

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P993Q

85-15 258th Street

Queens, NY 11001

Principal: Jacqueline Zaretsky

Dates of review: March 13-15, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Nina Pitton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P993Q is a K-12 school with 413 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 31% Black, 32% Hispanic, 18% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 87.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's highly engaging curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning standards (CCLS) and integrates rigorous tasks to increase achievement for a diverse group of learners. (1.1)
 - The school's curriculum team has created detailed curricula that include focus standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math aligned to the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and the instructional shifts, including a balance of literary and informational texts selected to support the functional life skills needed by students in a variety of cohorts. Curricula maps across content areas emphasize the use of non-fiction texts, and formative assessments are embedded to track progress and modify instruction. Curricula are supplemented with D75 Units of Study, Lexia Reading System, Everyday Math, Equals, Foss Science, Getting Ready to Learn Yoga Program, and Primary Sources primarily for standardized assessment students. The school uses the Common Core aligned Unique Learning Systems alternates assessment program to provide instructional coherence across grades and subjects, enabling access to students with physical, sensory, and multiple disabilities. The speaking and listening standards are prioritized in the curriculum and instruction to address the varying needs of the school's English Language Learner (ELL) population with appropriate scaffolding of key content area concepts. A strong transition program for middle and high school is in place to prepare students for college and/or workplace success. This leads to graduates who are college and career ready, supported to reach their potential, and able to obtain competitive employment as evidenced by 10 out of 13 alternate assessment students graduating in 2011-12. Additionally, many students are successfully placed in competitive employment in a variety of settings with a 92% graduation rate for students in the phobic program at Cardozo High School and with 80 % attending colleges including Penn State University, Mercy College, Queens College, Nassau Community College, Pace University, Bloomfield College and Queensborough Community College upon graduation.
 - Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills that require students to create their own meaning, transfer skills into processes, and apply the knowledge gained to solve real world problems are coherently embedded in the curricula and academic tasks across grades and subjects. For example, a unit on Fractions asked that students hold a "Mock Election" in their classroom, tally and share the final results. Teacher teams have established purposeful protocols to examine student work products, curricula and data collected through Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), careful daily monitoring of Individualized Education Plan (IEP) progress by teachers, and student self-assessments using rubrics and checklists that yield refinements of tasks and curricula leading to high quality tasks and student work. Teacher practice involves using the Depth of Knowledge to emphasize rigor and higher order thinking through the use of effective questioning to increase students' ongoing critical analysis and problem solving skills across all grades and subjects.

For example, students complete tasks in literacy and Math that require them to engage in structured debates and written tasks and supporting their arguments with text-based evidence using academic vocabulary. As a result, student work reviewed demonstrated evidence of extended thinking and extended work over time as measured by teacher developed rubrics and the content of student portfolios.

- The school creates standard-based assessments that include a cycle of analysis, reflection, and instructional adjustments resulting in student mastery as evidenced in student work products. (2.2)
 - Common rubrics and a variety of assessment data from Acuity, Performance Series, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) for standardized students and ELLs, and New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), and teacher made tests aligned to standards and curricula are utilized across the school to inform practice. Curricula and academic tasks are designed to engage students, advance them through the content, and assess their understanding as evidenced by student work products that are assessed through standards based rubrics. Programmatic and assessment data is shared at monthly faculty meetings where student work is also reviewed using appropriately aligned District 75 and teacher-made rubrics and checklists. Inquiry teams' findings are analyzed by teachers for progress toward meeting goals. This data is further evaluated during mid- and end-year review by the administrative team for impact on student achievement.
 - Classroom level data in the form of end-of unit tasks; projects; self-assessment checklists; data tracking sheets to determine progress change in student IEPs; rubrics; and portfolios are utilized and adapted within classrooms relative to the analysis of student outcomes. In addition, the school uses "Engrade," a free web-based program that allows teachers to make grades and assignments accessible to parents and students. Consequently, teacher lessons integrate content rigor that correlate to students' individualized education plan goals.
- The deeply reflective organizational decisions regarding the use of resources align to the school's goals and the Common Core focus, resulting in increased student outcomes. (1.3)
 - The principal articulates a clear rationale for her strategic choices. For example, the collaborative design of a Danielson based walkthrough protocol with CIE competencies aims to support teacher practice in a trusting environment. The determination of how many units and performance tasks each teacher will implement was made by the administrative cabinet after a careful review of staff and student performance data at nine sites. The school budget is aligned to support the goals for school improvement. The school goal to improve speaking and listening skills by using effective assessment strategies and programs, is a data-based decision supported by the purchase of SANDI, ABLLs, Thinking Maps, LEXIA, Scholastic, Discovery, Brain Pop, and UNIQUE LEARNING SYSTEMS to specifically address the multiple

challenges of students in alternate assessment. To meet the needs of students in transition programs, the school partners with agencies including AHRC, Goodwill, YAI, VTEA, CIDNY and community programs such as; Recycle a Bicycle, Queens Botanical Gardens, Queens Courthouses to prepare students for college or career options. Resources allocated for technology upgrades support the use of online assessments and programs result in more students transitioning into college and competitive employment.

