



**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 11 Thomas Dongan School

Elementary

**50 JEFFERSON STREET
STATEN ISLAND
NY, 10304**

Principal: ERICA MATTERA

**Dates of review: Dec 5, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Ina Solomon**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 11 Thomas Dongan School is a/an Elementary school with 300 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 36% Hispanic, 42% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 23% 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 95.07%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff aligned curricula to the Common Core Standards and thoughtfully integrated the arts into units of study so that a diversity of learners are engaged. (1.1)
 - Literacy units are designed around science and social studies themes to support the reading and writing of informational text. In math and literacy teachers incorporate response journals to encourage students to articulate their understanding of content and support their thinking with evidence. There is a school wide focus on drilling in math to promote fluency in the appropriate skills. The dance teacher supports literacy and math development by incorporating relevant cultural dances and infusing math concepts such as fractions, where applicable, into lessons. Student needs and interests are the basis of units, resulting in high levels of motivation for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities. Data is collected throughout units of study to gauge how well students are meeting unit objectives, resulting in the design of rigorous academic tasks that engage all learners.
- The school maintains a safe and inclusive culture that supports students and families in promoting the academic and social-emotional development of students. (1.4)
 - The school believes that providing students with a safe, nurturing environment is paramount to academic success. Systems have been established within the school to build a community that supports students' social-emotional and academic development. The student council comprised of grade 5 students meets on a daily basis to discuss ways to positively impact the school community. The student council instituted the daily math message to lead the school towards meeting its goal to improve students' problem solving skills in math. Each morning during the announcements, a grade 5 student shares a mental math problem over the loud speaker for the students to solve. Also, Peer Mediation was established by the student council as a resource for solving social problems that may arise. The Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) reports indicate that the school has had a total of 5 low level infractions this year. Moreover, during conversations with students, they unhesitatingly said that they love coming to school every day because they, "learn a lot and have fun."
 - There is a concerted effort at the school to maintain high rates of attendance. On a daily basis, the administration reviews the RISA report to determine trends in absenteeism. After noticing that students who receive special education services, on average, are absent more than their counterparts, the principal applied and received the, "Parents as Arts Partner Grant" to encourage consistent attendance among that group of students. From the end of last year to date, attendance for students that participated in the, "Parents as Arts Partner" activities has risen from about 88% to 98%. The school also has an attendance committee comprised of the administration, parent coordinators and school aides that meet regularly to coordinate attendance. Each member of that team is assigned a student "attendance buddy," to support students with coming to school on a regular basis. Attendance at the school has steadily increased during the principal's seven year tenure, averaging about 95% for the past two years. Additionally, 12 out of the 20 students that the school is monitoring because they scored below grade level on the most recent ELA state exam, have moved up one reading level, since the beginning of the year on the Teachers College Reading Writing Project (TCRWP) reading inventory. Parents are grateful for all of the services the school provides and the ways it supports students in reaching their full potential, academically and socially.

- School leaders and teachers collect a range of data that is used to provide actionable feedback to students and adjust instructional decisions. (2.2)
 - There is consistency to the kinds of data teachers collect and analyze. For example, teachers create rubrics, administer pre and post- test unit assessments, analyze running records, take conference notes and review state wide test results. Teachers use a tracking sheet, aligned to the school wide grading policy, to compile information about student performance related to key skills and concepts. One notable practice is that immediately after the whole group lesson, before giving students a task to complete, teachers conduct an on the spot assessment of students' understanding of the skills and concepts that were just taught. Teachers use the results of this assessment to give students a task and/ or assign them to a work group that meets their learning needs. As a result of this regular review of data, teachers routinely adjust curriculum and instruction for groups of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teacher pedagogy by strengthening scaffolds and routines to provide all students with opportunities to engage in rigorous conversation and appropriately challenging tasks. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teachers follow a similar instructional model that begins with a whole group lesson followed by small group work time, where students are assigned tasks designed to demonstrate their understanding of the skills and concepts taught during the lesson. Tasks are differentiated according to groups of students' learning needs. Teachers typically work with the struggling learners to provide guided support in completing the assignments. However, supports for struggling learners and English language learners during the whole group lessons are inconsistent across classrooms. Similarly, in some classrooms, extensions that encourage high achievers to think deeply about skills and concepts are missing during student work time. As a result, student work products reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.
- Sharpen the feedback to teachers to clearly connect next steps to professional goals, leading to improved delivery of instruction. (4.1)
 - The principal and assistant principal use a research-based common teaching framework, during regular classroom visits, to provide teachers with feedback about their practice. These classroom visits prompt school administration to suggest professional development for teachers, in the form of workshops or interclass visitations, to further support their practice. For example, the teacher of the newly formed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) class was partnered with a teacher of the same population at a neighboring school in the district to provide support around developing appropriate lessons and activities. The dance teacher, after writing and receiving a grant that brought more supplies into the dance program, sought professional development that would further enhance her knowledge and skills around curriculum development. The school fully supported the dance teacher by freeing up the schedule so she could attend professional development sessions. However, all teachers, regardless of their years of experience, strengths or weaknesses are given the same areas of focus for the research based framework at the same time. Also, feedback is only loosely aligned to framework criteria. As a result, the expectations for teacher practice do not clearly lead to instructional adjustments that directly impact student achievement.

- Continue to improve teacher team practice so that collaborations are inquiry based, leading to improved outcomes for students. (4.2)
 - Teacher teams meet consistently to develop curricula and analyze resulting student work. Teams follow a protocol for analyzing student work that helps teachers identify changes they need to make to their own practice, to support student progress. For example, the fifth grade teachers noticed that students were having a difficult time distinguishing relevant and irrelevant information in math word problems. Teachers were then able to incorporate a targeted study of this concept into their math lessons. Although the results of the teacher team work and the analysis of student work protocol lead to improved teacher practice, the level of analysis does not lead teachers to identify trends that impact progress for specific groups of students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 11 Thomas Dongan 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 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 and ensure that it is: aligned to curriculum, engaging and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level			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 attitude towards learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults			X				
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community			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 student learning needs			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching 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 curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed

