

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 044 Thomas C. Brown

Elementary 31R044

**80 MAPLE PARKWAY
STATEN ISLAND
NY, 10303**

Principal: JOSEPH MILLER

**Dates of review: Dec 17, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Maria Robustelli**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 044 Thomas C. Brown is a/an Elementary school with 902 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 43.0% Black, 48.0% Hispanic, 3.0% White, and 2.0% Asian students. The student body includes 9.0% English language learners and 24.0% special education students. Boys account for 49.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school strategically aligns resources to support the school's instructional goals and build teacher capacity to meet the needs of students. (1.3)
 - The school has obtained several grants to supplement the school's budget for school wide initiatives, including implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) and the newly acquired New Yorkers Read library grant that allows digital access to library holdings to provide students with greater access to a variety of literary and non-fiction texts. Technology has been integrated across classrooms, including SMART boards, projectors, iPads, and laptops, to enhance lessons through internet research and online author and genre studies as well as multisensory learning opportunities. Partnerships with community based organizations (CBOs); including the Virtual Y and United Activities Unlimited (UAU), provide additional academic support and enrichment activities for students as well as parent workshops. Parents commented that this collaboration and assistance has helped them to support their children at home to meet their goals and the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As a result, resources contribute positively to the instructional work of the school and actively support student achievement as evidenced by meaningful student work products.
 - The administration provides time for teachers to meet twice per week to promote in-depth professional conversations around student learning. Teachers observed during a third grade team meeting analyzed student work from the performance task aligned to the CCLS unit to identify areas of strength and developed next steps around reading comprehension skills and adding more details to support the main idea to improve student outcomes through shared practices around mini lessons, peer support, and use of graphic organizers. A teacher leader designated on each grade helps to build cohesiveness and vertical alignment by facilitating cross-grade conversations and planning as well as to identify and target specific gaps and successes in teacher practice and student learning. Consequently, the school has developed a cohesive language across grade levels to address identified goals and areas for improvement around appropriately challenging and demanding academic instruction and student engagement in order to close the achievement gap and address the needs of a variety of learners.
- School leaders create a respectful, inclusive and nurturing environment where students feel valued and supported in their academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - Students are recognized on the Student of the Month board as well as during daily announcements and at school-wide celebrations. The school has implemented both the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model and use "Eagle Talons" as models for and reinforcement of positive behavior. Students report feeling safe

and clearly communicated that there are adults, including the principal, assistant principal, guidance counselor, and teachers, to whom they can and would seek support if necessary. On the most recent Learning environment Survey (LES), 92% of parents reported that, "There is an adult at the school whom my child trusts and can go to for help with a school problem." Students reported that the fifth grade student council provides them with daily opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and demonstrate leadership at monthly meetings with the principal, in which they can express their views, opinions, and ideas as well as discuss specific school related issues, including materials in the classrooms. As a result, the attendance rate has increased from 90.2% in the 2010-2011 school year to 92.26% in the current year and suspensions and incident reports decreased by 32.4% from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 and are 50% lower this school year in comparison to last year at this time.

- The school has created and uses a wide range of assessments aligned to key standards and curricula to support teachers in their analysis of ongoing assessment results to regularly inform instructional decisions. (2.2)
 - The school has weekly teacher team inquiry meetings to discuss data, instructional strategies, and interventions. A Response to Intervention team, including the data specialist, staff developers, and administrators, has been created this year to identify students for tiered intervention, analyze student data, and support targeted instruction. Across classrooms, teachers have created data binders that include a variety of formative and summative data, including Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), Acuity results, running records, conference notes, anecdotal notes, and rubrics aligned to the CCLS that provide ongoing feedback to teachers on student performance. Each classroom binder contains a tracking sheet that includes a review of assessments, identifies three critical areas for student growth, the rationale for choosing each area, next steps for student instruction, and individual student goals based on assessment analysis. This wide range of data enables teacher teams and individual teachers to reflect on individual student progress and the impact of instruction and next steps in the revision process to meet students' needs. As a result, teachers are now revisiting and refining curricula in a timely manner to impact individual student performance. For example, assessment analysis identified an area of concern for first graders in understanding the difference between fact and opinion. Teachers used the information gleaned from assessments to refine the unit to include more nonfiction texts, use of primary sources of data, graphic organizers to plan and organize research and the revision of questioning to help develop student research skills.
- School leaders have implemented short, frequent cycles of observation that provide teachers effective feedback and clear next steps around focused areas to support teacher development. (4.1)
 - The school has implemented the research-based Danielson Framework to clearly identify expectations for teachers. School leadership has created six cycles of observation and currently, all teachers have received at least two classroom visits. There is a focus on

questioning/discussion, assessment, and designing coherent instruction as outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIEs). Specific, actionable feedback, including next steps, is communicated through e-mails and informal meetings to improve teacher practice in these identified areas. Based on teacher input and observations, targeted professional development and individualized support is provided to facilitate teacher development. For example, feedback was given to one teacher regarding the effective use of questioning and discussion techniques. Upon observation of the teacher during the review, the teacher provided challenging questions to deepen student understanding, appropriate wait time for students, and varied opportunities for student participation in discussions in both small and large groups. Consequently, teachers have multiple opportunities to develop their teaching practices leading to increased student participation, rigorous questioning, and higher-level discussions as evidenced by student work and classroom observations.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the current work in curriculum development to enhance and expand rigor of academic tasks and continue to develop higher order thinking skills for all students. (1.1)
 - The school delivers instruction that is guided by curriculum maps aligned to key State standards. Teacher teams are engaged in work around revisiting and refining rigorous tasks aligned to the CCLS based on ongoing data collection and analysis and classroom observations demonstrate implementation of the math and literacy shifts. Although this work is progressing, there is inconsistency across classrooms in the ways in which teachers extend student thinking limiting student ability to engage in high levels of thinking. For example, in some classrooms, teachers developed highly effective and thoughtful questioning strategies that encouraged students to problem solve through turn and talk or small group activities while other rooms had limited opportunities for students to utilize their higher order thinking skills.
- Ensure opportunities for differentiated instructional strategies across classrooms to provide appropriately challenging tasks that maximize student learning resulting in meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - The school has established an environment where teachers share a set of beliefs of how students learn best and willingly collaborate and engage in discussions around student work and data analysis in order to identify areas of focus for individual and groups of students. Teachers have been trained and use the Understanding by Design template to plan CCLS lesson plans and units of study that address the learning needs of a variety of learners, including Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs). Specific strategies included various levels of questioning, use of manipulatives and small groupings based on teacher assessments, pre-unit assessments, and grade-level inquiry work. However, based on classroom observations, the implementation of these strategies is evident in only some classrooms and remains an instructional focus

for the school. Therefore, this inconsistency does not support or challenge all learners to maximize their learning potential.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 044 Thomas C. Brown	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