- Staff assignments are strategically organized based on student needs and school's instructional priorities. Effective teachers are matched to specific student cohorts where they are needed the most based on identified students' instructional needs, utilizing the special talents of teachers, such as ESL, PBIS, technology, music, sustainability, and fitness. This allows for implementation of special intervention programs, such as I Safe, Overcoming Obstacles, Get Ready to Learn, and Thinking Maps to increase teacher accountability for the progress of their designated student cohorts, leading to increased achievement of school's instructional goals in ELA and MATH as evidenced by SANDI and NYSAA results.
- The school's strong culture of collaboration, respect and mutual trust is highly inclusive and supported by all constituents to address the academic and social-emotional needs of students leading to success. (1.4)
 - The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) Inquiry Team monitors programmatic and behavioral data for grades K-12. Members include the principal, PBIS coach, and teachers representing all grades. Additionally, to address behavior issues and build student awareness, the school offers an Anti-Bullying program, Respect for All, Overcoming Obstacles, Socratic circles, and opportunities for students to represent their school at leadership and at council meetings serving as advocates for their peers. Guidance counselors and social workers consistently teach social skills outside the classroom to promote safe behavior in these common areas and regularly monitor student attendance by meeting with students and parents. Another team includes the teacher, paraprofessionals, PBIS coach, unit teacher, IEP coordinator, and guidance counselors who meet regularly to evaluate the learning needs of students. Staff members receive training in PBIS at monthly faculty meetings and school-wide staff development. In addition, the school partners with families by sharing academic and behavioral strategies at parent workshops, Parent Association (PA) meetings, School Leadership Team meetings, IEP and open school conferences. Effective systems are in place in all safety areas to track participation, levels of compliance, outcomes, and next steps. The parent coordinator has established strong links to the community by organizing activities for parents and students. The "Let's Bridge the Gap" series invite parents, students, and siblings to connect with the school community during Saturday workshops and organized events. The parent coordinator collaborates with other District 75 schools to share information and resources that further support the home/school community. These activities have enhanced community outreach leading to meaningful student outcomes as evidenced by 10 out of 13 alternate assessment graduates moving into competitive employment.

- The school community has robust systems in place to evaluate the efficacy of initiatives and decisions relating to instructional practices, school culture and the use of organizational resources. (5.1)
 - Structures and processes for monitoring and revision in the school community are multi-layered and involve participation from key constituents. On-going evaluation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) systems across the school's different locations led to a unification of the protocols used at all sites to increase consistency as well as a 54% decrease in Level 1-5 infractions during the course of the school year. On-going evaluation of IEPs, student programming and transition services led to a 20% increase of students served in the least restrictive environment, as well as the expansion from 1 student transition program to 2 in the last year. Regular evaluation of instructional materials and formative assessments data inform the scope and sequence of curricula and the use of supplemental curricular materials such as Lexia Reading System; this constant revision process has increased student outcomes on both internal and external measures.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the alignment of teaching practices and strategies to the curriculum to elevate students' thinking skills so that learning is further improved. (1.2)
 - The school believes that students learn best when exposed to the community and are able to explore and experience what is being taught. All aspects of the school program and curriculum support this belief. The Unique Learning System is designed to help teachers deliver instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities and offers differentiated tasks that are CCLS aligned with a parallel transition curriculum to prepare students with disabilities for adult community living. Inquiry teams are in place to ensure consistent use of assistive technology, PBIS, hearing and vision and faculty engagement to support the development and implementation of the school's goals. Additional programs to enhance student learning are evident such as the Getting Ready to Learn Yoga Program. Lessons are delivered through the reinforcement of routines. This was evident in some classrooms where visual supports were provided, graphic organizers utilized, and paraprofessional support was readily available. However, not all students were cognitively engaged or challenged by appropriate content in order to demonstrate higher order thinking in their discussions and participation. This resulted in missed opportunities for students to be exposed to concept-based learning that could strategically support their progress to higher levels of achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 993Q	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