

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

PS 306

Elementary School 306

**40 West Tremont Ave
Bronx, 10453**

Principal: Darryl Harrington

Dates of Review: May 7-8, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Melodie Mashel

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 306 is an elementary school 745 students from kindergarten through 5th grade. The school population comprises 30% Black, 68% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 15% 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 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders' effective use of classroom observations support teacher development that elevates instructional practices. (4.1)
 - Frequent visits to classrooms by school leaders and New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) talent coach provides teachers with effective actionable feedback and next steps that support the ongoing development of teacher practice. Coaches supported teachers with planning units, lessons and instructional tasks resulting in cohesive teacher planning across all grades. School leaders' normed focus on all components of Danielson's Framework ensures teachers receive feedback on various elements of their instructional practices. The principal and assistant principals meet with teachers on a scheduled one to one basis to discuss their strengths and areas to improve. An outside consultant provides teachers with model demonstration lessons and supports scheduled inter-visitations. New teachers are paired with school coaches, talent coaches or mentor teachers to support their growth in all areas of Danielson's Framework. Strategies and suggestions on ARIS Learns provide additional resources for teachers to access so that they may continue to improve their instructional practice. cursory visits by school leaders and coaches ensure teachers are reflective about their practice and accountable for recommendations made. As a result, there has been a 10% increase of teachers moving from the developing level to the effective level in across all of Danielson's domains since the beginning of the school year.
 - School leaders' ongoing visits to classrooms effectively capture teacher strengths and areas of challenge for teacher practice. As a result of one to one goal setting with school leaders, teachers focus on a specific component of Danielson's framework identified in need of strengthening. For example, a key component of focus for this year is planning and instruction. Therefore, teachers planned with coaches and lead teachers, and teachers with a particular area of expertise provided professional development to staff. For example, a teacher particularly knowledgeable in the area of supporting English language learners provides teaching strategies to a teacher in need of support in this area. As a result, 52% of English language learners demonstrated progress on the 2011 New York State tests. In addition, frequent teacher use of exemplars of instructional practices from ARIS Learn supports teacher practice. School leaders' targeted feedback, aligned teacher supports and clear expectations around planning and instruction has resulted in teacher self- reflective practice, improved teacher planning thus ensuring 50% of all students are performing on level on end of unit math tests.
- The principal effectively aligns resources to support instructional goals resulting in improved student learning outcomes. (1.3)
 - Strategic school wide scheduling by the principal ensures teachers have time to meet once to twice a week to analyze student assessments and closely examine student work. Across grades teachers identify student trends and needs. In addition, academic tasks are refined and tailored to

meet the needs of students. For example, the timeline for which some special education students needed to complete a task was increased to accommodate the pace at which these students were able to work. In subsequent unit tasks, these same students were able to complete the work within the specified period of time. A literacy coach, network instructional staff and additional consultants provide direct assistance to teachers in refining learning tasks so that student work products reflect high levels of rigor thus ensuring alignment to the school's instructional goals. As a result, across grades the majority of students performing at level 1 on pre-performance assessment tasks have moved to level 2 and above on post-performance tasks since the beginning of the year.

- After school programs that provide support to struggling students and enrichment learning experiences that accelerate student learning beyond grade level standards lend needed support to groups of students. School leaders' strategic hiring of part time teachers provide ongoing support to students through a push in or pull out program design model. This work has increased shared responsibility for student outcomes and strengthened teacher's ability to increase student performance resulting in a 50% decrease in the number of all students, including English language learners and special education students, performing at level 1 on Acuity assessments since the beginning of the year.
- The school embraces a culture of mutual respect which supports student and adult learning and cultivates a range of positive student behaviors that promotes academic achievement. (1.4)
 - Parents, students and staff describe the school as safe and welcoming. Students state they feel safe and that there are fewer incidents of bullying in the school than in the past. School leaders' encourage students to write persuasive letters about what they feel the school may need to do in order to improve. For example, students wanted more after school programs. As a result, school leaders secured numerous collaborations to provide students with additional enrichment opportunities after school. Parents state that they enjoy the open door policy the principal has created and state that teachers are readily accessible to discuss their children's progress and any concerns that may arise. One parent stated that staff handles problems right away and everyone looks out for each other. In addition, parents state the school has provided extensive information about Common Core Learning Standards and they now realize the level of rigor that is required of the school and students. Staff members speak positively about their involvement in the School Improvement Team committee as they make recommendations to school leaders through this venue. As a result, all members of the school community benefit from an inclusive environment that honors student and adult voice and ensures a communal sense of shared responsibility that supports student and adult learning.
 - The school's investment in Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) ensures students are honored and celebrated for academic and personal behaviors that support self-regulation and learning. Assemblies highlight the student of the month and those with 100% attendance. Students seek advisement and counseling from the guidance counselor, parent coordinator and other key staff members. Student participation in the Girls

