Quality Review Report

2013-2014

Horace E. Greene

K045

84 Schaeffer Street
Brooklyn, NY 11207

Principal: Tracey Lott-Davis

Dates of review: January 29-30, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Horace E. Greene is an elementary school with 838 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 56% Black, 42% Hispanic, 1% Asian students and 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- All members of the school community work cohesively to ensure a safe, inclusive culture that promotes adult learning and enhances students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)

    - The school's character development program highlights monthly values through books of the month, assembly programs and interdisciplinary activities. Monthly values such as fairness, persistence, determination and friendship reinforce constructive behaviors, foster a culture of mutual trust and support progress toward the school's goals. School brochures outline the mission and vision, which state that all members of the school community are learners who share accountability for creating a positive and supportive educational environment, so that it leads to successful student outcomes and the attainment of leadership qualities. The school's motto, "Never settle for less than your best," is prominently displayed at the school's entrance and throughout the building to promote effective academic and personal behaviors. Student Council members meet with the staff developer every week and with the principal once a month to provide input on school issues and events, so that they are meaningfully involved in school decisions that contribute to school improvement. For example, they participate in community service activities, plan fundraising for the school, and organize events such as the collection of canned goods to donate to local family shelters. Therefore, students' ideas are valued and their suggestions contribute in a positive manner toward school improvement. Consequently, the school's collaborative efforts and various systems in place to promote caring attitudes and shared beliefs result in a productive learning community as noted in scores reflecting well-above average satisfaction in the safety and respect section of the annual School Survey.

    - The social worker, school psychologist, guidance counselor and parent coordinator work closely with families to support students' social emotional and academic needs. They meet with families to help find solutions to problems, recommend supports, and provide necessary resources so that students experience success in school. The guidance counselor conducts assembly programs that involve students in role-playing activities and information sharing to reinforce the value of the month or discuss topics such as bullying, respect, collaboration and decision-making, thereby promoting life skills and self-improvement strategies for students. Members of the attendance committee regularly contact families of students with attendance and punctuality issues through phone calls, emails, home visits and individualized meetings to ensure that students come to school every day. The school implements an attendance incentive program that includes class trips and awards for good attendance. The guidance counselor, social worker and psychologist provide small group sessions to improve the social-emotional skills of high needs students so that they experience academic success in their classrooms. These coordinated efforts and personalized supports lead to a high level of mutual trust and a caring school culture that positively impacts the academic and personal growth of students,

resulting in low incidental activity and minimal infractions as noted on school occurrence reports.

- School leaders constantly convey high expectations that support a culture of learning and successfully partner with families to promote college and career readiness. (3.4)

  - The Design Team, comprised of supervisors and one representative from each grade, meets regularly to discuss curriculum, instructional practices and Common Core alignment across grades and subjects. Individual Design Team members meet with designated teacher teams to turnkey grade specific and school-wide practices related to curriculum planning and classroom instruction, thereby creating a culture of mutual accountability in meeting the school's expectations. In addition, school leaders communicate high expectations to the staff through faculty conferences, grade conferences, professional collaborations and individual conversations following classroom visits. The Danielson Framework for Teaching serves as a source to build a common understanding related to professional responsibilities, planning and preparation, classroom practice and communication with students and families to promote academic success. Professional development focuses on competencies such as questioning and discussion techniques, planning coherent instruction and engaging students in learning as outlined in the Danielson Framework. For example, teachers participate in classroom intervistations, co-planning with Lead Teachers and professional collaborations that provide a shared lens on productive learning environments, effective instructional practices and collaborative planning to improve student outcomes. As a result, the staff works collaboratively to improve classroom instruction and accelerate student learning, evident in the consistent practices and student work products displayed throughout the school building and observed during visits to classrooms.

  - Student progress reports, phone calls and parent meetings provide families with information about students' progress in meeting classroom expectations and their overall performance in school. School leaders, Lead Teachers, the staff developer and the parent coordinator offer workshops to deepen parents' understanding of the English language arts and math curriculum, State assessments and Common Core expectations. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, workshops and sessions on topics connected to college and career readiness promote a strong partnership with families to ensure that students are on track toward meeting set expectations for success. For example, parents learn about the Entrepreneurship Program and the Financial Literacy Program which engage children in grades 5 through 8 in handling finances and setting goals for their future. Parents engage in English language arts and math performance tasks and participate in Common Core aligned simulated assessments to acquire hands on experiences and information related to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, families understand what their children need to accomplish to be successful at their next level of learning and express confidence that the school is preparing their children with the college and career readiness skills they need for future success.

