

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

James B. Colgate Elementary School

Q012

**42-00 72nd Street
Woodside, NY 11377**

Principal: Stephanie Moskos

Dates of review: October 24-25, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 12 is an elementary school with 1,264 students from K through grade 5. The school population comprises 0% Black, 40 % Hispanic, 3% White, and 56% Asian students. The student body includes 31% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 96.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has strategically created a rigorous curriculum across grades and subject areas, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), promoting student inquiry and meeting the needs of all learners. (1.1)
 - There is a successful interdisciplinary, standards based curriculum that reaches across all subject areas and emphasizes the instructional shifts embedded into teacher practice across grades and subject areas. This practice provides students with real life examples aligned to evidence gathered from rigorous text supporting the school community's belief that children learn best when teachers provide and model practical examples, set high expectations and create an inquisitive culture for learning. Specialty area classes like physical education engage students in activities that are embedded with standards based goals that utilize word walls to help students identify skills and offer choice of physical fitness stations allowing them to self-assess their skills and meet the goals they have prescribed for themselves. Throughout the building, students are confident taking risks and consistently reflect on their learning, resulting in enthusiastic participation through student inquiry conducive to higher levels of learning.
 - All teachers participate in ongoing collaborative planning, use assessment data and feedback from administrators towards reflection in order to revise and refine curricula and instruction. Additionally teachers are empowering all students to be in charge of making decisions to guide the learning process. Furthermore, teachers are setting high standards by providing rigorous tasks and rubrics that correlate to levels 3 and 4 on the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix and the CCLS. When presented with challenging tasks, students are asked to explain how they arrived at their responses. Teacher teams have a deep understanding of student subgroup data and as a result students work collaboratively in strategically organized groups and partnerships to critique one another and support their claims with evidence. As a result of the progression of complex text since September, cognitive engagement has increased and students' writing has shown higher levels according to levers of DOK with a connection to other core subjects.
- Pedagogical practices are consistently informed by a research-based set of beliefs of how students learn best aligned to the curricula, ensuring that students have multiple opportunities to engage in challenging tasks. (1.2)
 - The school believes that every student has the ability to surpass their own goals. This is reflective in the vertically aligned teacher team planning process and the ability of the students to self-assess and rethink their pathways for solving problems. The school has implemented the work of Bouchard (Comprehension Strategies for English Language Learners) to embed the instructional shifts in a uniform manner. Results from 2012-2013 indicated that 36 out of 46 stalled English Language Learners (ELLs), and 154 out of 200 students in the 4th grade met or exceeded grade level standards when responding to teacher team vertically aligned

literacy tasks. Teacher practice has been supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching to promote pedagogical growth. Furthermore, teams of teachers consistently analyze student work and determine data driven next steps in order to modify lessons to achieve high results.

- Throughout classrooms, teachers offer prescriptive approaches such as providing students with exposure to multiple tasks embedded into lessons, participating in mathematical conversations, and self-assessing peer work for proficiency in order to engage students in all aspects of a lesson. Through ongoing data analysis the administration determined that 80% of the staff is currently engaged in high levels of instruction that offer students supports and enable them to consolidate and extend their learning, interact with discussion and debate, and struggle productively with mathematics. These practices require them to listen, choose their responses and come to conclusions. Effective pedagogical practices have been identified to create an environment in which each student is expected to experience deep levels of thought, supported with appropriate scaffolds and extensions to the curriculum. Specifically, a fourth grade literacy enrichment program exposing students to multiple genres of complex text and creating productive conversation about text yielded results that indicated eleven out of twenty students showed an increase on their ELA state score. As a result, students exhibit higher order thinking based on the practices that are in place towards excellent instruction.
- School leaders strategically align budget, technology and coaching while making organizational decisions that effectively support instructional goals to meet student learning needs through quality work products. (1.3)
 - Last year's monies were spent to be proactive by purchasing new curricula in English Language Arts (ELA) and as a result teachers were well prepared to implement the ReadyGen curriculum and students are benefitting from the well versed questions and planning that has been an outgrowth of last year's preparation. As part of the school's long range action plans, productive struggle in math is being supported by the placement of a math cluster. The instructional strategies thus far have indicated that students have exhibited success in having extended wait time to solve problems, assess their own answers without definitive responses, obtain checks for understanding and modify responses during class work. During the 2012-2013 school year eighty thousand dollars was used to purchase new technology in order to help teachers enhance the learning process while supporting curricular goals. Through active engagement and connection to real-world experts, student work has shown evidence of refinement of analysis and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, all students' work, both individually and in groups, utilizes technology to find, process, and synthesize non-fiction information through research.
 - The principal has consistently made purposeful decisions to maximize professional development opportunities and enrich classroom instruction by having three coaches who regularly model lessons for teachers and develop and implement CCLS aligned units and assessments. The school is funding an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, so that teachers are working collaboratively and planning for students who are exhibiting needed instructional supports. Running record results of this

