

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Philip H. Sheridan School

11X021

715 East 225 Street

Bronx

New York

10466

Principal: Joyce B. Coleman

Dates of review: April 9-10, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Philip H. Sheridan School is an elementary school with students from kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 72% Black, 25% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty ensure a safe and nurturing environment that supports the social, emotional, and academic development of students. (1.4)
 - School leadership has supports in place so that all students are known well by at least one adult in the building. The school implements Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to nurture students' social-emotional learning. The guidance counselor and a newly hired psychologist meet with students to discuss progress toward goals, and to mediate conflicts. In addition, one student shared that when she felt bullied, her teacher "went from door to door" to address the conflict. The Attendance Committee monitors student attendance, conducts home visits, and provides incentives for 100% attendance. Winning classes receive a "Personal Best, Act Responsibly, Work and Play Safely (PAW) award for exemplary attendance, and bulletin boards celebrate winners. The principal promotes "Safe and Smart Choices" and, in daily announcements, reminds students of this initiative. These structures have resulted in building an inclusive culture that supports student learning and consistent increases in school-wide attendance from last year's 91.1% to this year-to-date 93.1%.
 - School leadership is working to align professional development experiences and family outreach in order to develop students' academic and personal behaviors. For example, kindergarten students are provided with Academic Intervention Services (AIS) aligned to their learning needs, second grade with Response to Intervention (RTI) services, and Educators for Social Responsibility are credited with having promoted positive behavior of some students. The school reaches out to families to involve them in promoting academic and personal work habits at home, provides workshops on the rigors of the upcoming Common Core-aligned assessments, and teachers communicate to families regularly with "good and bad news." The School-based Support Team is partners with the school to improve learning outcomes, and parents spoke highly of their commitment to the school's success, several with more than one student attending. They remarked that the SAVE teacher and the school security officer are protective and responsive. Furthermore, parents join the administration in learning walks and in school celebrations, and learn how to help their students. One parent shared that she learned "to break down problems in order to help my child" since having multiple solutions to a single math problem was "not the way she was taught." As a result, students' academic and personal habits are much improved in addition to decrease in incidents on Online Occurrence Reports System (OORS) this year.
- A variety of assessment tools used consistently across the school inform teachers of students' academic needs and lead to curricula and instructional adjustments that improve learning outcomes for many students. (2.2)
 - All teachers use a variety of assessments to track student progress, use rubrics to provide feedback to students on work products, and the implementation of a school-wide grading policy is evident across classrooms. This consistency helps teachers assess what their students

know and are able to do, and helps students to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Following the last Acuity assessment, for example, teacher teams and school leadership surfaced a gap in a group of third grade students' ability to articulate a main idea and summarize a passage. This led teacher teams to target "multiple hold over" and level one students for cycles of Response to Intervention (RTI) services. Additionally, running records, teacher's conferencing notes, and the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) program track students' reading progress. Individual teachers and teacher teams use the assessments to make curricular decisions and adjustments, such as: beginning the year with nonfiction texts as opposed to memoir writing in order to strengthen students' reading comprehension skills in alignment to a Common Core instructional shift. In addition, based on ongoing review of student data, the school purchased the Wilson Program to support students struggling with text comprehension, and the Award Reading program to address the needs of English Language Learners. As a result of these assessment practices, teachers and teams are making necessary adjustments to curriculum and instruction across classrooms.

- School leaders support teacher development through frequent observation and feedback cycles that capture teachers' strengths, challenges, and next steps and improve instructional practices. (4.1)
 - Utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching administrators provide ongoing written feedback to all teachers that include strengths, challenges, and next steps aligned to the Danielson competencies in, for example, using questioning and discussion (3b). Feedback consistently stresses including more Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level three questioning in classrooms, affording wait time for students to respond, and increasing opportunities for students to "turn and talk" prior to answering a question in a whole group. In addition, school leaders conduct learning walks and teachers visit each other's classrooms to learn more about a promising practice. The principal joined by lead teachers attend the network's principal study group in order to strengthen teachers' understanding of the framework. The Response to Intervention services provide focused professional development on effective teaching models, and in November and January the network provided workshops focused on differentiated instruction for English language learners and students with disabilities. This results in improved teaching practices in raising the level of questions across classrooms.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen school-wide curricula and tasks so that all students are consistently engaged in challenging, Common Core-aligned academic tasks that emphasize higher order thinking. (1.1)
 - Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards in reading, writing, language and math by adapting the Common Core Library "bundles" and the school has changed the math program from *Everyday Math* to *My Math* to better support struggling learners. The principal and assistant principals note that curricula and tasks are becoming more structured and standards-based; however, developing rigorous tasks is still a "work in progress" as teachers continue to integrate the Common

Core expectations for cognitively demanding tasks. Several teachers are using more informational texts and asking students both orally and in written work to use evidence to support a claim, yet in many classrooms students were not yet generating their own questions, pushed to work collaboratively toward a shared goal, or applying what they learn to a new circumstance. Hence, the impact of these shifts is not yet evident in work products of all learners.

- Develop consistent teacher practices that are coherent with the school's belief system and provide students with multiple access points that result in improved work products. (1.2)
 - The principal holds the belief that all students can learn provided they have varied entry points into the curricula that are targeted to their learning needs and the school uses a universally implemented literacy program. However, across classrooms instructional practices are inconsistently aligned to the set of beliefs articulated by school leadership. In one classroom students were grouped by reading level to better accommodate their ability level, and graphic organizers and worksheets accompany most classroom tasks, however, this did not consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula to accommodate the needs of diverse learners. There were few instances where students relied on each other to construct meaning or to challenge each other's thinking, thus, limiting opportunities for all students to demonstrate higher order thinking in work products.
- Focus resource materials and programs so that they are specifically aligned to the needs of all students and to the school's goals for improving student achievement in English Language Arts and mathematics. (1.3)
 - The school places great emphasis on nurturing the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students with after-school programs provided by Unity and Montefiore Mosholu Community Center, a longstanding school partner. In addition, there are several instructional programs in place meant to provide richer classroom experiences aligned to the school's improvement goals such as: American Reading Company (100 Book Challenge) and Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA) with the accompanying progress tracker, School Pace. However, there is insufficient evidence that these programs consistently lead to improved instructional practices across classrooms, and thereby, limits opportunities for students to produce work that reflects higher order thinking.
 - Teacher teams meet regularly to engage in discussions about student progress. In one team, teachers looked at student work and reading levels to determine instructional next steps, and in another, teachers were discussing an upcoming English language arts performance task and its Common Core alignment. However, discussions focused more on what students' struggles were or varied reading levels, rather than the specific changes in pedagogy that would lead to improved outcomes. This results in limited opportunities for improving teacher practice and subsequent active student engagement in challenging academic tasks across content areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Philip H. Sheridan 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, 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