Quality Review Report

2012-2013

PS 175 City Island

Elementary and Middle School

200 City Island Avenue
Bronx
NY 10464

Principal: Amy Lipson

Dates of review: January 7 - 8, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Holly Reichert

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 175 City Island is an elementary and middle school with 343 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 6% Black, 24% Hispanic, 65% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned curricula emphasizes rigor and learner needs to cognitively engage and prepare all students for high school and beyond. (1.1)

    - The school spirals rigorous habits and higher order skills aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) from kindergarten through grade 8 to provide the progression of skills over time. For example, to support the development of collaborative conversations across grades and content, partner and group discussion strategies build in complexity and increasingly hold students more accountable for expressing their thinking and actively listening to the ideas of others. As a result, school curricula provides consistency in building standards-based foundational skills that cognitively engage and lead to student output that evidences deep thinking and the critique of others.

    - Teacher teams use student work data to continuously revise school curricula to target the learning needs of all students. Teams and individual teachers examine student work from diagnostic pre-assessments, formative and summative assessments throughout the course of a unit to determine shifts in current and future instructional units. For some students, post-assessments now serve as pre-assessments leading to new culminating tasks being created at higher cognitive levels. Differentiated texts and instructional strategies embedded in curriculum maps support data defined groupings of students, and are revised following each assessment with the level of cognitive challenge increasing by unit and across units. As a result, curricular revisions focus on meeting students where they are and taking them to the next level.

- Differentiated instructional practices focus all students on their thinking and understanding of content leading to meaningful work products. (1.2)

    - The school believes learning takes place in a social context where individuals learn from and with each other. Instructional practice demonstrates a unified culture for learning that highlights social engagement and communicates the diversity of learners. Differentiated instruction provides data-informed support across groupings including review, on-level, and enrichment categories. Across classrooms and stated by parents, students know what they are learning, know why they are in the groupings they are in, and take responsibility for communicating their learning. The school's culture for learning, informed by a research-based teaching framework, attends to all student needs ensuring access and extension to curricula.

    - Classroom discourse, demonstrated by students in partnerships, small group collaborative problem solving and class discussions, reflects high levels of cognitive engagement. In English language arts, students discuss their 'chunked' books in groups guided by questions that push their thinking to consider other perspectives. In math, students work in differentiated partnerships on tiered problems tailored to their level.

Students spoke about how they came to the solution of the problem, how they utilized the thinking of their partners, and explained their thought process. Strategic groupings, tiered tasks, and an embedded culture of student talk leads to discussion that advances student thinking across classrooms.

- The school strategically aligns resources and structures that support instructional goals ensuring teachers and students move to the next level. (1.3)

  - Funding and resources are prioritized to align to school goals centered on curricular planning and revision to ensure student progress. Teachers have daily common planning and meet in teams twice a week to analyze student work/data to inform and adjust instructional plans. The literacy and math coaches support individual teachers during circular six periods with the planning and revision of lessons and units to lift the level of rigor in questioning, modeling with math, and opinion/argument writing that hone and extend student learning of key State standards. To better address individual needs, the school reduced class size to twenty students in most classrooms. For grades 7 and 8, the school changed social studies and science periods from eighty minutes three times per week to fifty-five minutes five times per week in response to low homework completion data. Since September 2012, on-time homework submission has increased by 50%. Dedicated collaborative team and planning time, reduced class size and adjusted student programs allow teachers to concentrate on planning and differentiating for all learners. As a result, the school attributes a 59% increase in writing skills and a 70% Level 3 attainment in math, as per performance task and end of unit outcomes, for targeted Level 2 students in grades 4 to 8 since September 2012 to these strategic organizational decisions.

- The school's welcoming and inclusive culture promotes adult learning, student voice and ownership of learning where individuals are recognized for their contributions and achievement. (1.4)

  - The school lives its mission. As a collaborative community of learners, all stakeholders are invested in the continual improvement of the school so that students receive the best education possible, one that develops both social-emotional and academic skills. Parents highlighted school-wide character development with monthly read-aloud book selections, community service projects, citizen of the month awards, and student government. Student government is an integral part of school life with members actively engaged with classmates to hear their ideas, create proposals, and implement changes agreed to by school administration. Student government members commented that their involvement allows them to speak on the behalf of others, act as role models, and work for the benefit of all. Middle school students asked for study hall periods in the library, and the administration is currently working on their request. Honoring student contributions to the school community underpins its continuous culture building and school improvement efforts.

  - The school focuses on the development of student personal and academic behaviors. Professional learning with coaches, consultants and peers allows the staff to continuously grow in how they provide a

well-rounded education for all students. Curricular plans, service and experiential learning activities, and recognition activities highlight persistence, engagement, and collaboration. Students highlighted their independent and partner/group work habits as well as self-regulation and self-assessment as elements that sustain their learning and desired improvement. Students regularly reflect on their learning goals and use rubrics to gauge the quality of their collaborative conversations with peers, math practices, and written work. Students highlighted the recognition of their work on bulletin board displays throughout the school adding that they often read their peers' papers to glean ideas on how they can improve theirs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the refinement of assessment practices aligned to CCLS curricula and informed by student data to close the achievement gap. (2.2)
    - Teachers create and revise assessments, tasks, and rubrics aligned to the school's curricula to assess student learning. In math, the school has implemented the use of pre-assessments to determine what students know prior to a unit in order to tailor tiered instruction during the unit. Across the school, in English language arts, opinion and argument writing rubrics are used to provide feedback to students so that they know what to do to move to the next level. While the school creates and revises it assessments and rubrics in response to student data and CCLS curricula, not all assessment processes are consistently detailed and refined across the school to provide a complete portrait of student mastery. Moreover, student progress towards specified goals across all grades and subjects is not comprehensively captured. Assessment outcomes and learning goals are not correlated to inform curricular adjustments both horizontally and vertically providing a clear trajectory to maintain and sustain student progress over time. Consequently, the current use of teacher-created assessments does not comprehensively assess and provide detailed feedback needed to accelerate the learning of all students and provide formative and summative data that maps student progress toward goals by grade and across grades in all subjects, limiting the school's capacity to have a complete picture of student progress across the school.

- Streamline classroom observation processes to accelerate improved teacher practice leading to increased student progress. (4.1)
    - The school's system for supporting the development of teachers includes informal cycles of classroom observation and feedback based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school maintains a year-long tracker of informal observation feedback used to differentiate professional development for teachers. While the school has an articulated and tracked system for cycles of informal classroom observation and providing effective feedback, the school does not have a streamlined structure for tracking growth by Danielson Framework competencies aligned to teachers' professional goals. Additionally, the school does not have an articulated process for how teacher peers visit each other's classrooms and provide feedback based on the Danielson Framework. As a result, feedback from peers and school leaders is not tracked by

Danielson Framework competencies and aligned to goals, limiting opportunities for monitoring and accelerating teacher growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: PS 175 City Island	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	

Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly…	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

To what extent does the school …	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

To what extent does the school …	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