

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Nadia J. Pagan School

X226

Bronx, NY 10453

Principal: Gloria Darden

Dates of review: March 5 – 6, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Melodie Mashel

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S.226 is an elementary school with 515 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 22% Black, 76% Hispanic, 1% White, 0% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The alignment of the school's curriculum to key Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) engages all students in rigorous tasks that promote high level thinking and accelerates student learning. (1.1)
 - School leaders and staff revised curriculum maps and units of study across subject areas to thoroughly align with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). The school's well-aligned CCLS curriculum ensures all students are immersed in reading a variety of complex non-fiction texts across all grades. Assessment tasks that monitor student progress of key English language arts standards such as writing evidenced based opinions and arguments are the focus of much of the school's work for the year. Shared and independent reads of articles, web based research and the incorporation of video clips into lessons engage all students, including special education students and English language learners (ELLs), providing them with the ability to produce rigorous performance task work products resulting in 50% of students moving from a level 2 to a level 3 on English language arts post performance assessment tasks since the beginning of the year.
 - Teams of teachers design or adapt rigorous academic tasks using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) rubric to ensure the tasks created challenge students. Tasks steeped in academic vocabulary ensure students develop and use rich content vocabulary. For example, a science task in which first grade students were asked to explore how three different liquids mixed with water, engaged students in partner discussions about their experiment using terms such as; hypothesize, sink, absorb, liquefy, predict and observe. In addition, student written logs reflect the appropriate use of these words to express and support their predictions and findings. As a result, the school's curriculum ensures all students including, special education and English language learners, engage in rigorous learning experiences that deepens their usage of domain specific language and ensures higher order skills and thinking.
- Across classrooms teachers use common assessments to monitor student progress and make instructional adjustments that improve student learning outcomes. (2.2)
 - Teachers meet frequently to review commonly implemented assessment results and examine student work. Information culled from task-specific rubrics conveys to teachers a clear picture of student needs and strengths and guides feedback to students that include next steps for improvement. Clearly defined grading policies categorize students at four levels of support; intensive, strategic, benchmark and enrichment with intensive being the group of students in most need of support and enrichment as students that need extended challenging tasks. Using this information, students and teachers collaborate to set learning goals for individual and groups of students with actionable next steps. For example, this analysis identified that the majority of third grade students needed to work on stretching details and adding minute by minute relevant details to their descriptive narratives of

real or imagined experiences, one of the school's chosen key standards of focus to their writing. As a result of instructional adjustments, 50% of third grade students moved from the intensive level to the strategic level from baseline to midline writing assessments.

- Data gathered every twelve weeks from the results of common assessments such as: Acuity, Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, performance tasks, end of unit tests and the ongoing close examination of student work drives the school's instructional adjustments. For example, a review of 5th grade student math work revealed they were not demonstrating a clear understanding of place value through the millions. As a result, teachers adjusted instruction to include the addition of the use of place value charts, squared material and computer software programs to support student understanding of this concept. As a result of ongoing instructional adjustments, 28% of students moved from a level 1 to a level 2 from baseline to midyear math assessments.
- School leaders make effective organizational decisions that result in meaningful student work products. (1.3)
 - Students are immersed in digital media experiences on a daily basis as third graders design power point presentations, and fifth graders create iMovies to complete their research based writing that supports their claims in their written work. Currently, groups of students use iExcel, a math software program that provides focused math skill practice and ensures students track their grades and monitor their own progress. The school partners with a variety of organizations that support the school's goals and meet the needs of a diverse group of learners. Students participate in New York City's Parks Department Seeds to Tress program where they adopt a tree, monitor its' growth, create sketches and produce written work that describes the tree. This partnership with New York City Grows ensures students participate in urban farming, planting vegetables and herbs resulting in growing their own pizza gardens. Studio in a School aligns Common Core Learning Standards to the Arts and students create art and write reflections about the experience. As a result, the strategic decision to use the school's budget to fund media experiences, the purposeful decisions to infuse technology as a learning tool and to partner with key organizations results in all students producing authentic and meaningful work products.
 - The school leaders skillful data-driven budgetary decisions ensure all students in need of academic support are provided with intervention services that improve their achievement. The principal's strategic decision to hire teachers with expertise in guided reading, the instructional model for the teaching of reading provides targeted support for groups of students including English language learners and special education students. An academic intervention services teacher at each grade level provides additional reading instruction to groups of students on an ongoing basis. The intentional decision by school leaders to hire teachers from an outside consultant for their after school program ensures the use of a programmed approach that optimizes the instructional time by ensuring students read for extended periods and engage in solving multi-step math problems during these intervention sessions. As a result, midyear assessment data demonstrates 75% of students attending the after school sessions have moved from a level 1 to a level 2 on end of unit tests in reading and math,

ensuring that the resources provide direct and effective supports that are closing the achievement gap.