model indicate that all students in grades 3-5 are showing progress in reading more complex texts. In addition, mindful scheduling has given teachers common times for preps and meetings, allowing teachers to plan performance tasks, analyze student work, create rubrics for units of study and meet with coaches and staff developers from the school and network. Other instructional changes have included an additional academic intervention teacher (AIS) to facilitate the Response to Intervention program and the addition of a special education teacher for support services (SETSS) to provide grades 3-4 with a 12:1:1 special education bridge class with five supplementary push-in periods each of mathematics and literacy. Due to these instructional decisions AIS and SETSS students now have the opportunity to focus on close reading of complex texts as well as to deepen their understanding of grade appropriate math concepts.

- School leaders and staff have a clear, ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of all learners which effectively informs instructional practices and modifications at the team and classroom level. (2.2)
 - Vertically aligned teacher teams demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of each student's individual needs as evidenced by their strong rationale behind grouping students after careful assessment of a plethora of data including results from school based running records, New York State tests in ELA and Math and New York City performance tasks. These assessments are the specific lens for the modification of teacher designed units of study. Student data based on the NYS ELA and Math tests is disaggregated and analyzed to allow teachers to view how many more points each student needed to achieve a higher proficiency level and then modify instructional plans to ensure the achievement of benchmarks. Teachers conference with students and provide rubrics, and individual comments on written work so that students clearly understand their next learning steps.
 - Based on the reorganization of units of study last year and this year's new ELA curriculum teams of teachers are aware of students' baseline data in all content areas and have adjusted instruction to meet these needs. A collaborative decision was made school wide to adjust instruction, so that every Wednesday individual and guided reading occurs, which is a predominant force in support of increased student progress. As a result, students are aware of their reading levels, able to chose text of interest and have a plan to build upon their skills for mastery. The classrooms observed had an abundance of writing samples with actionable feedback noted by teachers ensuring students' understanding of the next step skills they have yet to achieve. One student said, "My teacher's comments guide my writing because I know what to look for in my next piece".
- The administration effectively utilizes a research-based framework to create teacher action plans to ensure that targeted feedback elevates teacher development. (4.1)
 - The administration supports the development of teachers through frequent cycles of observation using The Danielson Framework for Teaching that has been normed to everyone's understanding through multiple professional development sessions. A new pedagogue states

that the support she receives from the coaches and the built-in inter-visitation plan has allowed her to reflect on her practice and share her expertise with colleagues. Another teacher stated that the support is not “one size fits all”, but rather prescriptive to meet each teacher’s learning styles and needs. An understanding of teachers’ needs is in place and allows the administration to make informed decisions about future teacher development and placement. Student work is at the center of all feedback as it is used as a lens to determine if the correct skills and strategies are being addressed. As a result of this teacher support system, approximately 80% of the staff has currently met an effective level on many indicators throughout the framework.

- Classroom observation data collected by school leaders during formal and informal visits is used to determine ratings aligned to the Danielson Framework, as well as to help design and track professional development. Results indicate that through frequent observations, teachers are using questioning and discussion embedded in the new literacy and mathematics programs to promote higher-level thinking. Teachers are engaging students in content challenges, asking more probing questions and are effectively using wait time. The evaluation process is both formative and summative, enabling administrators to offer teachers targeted feedback. A formalized inter-visitation program, aligned to coach support, has yielded positive results, with all teachers celebrating an area of expertise in order to model for colleagues. The school’s professional development opportunities include school curricula and academic rigor with a connection to instruction and extend over time resulting in teacher professional growth in planning, practice, coaching, and reflection.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the good practice of regularly evaluating and adjusting instructional and organizational decisions in order to support the expectations of the CCLS and increase coherence. (5.1)
 - Ongoing team meetings and frequent administrative classroom observations provide platforms for evaluating and adjusting curricula and instruction to integrate the expectations of the CCLS. Various progress reports are disseminated to parents over the course of the year; some include individual teacher designed documents which specifically denote progress students need to make to move to a higher level in reading and writing. While the school has created a formal practice by defining the format and process of each report, the systematic creation and organization of these communications to parents are not school-wide. Without continuity of these grading tools total coherence to collect data from parents and purposeful adjustments to instructional practices in regard to students learning needs cannot be fully determined to make certain that student outcomes are reaching and exceeding grade level expectations.
 - Parents are excited about the many opportunities offered to them to help their children succeed. In addition, the parent coordinator is proud of her efforts to engage parents and make them feel welcome in the school. All workshops offered by the school are well attended and parents feel confident that they can assist their children at home with materials that

support the CCLS. At this time the school is working on a quantitative connection between specific students and the benefits of parental workshops on student mastery in order to purposefully provide support to meet the rigor of CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name:	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 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							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	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							
<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 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