

Quality Review Report 2012 – 2013

The Edward R. Byrne School

08X101

2750 Lafayette Avenue

Bronx, NY 10465

Principal: Jared Rosoff

Dates of review: May 21-22, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Edward R. Byrne School is a middle school with 482 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 13% Black, 55% Hispanic, 17% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 95.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students demonstrate good levels of involvement and eagerness in well matched classroom learning activities to maximize their learning. (1.2)
 - The majority of teachers across grades and content areas utilize the workshop model prioritizing students working in pairs based on levels of proficiency in content area strands which is informed by current formative assessments. Lessons are aligned to the Common Core and incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies. Utilizing the Danielson teaching framework teachers have prioritized, questioning and assessment to inform instruction. Teachers use this information to effectively gauge the instructional moves to make in order to meet the academic needs of students as evidenced by students utilizing graphic organizers to guide and inform their learning. Hence, most students are improving in reading based on the results of Degree of Reading Power (DRP) assessment.
 - Content area tasks are intricately embedded within the curriculum to provide students with the appreciation of applying the content taught to real life situations. For example, students in an Earth Science class had to interpret weather maps and explain how this information is useful in science. Working in pairs students used reference tables to demonstrate their understanding of isotherms and isobars through rigorous discussion. Students defined the terms low and high pressure to draw a synoptic map for a given set of conditions. Students state that because of this “hands on” activity they have a larger frame of reference and deeper understanding of content. As a result, students are profiting from dynamic learning opportunities as evidenced by improved work products and report card grades
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - The school’s investment in iPads and laptop technologies has been the impetus for students to delve into their studies with deeper interest and apply their basic skills to research to complete content-specific tasks. An experienced teacher who is adept at tailoring literacy instruction with media collaborates with content area teachers to support the integration of media and content to enhance student use of technology in the learning process. Kips Bay, a community-based organization supports the schools’ goals of improving students’ academic (band, digital arts, and history club) and social (sports teams and chill out room) development by providing a daily afterschool program in a collegial atmosphere. As a result, students state that “school experiences are very rewarding”. Consequently, student learning is maximized as evidenced by the majority of students scoring at or above proficiency on their Common Core tasks in all core content area subjects.
 - Teacher teams meet one period per week. The effective use of team collaborations has been pivotal in establishing rapid and effective communication between the leadership and teachers that has led to timely revisions in pedagogical skills and engaging students in challenging tasks. In order for students to be successful in tackling these rigorous, Common

Core-aligned tasks, teams prioritize scaffolding by tailoring instructional activities to meet the needs of students that lead to student mastery of content evident in student exit slips. Hence, teamwork enhances instruction and improves student work products.

- Various teacher teams collaborate with administration in reviewing information on student learning outcomes prioritizing areas of need at the school and class level. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams engage in a deep analysis of summative and formative data, enabling them to identify student's strengths and weaknesses. All students are familiar with a common grading policy and utilize content-specific rubrics across classrooms. Students stated that "rubrics helped them to know what they needed to include in assignments to get a good grade". Teams consistently analyze data to effectively gauge the instructional moves that they should make for students during lessons. For example, the English Language Arts team incorporated the use of a color-coded writing graphic organizer to chart and analyze student writing. By scaffolding this information student writing has improved as evidenced by work samples. In math the team utilizes the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership protocol to not only look at classroom assessment and student learning, but also to inform classroom practice. As a result, the increased emphasis on student engagement resulted in improved student performance as measured by spring 2013 Acuity results. Consequently, the analysis of formative classroom data supports the timely instructional modifications which are aligned to the Common Core and target the specific instructional needs of students.
- Administrators consistently use a common teaching framework to monitor the effectiveness of pedagogy in order to enhance instructional practices throughout the school. (4.1)
 - The newly hired principal is highly visible throughout the school and prioritizes visiting classrooms and engaging teachers in a balance of formal and informal observations. A newly designed informal observation template is used to provide feedback and next steps to the teachers. Co-observations are conducted with the network's talent coach to bring consistency to the process by norming expectations for good practice around the Danielson Framework. Additionally, instructional leads developed "look fors" that focus on the Danielson competencies of questioning and discussion techniques as well as assessment in instruction coupled with the school's emphasis on establishing a purposeful classroom environment. New teachers receive support in designing coherent instruction using a network/school designed template. A mentor assigned to teachers implements professional development in the Danielson competencies of planning, questioning, and assessment. This targeted and tiered professional development and collaboration resulted in a deepening of practice as evidenced by increased satisfactory observational reports. These strategies have built collaboration and collegiality through the sharing of content knowledge that supports teachers in improving their differentiated classroom practice. As result, pedagogical skills improved in providing targeted meaningful instruction for subgroups or individual students as evidenced by student work products, Acuity results and the just released State Report Card where all constituent groups attained adequate yearly progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the rigor of curriculum and instruction so that all lessons engage and offer suitable challenges for students at their level including higher order thinking skills to help support learning. (1.1)
 - All students participate in both art and music classes. Accelerated Regents coursework is offered in Integrated Algebra and Earth Science classes and advanced Spanish leading to a Second Language Proficiency Exam. However, teachers of students in special education are not consistently incorporating challenging and rigorous tasks into classroom instruction nor do plans reviewed consistently reflect activities designed to meet individual needs. Students with individualized education plans (IEP) were provided with generic lessons or activities that required them to complete tasks (ordering numbers highest to lowest involving rational numbers, decimals, and negative fraction) that they did not have the prior knowledge required to complete the assignment. Furthermore, paraprofessionals were not consistently providing assistance as necessary to support student learning. Some lessons observed were teacher-dominated. Students in sixth grade do not have a social studies textbook or any text aligned to the curriculum to use for reference or to drive text-based rich discussions. Consequently, these students are not progressing as rapidly as other students as evidenced by the spring 2013 Acuity results. Therefore, some student subgroups are not benefiting from curricula designed to provide the cognitive engagement that they require to strengthen their academic performance and progress.
- In strategic decision making assess progress toward identified objectives and make related adjustments through consistent formalized interim checkpoints. (5.1)
 - The school analyzes numerous aspects of student subgroup performance data and realizes there is a significant achievement gap in overall English Language Arts and math proficiency levels. However, the school has not yet embedded support strategies across content areas to address this area of need. Benchmarks measuring progress towards goals at specific intervals during the school year are not indicated. Furthermore, the school lacks a formal positive behavior intervention plan for effectively dealing with assorted socio-emotional concerns of students. As a result, students are not benefitting from participating in programs that promote and reward positive socio-academic behavior to extend classroom learning and enhance structures to ensure optimal communication with all constituents.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-201

School name: P.O. Edward R. Byrne	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