- The strategic use of resources promotes organizational decisions that clearly support the school's instructional goals to constantly improve student learning outcomes and academic performance. (1.3)

    - The staff developer and the lead teacher spearhead curriculum planning across subjects and grades and support teacher development through demonstration lessons, coaching in classrooms, meeting with teams to ensure alignment across grades and subjects and planning Common Core lessons with teachers to positively impact student learning. Funding allows for per session, training rate and per diem coverage for teachers to engage in planning of curriculum and assessment of student work. For example, teacher teams meet twice a month on Saturdays to assess student work and review curriculum to meet the needs of students. The school schedule also provides opportunities for teachers to meet in teams to plan weekly lessons, analyze student data, and revise instructional units as needed. For example, grade level and department teams look at student work to surface areas of need and identify strategies to improve learning outcomes for the school's lowest third subgroup of students. Teachers then implement these strategies during their small group academic intervention sessions with target students. Therefore, the collaborative work of teacher teams coupled with the focused analysis of student work and the targeted academic intervention services for students planned during team meetings, contributes to the narrowing of students' learning gaps as noted in improved performance in class, reflected in end of unit performance task results and student work posted on boards and work folders.

- The school uses assessments aligned to the curriculum to acquire a good understanding of the performance of students, in order to adjust curricular and make instructional decisions. (2.2)

    - Teachers use curricula-aligned assessments such as bi-monthly performance tasks, Ready English language arts and math assessments, Fountas and Pinnell running records, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as a source for actionable feedback regarding students' strengths and areas of need. Student work posted on bulletin boards and in folders includes rubrics, teacher feedback and common grading practices to determine student progress toward meeting subject-specific benchmarks across grades and subjects. Teacher checklists and conference notes help identify who needs immediate attention with learning tasks during lessons. Assessment results are used to make adjustments such as grouping of students in strategic, on level and advanced level groups for instruction. For example, an item analysis of English language arts assessment results surfaced learning gaps in the comprehension of informational texts and identifying evidence to support claims. Adjustments to curriculum and instruction included generating focused teaching points, increasing informational texts, and engaging students in reading and discussions using text-based evidence across subjects. As a result, the most recent classroom assessments indicate that 70% to 85% of students across grades performed at or above the grade benchmark.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the use of student data to plan academic tasks so that lessons promote rigorous habits, high levels of thinking and cognitive engagement for all students. (1.1)

    - Design team members create curriculum binders to ensure vertical and horizontal coherence across grades and subjects. A balanced literacy approach is supported by the Reading Street program and flow of the day activities that reflect reading workshops, read alouds, shared reading and other literacy components. The New York State Common Core math curriculum was recently introduced to grades kindergarten through 5, and grades 6 through 8 have access to other math programs, with attention to alignment to CCLS expectations and integration of the instructional shifts. However, although curriculum binders and instructional units reflect adjustments to curricula intended to promote rigor and higher order thinking skills, the academic tasks and lessons observed during some classroom visits did not consistently emphasize rigorous habits or push student thinking. Similarly, although planning indicated groupings of students and adjustments to activities intended to provide multiple entry points to curricula, some lessons did not reflect the purposeful use of data to thoughtfully inform revisions that provide English language learners and special education students, meaningful access to the curricula and to academic tasks that foster cognitive engagement. As a result, opportunities for some students to partake in high level academic tasks that enhance thinking skills and meaningful engagement are limited.

- Promote consistency in the use of instructional strategies that provide multiple entry points into the curricula so that lessons fully challenge thinking to improve student learning. (1.2)

    - Clear expectations for classroom practice, as outlined in the Danielson teaching framework, reinforce school-wide beliefs about how students learn best. Lesson plans reflect activities designated as strategic, on level and advanced groupings, questions to activate thinking, and graphic organizers to gather information. However, some lessons did not consistently include the use of adequate scaffolds, manipulative materials, visuals and interactive activities to challenge and engage English language learners and special education students in high levels of thinking. For example, some graphic organizers required English language learners and special education students to draw. When asked to articulate what their drawings represented, students' responses did not lead to enhanced thinking or work products connected to the learning target. As a result, some students do not participate in a wide range of differentiated learning opportunities that would enable them to work to their full potential and produce high quality work products that maximize their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Horace E. Greene School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
Instructional Core				
To what extent does the school regularly…	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		X		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?				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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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