

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Elementary School 207
3030 Godwin Terrace, Bronx
NY 10463

Principal: Maria Rosado

Dates of review: March 21 - 22 2013
Lead Reviewer: Leslie Miller Chislett

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 207 is an elementary school with 408 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 7% Black, 84% Hispanic, 5% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 41% English language learners and 9% 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 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's culture of mutual trust, approach to discipline, and social emotional support structures, result in the academic and personal growth of adults and students. (1.4)
 - In response to the Learning Environment Survey, the school implemented a positive behavior support program called "PS 207 ROCKS" (respect, organization, cooperation, kindness and safety), to promote personal behaviors conducive to learning. These character traits serve as a common approach to culture building and discipline and are incorporated into a program that includes a pledge, classroom lessons, and school-wide celebrations. Across classrooms teachers support students to self-monitor through green, yellow, and red traffic lights, thus either reinforcing desired behavior, giving a warning, or resulting in logical consequences when unacceptable behavior occurs. The school leadership reports that, as a result, escalated behavioral incidents are declining. In addition, nominated second graders who serve as student council members meet regularly to plan community service initiatives for charity, like penny drives, and they are charged with the responsibility of returning to class to share with their peers the content of discussions about rules, resulting in students serving a role in maintaining the positive climate. The school aligns family outreach and professional development to promote student well-being. For example, newsletters and workshops for families address ways to support learning at home, effective parenting, and bullying prevention. Teachers are trained by the fulltime social worker during faculty conferences to reinforce routines. As a result, parents and children confidently experience school as a safe, nurturing place where students are loved and taken care of.
 - Teachers are surveyed several times a year to formally identify students who may need additional support. This information and other referrals are reviewed in an on-going fashion by both the Response to Intervention Team (RTI) that meets to select instructional supports for students or the school-based support team (SBST) that collaboratively reviews cases where a social or emotional need is impeding academic progress. When necessary, action plans are written for students needing additional behavioral support and the school's fulltime social worker observes students to monitor and aid progress. Paraprofessionals, the school nurse, and members of the school-based support team are available at lunch; students know one of these caring adults will speak to them and they can access an "I'm upset" pass. According to parents, the school's parent coordinator is available to relay concerns to the administrator as they arise, and teachers make frequent calls or face-to-face contact with families to support student learning. Therefore, the school's systematic response to student need, effectively impacts the children's personal and academic growth.
- Teachers thoughtfully use common assessments and grading practices to analyze student learning results, fine-tune curriculum, and make instructional decisions for their grade-level and classrooms. (2.2)
 - Common tasks and assessment criteria that are aligned to the school's focus on select Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in reading, writing with

informational texts, or communication of problem solving in math, are used on each grade level. A school-wide commitment to providing meaningful feedback to learners derived from these tasks and assessments is evidenced in classrooms as teachers help students individually or in guided partnerships as they make use of grade-level rubrics, “attribute charts” and suggestions on post-it notes to reflect on their progress and revise work. Young students explain that feedback helps them know how they are learning and the next steps for improving their work. While working collaboratively with their peers, teachers analyze student-learning patterns from common grade-level unit tasks and adjust instructional plans. For example, the first grade team observed students having difficulty in using varied sentence starters in writing an animal report and decided to explicitly attend to this skill during interactive writing experiences. As a result teachers understand learning outcomes, adjust instruction, and have observed student gains on formative assessments on more rigorous targeted skills such as staying on topic,

- Working on grade-level teams, teachers review student work to analyze whether students are meeting grade-level and subject-area goals and revise their instruction plans and curriculum. The school has adapted or designed common performance tasks that integrate social studies (SS) and science content, what the school calls “theme”, with English language arts (ELA) genre study. For example, while exploring urban and suburban communities, second graders are assessed both on the social studies objectives and on the CCLS standards for reading and writing informational texts. This enables the second grade teacher team to review strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in the student work for the purpose of revising the SS and ELA unit lessons for next year and to inform current instruction. As teachers noted students struggled with run-on sentences, they decided to focus revision work on needed linking words. Rewritten unit plans now reinforce discipline-based vocabulary and use of evidence from texts through word walls and other strategies. Individual teachers create class sheets to summarize the number of students at proficiency levels from 1 to 4 on these CCLS assessment tasks. In addition to teacher-made assessments and tasks from the City’s CC library, benchmark assessments from ECLAS 2, Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) and end-of-unit tests from enVision Math are uniformly used, summarized by class and grade, thus providing a clear picture of student progress toward classroom and grade-level goals.
- Teachers regularly engage in team based inquiry-oriented professional collaborations resulting in shared leadership, mutual accountability for improved practice, impacting student learning. (4.2)
 - Grade-level teams including teachers of students with disabilities (SWDs) and English language learners (ELLs) meet purposefully two to three times a week during common prep times, and vertical teams of staff from pre-kindergarten to grade 2 meet weekly to conduct inquiry. In keeping with school goals related to the implementation of the CCLS, this work has involved refining unit maps, lessons plans, and literacy performance tasks, while conducting gap analyses to ascertain needed instructional shifts and identify current student performance relative to the rigorous standards and implementation of enVision, the new math program. Guided by agenda topics determined by the administrator and coaches, teachers take responsibility for facilitating or presenting at the meetings on a rotating basis and use protocols that assist them in examining student work and generating instructional solutions. As a result, teachers and the principal report that educators’ understanding of the standards has expanded as well as their capacity to plan instruction aligned to CCLS, suitable for diverse learners, and incorporating the instructional shifts such as using group work and higher-level

questioning to promote student discussion of ideas. Teachers note student progress towards meeting the literacy standards requiring comprehension of informational texts, more frequent integration of the content into their writing, and use of various elements such as word choice within narratives. Middle-of-the-year data summaries for writing kindergarten through grade 2 shows an average of 23% of students moving one or more proficiency levels, with over 65% moving forward in kindergarten and 33.5% SWDs making gains.

