

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

John C. Thompson

Elementary R052

**450 Buel Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10305**

Principal: Jane McCord

Dates of review: April 9-10, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 52 is an elementary school with 555 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 15% Hispanic, 74% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers align common assessments to curriculum, use data to gauge student progress, check for understanding, provide feedback and make adjustments to meet student needs and promote student achievement. (2.2)
 - Teachers have developed baseline assessments for the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned units of study with teachers reviewing the data from the assessments to adjust lessons within the units. Teachers check for understanding using exit slips and conference notes, which has been a focus in the school this school year. Students in the upper grades spoke to the use of rubrics to provide feedback on their work and to having regular opportunities to self-assess their work. Students also write reflections on their work at the end of a unit of study in English language arts. They have started the work of peer assessment, which takes place in some classrooms. The school's grading policy was revised this school year to incorporate the new units of study and the corresponding assessments. This work has resulted in teachers having more of a focus on the expectations of the Common Core as well as adjusting instruction based on data resulting in increased outcomes on unit summative tasks.
 - The school developed a formal assessment plan covering all assessments in English language arts and math which they use to ensure that they are both assessing students and using the data to inform instruction as well as meeting specific student needs. Teachers utilize the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Assessments to assess students in kindergarten through grade 5 four times yearly. Acuity is utilized in English language arts and math. Teachers look at the resulting data through an item skills analysis to see strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers have also developed an item skills analysis of the CCLS unit of study assessments using the information to revise units just taught and to inform the development of upcoming units. Through the use of these common assessments and the analysis of the data stemming from them, teachers consistently assess students and use the data to make adjustments to lessons and unit plans. As a result, lessons and units are developed and enhanced to meet student needs.
- School leaders' observations of classroom practice elevate school-wide practices promoting professional growth. (4.1)
 - "We are here to improve instruction." That is the principal's mantra at the center of the work around teacher development. School leaders focus efforts this year around particular competencies in the Danielson framework centered on questioning and discussion techniques and using assessment in instruction. Teachers set professional goals for themselves at the start of the school year around these competencies. These goals are followed up on through the observation process and feedback. In reviewing trends from observation feedback, the principal noted that there needed to be an improvement by some teachers in the questions that they posed to students. Particular teachers attended training on the use

of Depth of Knowledge (DOK) so that they could plan lessons with more critical thinking for students. Another focus was around the use of assessment in instruction. The principal encourages teachers to have students self-assess their work as well as have peers assess each other's work. Professional development was provided to teachers so that they could then have children assess work and there were follow-up observations. This work has enabled teacher to reflect on their practices and to receive support to improve their pedagogy. School leaders have spearheaded work around the evaluation of professional development and connecting it to student work outcomes. The principal meets with instructional leads to look for trends in subjects across particular grades connecting the outcomes to the Danielson rubric. Finding that additional work needed to be done in math classrooms, particular teachers attended training provided by Metamorphosis. The information was then shared with all staff. New special education teachers receive mentoring from a teacher who is expert in this area. This work has resulted in teachers improving their practices as reflected in observation reports.

- The principal makes effective organizational decisions in support of the school's instructional goals improving student outcomes. (1.3)
 - The principal, seeing the need for students to have every advantage, provides all students with supports to enable success. All third, fourth and fifth grade students, no matter their level, were invited to attend a weekly Saturday test prep program. In addition, after starting the use of the Achieve 3000 program last fall with students below the standard in English language arts in grades 4 and 5 and seeing the gains made by these students, the principal purchased licenses for all 4th and 5th graders. The program, with a focus on exposure to non-fiction, has enabled all students to have intensive time working on reading skills through non-fiction with teachers able to receive results in real time for each student. Teachers study the item skills analysis of student results and adapt lessons to meet particular needs of students. Students in the early childhood grades who need intervention in English language arts receive it through the Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) program and also through the Wilson Reading System provided by trained part-time teachers. These teachers also push into classrooms to model the program so classroom teachers can use this method of intervention in the classroom. The school has also received grants to purchase laptop computers and smart boards to support Achieve 3000 and other software based programs. Consequently, students have received one on one interventions resulting in improved student outcomes.
 - In order to support the work around the development and implementation of Common Core aligned English language arts units of study, the school provides weekly periods for teacher teams to meet and to study lessons, student work and assessments around these challenging and engaging units and tasks. Additionally, most teachers have three to four common planning periods weekly where this work is also discussed. At one team meeting of first grade teachers, discussion centered on what could be done to meet English language learners needs in a better manner. Teachers discussed revising some aspects of the Foundations program as well as to provide additional picture cues in books that are read as shared text. This same group spoke to reviewing second grade English language arts standards and to adapting their current program "Good

