, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 280 is an elementary school with 365 students from kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 1% Black, 90% Hispanic, 2% White, 6% Asian and 1% other student. The student body includes 67% English language learners and 33% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. 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 school community appreciates the safe, respectful and orderly school environment and the support for the personal development of students (1.4).
 - The school's conflict resolution team, also known as The A Team, consists of kindergarten, first grade and second grade students who have been nominated by their teachers to serve as leaders for their peers. These students are trained by the Individualized Educational Plan teacher and guidance counselor, to follow a specific problem-solving protocol which involves investigating problems and brainstorming solutions. The A Team meets on a daily basis in the cafeteria to address the concerns voiced by students. The cafeteria staff reports a decrease in the number of complaints received on the days that the A Team is involved in mediating conflicts. As a result, student's state feeling empowered, thus creating greater independence and building community throughout all age groups in the school. A student stated, "I help resolve the conflicts in my school."
 - The attendance team which consists of the principal, teachers, school aides, nurse, guidance counselor and attendance teacher, meets on a monthly basis. The team assists in coordinating supports that align with the learning needs of students. For example, the team engages in daily wake up calls, meetings with families of students who are constantly late, movie nights for students with perfect attendance, home visits to speak with families of students who have difficulty coming to school and after school programs which offer homework help and student and family therapy. This had led to a decrease in lateness by one third from last year.
- The school uses its resources effectively to build teacher capacity and improve instruction as evidenced by increased student engagement in academic tasks (1.3).
 - Since 50% of students did not meet the end of year benchmarks in literacy, the school hired a Teachers College staff developer to support teachers in literacy instruction through professional development. This provided a staff developer to visit the school regularly as well as opportunities for teachers to attend professional development at Teachers College, where they learn about scaffolding strategies to support struggling readers and build capacity with their peers by modeling and sharing effective practices to improve student comprehension. In addition, the school partners with a special education professional development organization that supports teachers in planning instruction for special needs students. As a result, these partnerships help support the school's goal to increase students' reading stamina as noted in student completed grade-appropriate reading logs that demonstrate an increase in reading stamina, both in school and at home, as evidenced by increasing duration of time entered in their reading logs .

- Teachers are regularly scheduled for three team meetings each week. Team meetings focus on inquiry and on the analysis of student work to guide literacy and math planning and instruction. In addition, one of the extended day periods is used for planning, child study and supporting English as a second language (ESL) and special education students. Based on the review of last year's math journals, the team determined that students were deficient with problem solving skills. As a result, teachers now incorporate problem solving as an integral part of their daily lessons. This has led to improved math results for 65% of the students as noted in unit assessments related to problem solving skills.
- The school leader and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer a range of learning experiences that engage students and support their learning (1.1).
 - In response to the Citywide Instructional Expectations emphasis related to Integration of Knowledge and Ideas for literacy and problem solving for mathematics, teachers across all grade levels require students to complete entries in a reader's response notebook and a math problem solving notebook on a daily basis. Consequently, students describe different math strategies used each day as they complete daily entries in their math problem solving notebooks. Additionally, writing has increased on all grade levels as noted in student folders where work products demonstrate that each student is writing at least 3 to 4 more pages than was evidenced last year with more elaboration, structure and meaning.
 - Teachers use standards based curricula and rubrics designed by Teachers College to plan academic tasks. During weekly grade meetings that focus on literacy planning, the literacy staff developer guides teachers with the design of learning activities to cognitively engage students, specifically English language learners and Students with Disabilities. As a result, academic tasks and curricula now incorporate an increased use of technology, manipulatives and visuals which fully engage these groups of students.
- The diligent principal has created a goal-oriented learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a clear vision to accelerate learning (3.1).
 - Teachers meet regularly on established preps to create focused goals that support those set forth by the school in its Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) and fully analyze student progress to improve learning outcomes across all subjects. For example, a kindergarten goal is that by January, students will be reading at level B and will do this by re-reading and learning site words. During this time, teachers share specific action plans and effective lessons which have resulted in supporting the goals and demonstrated acceleration in student learning. Due to a new interim checkpoint system, goals are monitored by the School Leadership Team four times a year. For example, after the first checkpoint, it was decided that Inquiry Teams would follow target student groups more closely to address deficits in English language arts and math. This has led to changes in the teams' work that is now more finely targeted to meet the needs of these specific students to accelerate their learning.

- The principal clearly communicates school goals and action plans to teachers and families which result in the school community working together effectively to accelerate student learning. For example, in math, the articulated goal is that 80% of the students will master the Fundamental Common Core Standard. The school consistently uses calendars, letters, College Binders which are learning and communication tools for students and families, emails and phone calls to inform parents, students and staff of the instructional plans. As a result, the entire community fully supports the practices that inform the school's direction. As one parent stated, "the principal and teachers are like my relatives, they are warm and friendly and I am a part of my child's learning."

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen teachers' assessment practices to reflect effective feedback resulting in instructional adjustments and 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, written comments and use this information to inform next learning steps for 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.
- Refine teaching practices to ensure teachers strategically provide multiple entry points so that lessons challenge all students in their learning and result in producing meaningful work products (1.1).
 - Teachers, across grades and subjects, plan lessons and use appropriate scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to students' performance and interests. For example, teachers use the results of a student survey administered in September to plan instruction in the students' preferred learning style. 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. Therefore, these high performing students are limited in their ability to achieve greater outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Public School 280	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