- Analysis of student data from math constructed response problems and benchmark assessments in reading or writing performance tasks is a common practice on both grade-level and vertical teams. Teachers on each grade-level who work in general education transitional bi-lingual or special education settings come together to investigate how to serve students whom they share. This includes discussing how to differentiate grade-level content, devising multiple entry points to common lessons, strategizing about needs of groups of struggling students, and sharing best practices. The second grade team discussed strengths and weaknesses in student work relative to the goal of moving all students to proficiency in writing. It was noted that SWDs needed help in comparing and contrasting both sides of an argument and supporting their arguments with textual evidence. It was also noted that students made gains in developing an introduction and conclusion. This type of structured professional collaboration typically results in improved teacher practice and progress toward student learning goals for sub-groups of students. This is evidenced in part by present year gains of 33.5% by SWDs in reading on DRA assessments and 59% of ELLs moving at least one level in math.
- The principal and assistant principal (AP) have implemented a system for classroom observation and feedback aligned with a research-based teaching framework that has created a school-wide instructional focus resulting in professional growth. (4.1)
 - In support of the development of new and veteran teachers, the principal and AP conduct short, frequent classroom visits to observe teaching, examine room environment, and to look at student work. They then craft feedback and next steps based on the Danielson teaching framework, and provide levels of performance and actionable comments for improving teaching. Early in the year, teachers identify professional growth goals aligned to this framework that are documented and tracked to note progress in target growth areas. Administrators record this information and summarize trends to assess progress towards the school's instructional focus on coherent planning and strategies like questioning and student self-assessment techniques. Additionally, the framework's content is embedded into professional discussions to build an understanding of the descriptive language and expectations for effective instructional practices, a discussion that also focuses on items like displays of student work, homework, and in-class notebooks. This work has furthered the school's commitment to continuous improvement as evidenced by faculty buy-in to the process, teacher reflections, and observed professional growth in use of certain targeted strategies.
 - School leaders and three instructional coaches, one for each in literacy, math, and/or theme, work effectively to incorporate trends from teacher observations and student data into the design of professional development. Data revealed the need for lab experiences focusing on managing flexible student groupings or designing coherent lessons aligned to learning objectives, and appropriate pacing of instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Support for teachers is then customized into cycles of in-class coaching support and/or lab site experiences where teachers observe the coach or their peers using a targeted strategy, and as

they try the strategy themselves, receive input on how to refine the practice. Teachers also attend workshops outside of school to deepen their knowledge and skill in goal areas and then present to their colleagues. Subsequently, professional growth consistent with the school's goals for improving literacy and math and the City-wide instructional expectations has occurred for teachers.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the work across grades and subjects to align curricula to the CCLS and embed rigorous habits and skills in academic and assessment tasks so that all students are required to demonstrate higher order thinking (1.1)
 - Purposeful decisions that have been made to align curricula to key State standards include the adoption of a new math program that focuses more on conceptual understanding and includes topics that are aligned to the major work of the grades as laid out in the CCLS. There is also a focus on engaging teams in refining ELA, theme maps, and pacing calendars, to include literacy performance tasks in social studies and science units. While grade-level teams have implemented several CCLS-aligned ELA and literacy units, and are continually refining these to include some instructional strategies that engage learners in appropriately rigorous performance tasks, they have not yet comprehensively developed CCLS-aligned curricula across all grades and subjects detailing how students in the lowest third, ELLs, SWDs or higher achieving students must demonstrate their thinking.
- Strengthen teaching practices across classrooms to result in higher-levels of student thinking, engagement in discussions, ownership of learning, and accelerated progress for all learners. (1.2)
 - Across general education, transitional bi-lingual and self-contained special education classrooms, lessons are typically organized around the workshop model. Certain teaching strategies such as modeling the way to complete a task, use of a mini-lesson to introduce a new concept or skill, and students' active involvement in varied challenging tasks, were consistently observed. Students were frequently given time to turn-and-talk with a neighbor, to work with peers to edit stories, practice reading with voice or reflect on their learning. Written work that evidenced student participation in challenging writing tasks was ubiquitous throughout the halls and classrooms. Portfolios captured benchmark performances in math evidencing multi-step problems and students explaining their process. However, during classroom visitations students were not consistently demonstrating ownership for what was essential to their learning. For example, in several second grades students practiced reading with voice as instructed, yet only some students utilized the checklist of criteria to examine their accomplishments while in discussion with his/her partner. While scaffolds, questioning techniques, and routines, are used to ensure most students have a variety of ways to think about the content and develop meaningful work products, supports and extensions do not yet reflect elaborate and strategic planning and delivery to result in depth of knowledge and further acceleration of student progress for SWDs, ELLs and high-end learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Public School X207	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