Habits, Great Readers” to reflect the expectations of the CCLS in order to provide first graders with the appropriate instruction so that they could handle the next year’s expectations. Teachers spoke to appreciating the opportunity to plan together, share resources with each other and to know their students more deeply through this process. This work has resulted in teachers having a deeper understanding of the expectations of the CCLS in meeting student learning needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school scaffolds CCLS aligned curriculum within and across grade levels to promote rigorous habits and close achievement gaps. (1.1)
 - While teachers have worked on developing Common Core aligned units of study in various content areas and they have addressed some shifts in literacy and math, there was inconsistency in providing scaffolds and supports for students with disabilities, English language learners and higher achieving students. In some cases, teachers, after reviewing student work connected to the unit taught, did not revise units to incorporate adaptations and include specific supports for students with disabilities and English language learners. Consequently, student work products did not demonstrate consistent evidence of scaffolded support and not all students are consistently pushed academically to develop critical thinking skills in order to close the achievement gap.
 - The school selected key standards that students and teachers focused on this year including the use of non-fiction literature, the close reading of complex text and providing evidence in argumentative writing as well as problem solving in math where students solve problems with a real world application. This was seen through the examination of units of study and curriculum maps. Although college and career benchmarks were addressed in English language arts, these benchmarks were not addressed throughout all content areas. Students could not speak about college and career readiness or the incorporation of these behaviors as a part of their learning. In addition, some of the shifts, particularly in the area of math, were inconsistently addressed. As a result, students are not afforded exposure to the behaviors that would lead to being prepared for the future.
- Deepen the use of teaching strategies linked to a research based teaching framework that enables staff to develop questioning and discussion practices that lead to meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - The belief system in the school is that “every child can learn.” Teachers, in some of the classrooms visited, provided multiple entry points for students based on exit slips, through conferencing or from information from assessments like Achieve 3000. Students were seen working on differentiated math problems or on writing in groups after a mini lesson. In other classrooms visited, whole class instruction occurred with students sitting on the carpet for a shared text lesson with limited opportunity for support for particular student needs. This inconsistency in meeting the needs of all students, including higher achieving students, does not allow them to either be supported or challenged based on their individual needs.

- In visits to some classrooms, students were seen engaging in turn and talk discussions in pairs. In other classrooms, students participated in whole class discussions. With that said, in some classrooms, students did not have the opportunity to extend their thinking based on classmates' contributions or they were not given sufficient wait time to respond to questions posed. Additionally, although there has been a focus in professional development around questioning and discussion in the Danielson rubric, questions posed by teachers in some classrooms were mostly at a literal level. As a result, some students are not given the opportunity to extend their thinking both critically and to others in the classrooms through consistent use of protocols.
- Extend the effective practice of communicating with families to include current progress and expectations for learning across all subject areas to ensure that students and families know to reach higher levels of achievement. (3.4)
 - A large percentage of families in the school were impacted by Hurricane Sandy and the school took great initiative in instituting frequent communication through a telephone messaging system, on site communication to assist families with school information as well as providing support of food and clothing. With that said, there has been limited communication to parents regarding the expectations of the CCLS, although the school held two workshops for parents. At this time, parents are not frequently apprised of what their children are learning or the progress they are making between report card distributions. In addition, the school's web site has not been updated to provide resources to parents. As a result, while parents have been introduced to the CCLS, the lack of ongoing feedback on their children's progress hinders their ability to reinforce learning at home in order for children to make additional progress.
 - Students are now incorporating self and peer assessment as a part of their learning so that they are aware of the expectations of rubrics. Students also know that in order for them to participate in extra curricular activities such as the basketball team, they need to exhibit good citizenship and attendance in school along with effort in the classrooms. While teachers are communicating the higher expectations of the Common Core, there is little connection between these higher expectations and the behaviors needed for college and career readiness. Consequently, students are not afforded the opportunity to connect behaviors around responsibility, self-regulation and perseverance with behaviors needed for success for middle school and beyond.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: R052/ John C. Thompson	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