- School leaders effectively use feedback from classroom observations to inform professional development and support teacher growth that elevates teacher practice. (4.1)
 - Analysis of classroom observation data by school leaders revealed teachers at varying ability levels on Danielson's Framework domains. Initially, a major part of the work at the school focused around the data identified the need to ensure effective instructional planning. With the support of an outside consultant, teachers worked on their next steps. As feedback provided to teachers by school leaders articulates clear next steps, they are able to log their improved instructional planning in a discussion Drop Box, an online system which houses and facilitates dialog for consultant and school leader feedback. Additional visits to classrooms by leaders determine improvements in planning. As a result of this process, the vast majority of teachers demonstrate growth as evidenced by moving from the developing to effective level on the instructional planning domain of Danielson's rubric thus resulting in student engagement in more rigorous tasks and learning experiences.
 - Differentiated professional development designed to meet the specific needs of both new and veteran teachers is the focal point of teacher development at the school. An outside consultant supports new teachers in establishing classroom environments that promote learning and creating classroom systems and structures that support new teachers in managing student behaviors. Professional development that supports teacher practice around looking closely at work and elevating the rigor of performance assessment tasks is at the core of all professional development. Weekly meetings are dedicated to refining units of study, monthly sessions are devoted to revising student tasks, half day and Saturday meetings are held to grow teacher practice on teacher selected topics of study. As a result, 95% of teachers attend professional development sessions and state that the supports provided ensure they vest in their own growth assuring they raise the quality of teaching in order to improve student performance, thus resulting in implementation of instructional strategies that demonstrate an 11% increase of 4th grade students reading at grade level since the beginning of the year.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen instructional practices so that teachers consistently develop high level questions and multiple entry points to engage students in group discussions in order to extend student thinking. (1.2)
 - Teachers incorporate questions in daily lessons and the school's implicit vision is to ensure teachers pose thought provoking questions that spark student thinking. However, in the vast majority of classrooms teacher questions were at a low level and limited to student to teacher responses. Teacher questioning, including the design of high level questions or providing differentiated entry points to meet student learning needs are still developing and are not regularly embedded in lessons, thus hindering opportunities for students to stretch their thinking or to provide students,

including English language learners and special education students, with multiple entry points in order to reach deeper levels of understanding about what they are learning.

- Classroom opportunities that encourage partnership talk and turn and talks are expected practices across classrooms. Students routinely speak to the partner next to them or, in some classrooms, partnership talk results from the teacher's strategic planning to ensure students are matched to their strengths and needs. However, across classrooms opportunities for students to engage in valuable group dialog and discussions are not consistent, limiting the ability for students to be highly engaged in listening to the viewpoints of others and engaging in reflective and critical thinking in order to improve their learning.
- Continue to build upon systems that communicate high expectations to all constituents to ensure that students are on a path to college and career readiness. (3.4)
 - Communication of high expectations form part of the school's inherent vision. School leaders and the parent coordinator provide parent workshops around a variety of topics including information about the Common Core Learning Standards. A parent handbook, monthly newsletters and a school website keep parents updated on school events and provide them with curricular information about units of study in English language arts and math. Parents of students attending academic intervention services receive progress reports two times a year. Progress reports for all students are provided to parent every 12 weeks and monthly parent workshops walk parents through understanding their children's progress toward the standards. However, parents state that explicit communication that partners the school and families in assisting parents with strategies to support their children are not yet an embedded school practice. As a result there are missed opportunities to promote collective responsibility for student progress across all constituencies.
 - Parents are fully aware of the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards through workshops provided by the school. While they feel supported by the school and have affirmed that the school provides them with a great deal of information, specific advice to the students by teachers to support students to the next level or grade is not clearly articulated to students and parents. Parents state that students are sometimes not provided with feedback on projects or homework assignments that supports students to go beyond the levels they have attained. As a result, guidance is limited to providing students with only classwork feedback, thus hindering the articulation process that supports students to prepare for the next grades including middle school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Nadia J. Pagan 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