

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 073 Bronx

Elementary School 73

**1020 ANDERSON AVENUE
BRONX
NY, 10452**

Principal: Vivian Bueno

**Dates of review: April 29-30, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Alycia C. Rhinehart**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 073 Bronx is an Elementary school with 857 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 30% Black, 68% Hispanic, 2%, and White, students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 91.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is aligning teacher assignments and student interventions to the school's instructional goals and teacher teams are analyzing student work as a conduit for instructional improvements. (1.3)
 - The school's inquiry teams meet once per week for two periods to review instructional content and student work products. The Grade 3 team analyzed several samples of student work in an effort to surface student progress on plot and character in their writing. Fables were the basis for the student writing content. Upon reviewing student work samples, team findings indicate that they need to examine instructional delivery features of the content –what is being taught and how it is being taught. For example, one of the instructional leads asked, “How is ‘dialog’ as a writing feature being taught? We may need to take a look at teaching practice as a means for addressing students’ needs that trend across student work samples.” The team also voiced that some of the changes they would make, instructionally, can be realized immediately by revisiting the pacing calendar and noting when the adjustment to content and instruction can be forwarded. Consequently, the process for adjustments to instruction is structurally in place, promoting enhancement of instructional rigor.
 - The school has established, The Literacy Lab, as an intervention mechanism for Grade 1 and 2 students as a pathway for meeting one of the school's instructional goals, around grades “Kindergarten through Grade 2 and the expectation that they will demonstrate an increase of 3-5% in the Teachers College Reading Writing Project reading levels as measured by Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks.” In order to support the implementation of this intervention, the school leader has appointed the school's Response to Intervention faculty member to lead this work. In doing so, the intervention is connected to the school's overall Response to Intervention efforts. Additionally, the school leader has implemented the New York State Bilingual Common Core Initiative in her school by implementing Estrellita to meet the needs of the school's English Language Learner student population. The bilingual coordinator has been assigned to do this work and is also the school's English as a Second Language teacher. The implementation of Estrellita is aligned to another instructional goal stating, “English Language Learners will demonstrate progress toward achieving state standards as measured by 3-5% percentage points increase in students scoring at levels 3 and 4 on the New York State ELA assessment.” Both interventions are programmed to meet the needs of specific student groups in the school, thus closing the achievement gap, proffering targeted support of students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and struggling students.
- The school's instructional goals to support all students, including English Language Learners articulate efforts to improve student achievement through the support of the school community, families and school improvement plans. (3.1)

- Leadership has established annual goals to convey the learning needs of students across the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5 continuum which correspond with literacy and mathematics content and instruction. Additionally, the school leader has identified specific teaching practices as emphases for ongoing professional development for each of the school's faculty. For example, to support student learning in the dual language Spanish class, the classroom teacher is receiving professional development and support in the delivery of Estrellita, a dual language curriculum designed to provide access to curricular content for students whose dominant language is Spanish. The dual language Spanish teacher's professional development plan also includes student conferencing and designing language objectives as part of her learning objectives for 2012-2013. Furthermore, to develop teaching practice aligned with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) expectations, the school leader has outlined an action plan for primary grade faculty that clearly outlines professional objectives such as providing small group support, differentiating instructional content during instructional delivery, and crafting questions to marshal students' higher order thinking. These undertakings are designed to link teacher practice and student learning so that progress in student achievement is enhanced.
- The principal holds monthly meetings with family members and parents who participate in the School Leadership Team and Learning Leaders who work in the school. Family members state that they are involved in the school's improvement efforts and have voice in decision-making with regard to their children's learning experiences and school safety. Family members also point out that they have improved the family engagement aspect of the school's culture. Families also point out that they have audience with the school's leadership and teaching faculty as a way of voicing their ideas related to school improvement and decision-making. The student council also pointed out that they, too, speak with administration and teachers, share ideas and suggestions to make the school better for everyone. Communications with family members and students is ongoing thus, ensuring that the school continues to academically evolve and show student improvement.
- Leadership engages in frequent classroom visits and provides written and verbal feedback designed to advance teacher practice that is aligned with student learning needs. (4.1)
 - School leaders provide faculty ongoing feedback, designed to target specific teaching actions that promote student learning. Written feedback includes clear connections to student learning and student work. For example, in one of the school leader's written responses to a teacher, she wrote, "An analysis of student work associated with this lesson indicated that all students were engaged in writing at this time. It was apparent that students connected this task with the previous paragraphs written in their personal narrative." To extend the teacher's learning and practice development in this same written response, the school leader wrote, "Continue to support questioning and discussion strategies by using Depth of Knowledge to develop specific higher order questions that you will carry out through guided writing and individual conferencing." In another written response to faculty, the school leader wrote, "What teaching strategy will you use with the group to scaffold their learning? In this particular case you could have used another short piece of literature

and retaught the identification of supporting information.” The explicit and clear recommendations to build and scaffold teacher practice are aligned to student work and learning as a pathway to ensure that teaching practice accelerates student achievement.