Club, Cookshop, Boy Scouts of America as well as a variety of additional after school programs ensures students have ongoing access to activities that support their social and emotional growth. As a result, the school's incidents have been reduced by more than half, referrals to special education have decreased dramatically and the school's overall percentile rank on the Progress Report increased by 14% from 2011 to 2012.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the alignment of the school's curriculum with the Common Core Learning Standards to include key standards that consistently engage students in rigorous tasks in order to promote higher order thinking. (1.1)
 - Although the school has committed to the use of a prescriptive literacy program and teachers plan together to design units that boost the level of rigor of the program, attention to instructional shifts and full alignment to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is still developing, therefore impacting the consistency of instructional rigor needed to ensure students are on a path to higher learning and college or career. Across grades daily units do not sufficiently challenge all students thus limiting their ability to engage in rigorous tasks in order to that maximize learning potential.
 - Teachers meet weekly to review student data culled from Acuity and the literacy programs' diagnostic assessments. Changes by teachers in instructional strategies to support students in reading and writing are implemented. For example, across classrooms this year there is a greater focus on the use of reading material that interests young males. As a result, classrooms are endowed with a variety of reading material that attract and encourage male students to read. In addition, an additional focus for teachers is to ensure students build stamina as they read. However, these strategies and resources have yet to be consistently used to support the specific needs of English language learner or special education students. As a result, the needs of all sub groups of students are not yet fully addressed, thus limiting their ability to engage in curricula that piques their interest and engages them in learning experiences that promotes high level thinking.
- Strengthen teacher practice so that across classrooms students are engaged in high levels of discussions and appropriately challenging tasks in order to extend their thinking. (1.2)
 - Teachers and school leaders believe students learn best when they are held to high expectations. Across classrooms teachers and school leaders have focused intently on ensuring Danielson's Framework components, specifically planning and instruction, are targeted in much of the school's work. As a result, teachers and students are held accountable for lessons that are embedded in the prescribed program's units. Ability grouping based on specific student skill acquisition is the basic approach embraced by the scripted program. However, student small instructional groupings that are designed to provide multiple entry points to targeted sub groups including opportunities to expand the

learning experiences of higher performing students are not yet fully developed thus limiting student prospects to extend thinking and improve learning outcomes. Across classrooms teaching practices that fully address the needs of the higher achieving students and special education students are not yet consistent, thus hindering them from participating in rigorous tasks that promotes high levels of thinking.

- While teachers encourage student active participation in class lessons opportunities for students to engage in peer discussions about their tasks are not yet common practices across all classrooms. Although teachers in some upper grades are beginning to use accountable talk protocols, the process of engaging students in substantive dialog about their work is not consistent, thus limiting students from engaging in deep conversations that promote critical thinking and result in high level student work products.
- Improve assessment practices across classrooms and grades so that adjustments to instruction are timely and provide students with effective feedback in order to accelerate learning. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams use common assessments to evaluate curriculum and make instructional decisions. Teachers and students use rubrics to assess their work. Grade level rubrics are task specific and results guide instructional adjustments and student grouping for additional support. However, refining rubrics for students to self- assess and gain detailed actionable feedback to move work toward mastery and beyond is not yet fully developed limiting students from taking ownership of expanding their own learning.
 - Teachers monitor student understanding of lessons and independent activities and use data from a range of assessments such as Acuity, pre- post- performance task assessment and the prescribed program end of unit tests. Teachers engage in error analysis of assessments and results from assessments guide teachers in the formation of student grouping. However, teacher practice for student checks for understanding throughout lessons is not yet a consistent practice across classrooms. As a result there are missed opportunities to target supports for students and accelerate their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: PS 306	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