- The school leader has devised a professional development plan for each faculty member. Each faculty member has a short list of targeted professional learning objectives based upon classroom observation data. For example, in a written response to one of the faculty members, the school leader wrote, “What specific common skill or strategy will you reteach based upon your knowledge of prior student performance in writing? This can come from their baselines or earlier work.” Following through on this recommendation, the school leader has identified ‘conferencing’ as one of the targeted professional development objectives for this faculty member. Evidence for implementation of this professional learning objective is the teacher’s use of student portfolios and conferencing notes. To further develop this faculty member’s practice in this area and to ensure that implementation produces the evidence identified by the school leader, one of the instructional leads will be responsible for supporting this faculty member’s development in this targeted area of professional development. In this way, professional development includes peer learning designed to promote best teaching practice as well as cultivate leadership within faculty.

What the school needs to improve

- Sustain the practice of aligning curricular content to the Common Core Learning Standards in order to ensure that student learning is aligned with Citywide Instructional Expectations, thus improving student achievement. (1.1)
 - The literacy science unit bundle for Grade 3 taken from the Common Core Resource Library will platform the literacy focus in April, May, and June. Grade 4 will focus on the structure and features of informational text in April/May as a review and reinforcement of the informational text focus provided Grade 4 in November/December. The most recent literacy curriculum maps for Kindergarten and Grade 1 indicate that the focus on initial literacy for student achievement is: asking and answering questions about key details and unknown words in a text, identifying characters, settings, and major events in a story, and recognizing common types of texts (storybooks, poems). These points for learning are important for students to acquire foundational literacy skills. However, the curriculum map for Kindergarten, the school’s younger learners, indicates that students begin actively engaging in group reading activities with purpose and understanding in May and June delaying the opportunity for young learners to engage in the questioning and inquiry purported by the CCLS as they launch into literary and academic careers.
- Incorporate Citywide Instructional Shifts into instructional delivery throughout grade levels to ensure that student instruction engages all learners in challenging tasks that reveal student thinking and participation at high levels. (1.2)
 - Students in fourth grade and fifth grade are given opportunities to engage in thoughtful interaction with curricular content. Students are afforded a range of opportunities to engage with concepts, skills, and information.

For example, in one fifth grade class students were given 5 mathematical equations to solve. Students paired up with a classmate to solve the 5 problems as well as create a problem for partners to solve. In a fourth grade class, during independent practice, students were annotating poetry as they located textual evidence to identify the tone of the poem. In a Grade 3 classroom, the teacher asked students, “Why do you think camels have long eyelashes?” “Do you think it is an adaptation?” In other classrooms, teachers asked closed ended questions, such as, “What is at the beginning of a question?” and “Digraphs are...?” Even with these efforts, consistency and availability of high DOK level, open-ended questions throughout classrooms is not yet school-wide practice in order to provide options for students to connect with curricular content leading to increased student engagement and higher order thinking practice.

- In Grade 3, students writing samples focused on identifying elements of fables and included student drawing analogies with personal experiences. Writing samples incorporate links between the main idea of the fable using the textual evidence and real world experiences. In Grade 4, student work focuses on interpreting the tone, language, and intention of poetry samples and ascertains the nuanced definitions of expressions and terms used in the self-selected poetry samples. The discussions and exchange of ideas relative to the nuances of language in poetry generated opportunities for increased participation. The student work samples observed indicated thoughtful attention to various literary genres affording students time and occasion to engage in the critical analysis and collaboration necessary for extended learning and increased depth of knowledge. In contrast, in some classrooms, student conversation was minimal and teacher talk was predominant throughout instructional delivery and teachable moments. High levels of student engagement and participation were inconsistently provided throughout grade levels and classrooms prohibiting all students, including relevant subgroups, from actively engaging in their own learning.
- Expand the development of rubrics and common assessments aligned to CCLS to ensure student progress and understanding of content and concepts are monitored and student data results inform instructional adjustments. (2.2)
 - Currently, Grades 3-5 have employed some of the rubrics available on the Common Core Resource Library website for literacy instruction. Upper grade faculty is also generating teacher-developed rubrics aligned with classroom learning experiences. Lower grades have developed and use Everyday Math rubrics to assess the comprehension of younger learners in the area of mathematical understanding. The work to create consistency in student assessment practice horizontally and vertically is absent, hindering instructional modification and monitoring of student learning within each grade level and across grade levels in the school.
 - Student conference notes are more akin to anecdotal and observational notes of student learning behaviors in classrooms. Students inconsistently engaged in conversations designed to support them in monitoring their learning progress and determining their own next steps. Ongoing monitoring of student understanding was minimal. Student discussion and exchange of ideas was also brief, limiting student awareness of their learning and next steps, and hindering instructional adjustments necessary to address the learning needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 073 Bronx	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