

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Edward Hart Elementary
25Q021
147-36 26 AVENUE
QUEENS
NY 11354

Principal: DEBRA BUSZKO

Dates of review: January 6-7, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 021 Edward Hart is an elementary school with 1311 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 9% Hispanic, 12% White, and 57% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 96%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well- developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff have made strategic curricula decisions and infused key standards and instructional shifts into units of study and tasks that provide access for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school is committed to working with the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project to design rigorous curriculum maps and units of study that promote deep thinking through close reading of fiction and non-fiction text and the use of text based information and writing in a variety of genres. Tasks such as “Walk in the characters shoes using text based evidence” are designed with both the instructional shifts of using text based answers, writing from sources, and text based analytic literacy standards in mind. Additionally, academic vocabulary and writing in the content areas is also a school wide focus with clear scaffolds across grades that target mastery of skills and spirals towards clear connected tasks that align to standards. Science and social studies units are framed to address both content and non-fiction research literacy standards. In math, teachers have worked with network support to address alignment to the standards. Teachers created teaching calendars that scaffold across grades through project based tasks where students are required to think deeply and explain their thinking. This year, the school adopted Go Math and teachers have aligned prior tasks to this program to enhance learning. For example, aligned to the instructional shift of deep understanding and applications, students are asked to develop their own multi step math problems within each unit of study where they must explain the skills and strategies necessary to answer the problem. Students then engage in discussion with their peers to answer and explain their mathematical thinking of both problem development, and solutions. As a result of this strong curricular work, students are exposed to skills necessary to be on track for college and career readiness, are demonstrating growth along the continuum of reading at or above grade level, can articulate their reasoning using text based evidence in writing and are solving complex, multi step problems in math using multiple strategies as evidenced by the schools performance exceeding the citywide average by twenty percent in English Language arts and twenty six percent in math.
 - The administration and staff are committed to understanding reading curricula and building student capacity and access to grade level text. As a result of this work, the school curricula include a focus on additional entry points such as images aligned to text and videos to support relevant subgroups. Additionally, Foundations and Leveled Literacy Intervention programs support early childhood and upper grade students scoring in the lowest third of the school. In math, student skill checklists and exemplar rubrics provide students, including advanced learners a clear picture of academic expectations to support deep thinking and discussion that guide students toward the completion of rigorous tasks in all content areas.
- The principal purposefully aligns resources, staff and student time to support the instructional needs of the school, resulting in improved pedagogy, teacher accountability and higher quality student work products. (1.3)

- The principal's decision on allocation of resources enables teachers to receive consistent professional development from both Teachers College staff developers, and from 20 lead teachers that support both early childhood and upper grade math and literacy. Rich partnerships with a plethora of organizations such as Carnegie Hall, City Center, Leap, NYC Roadrunners and the Leadership Academy also support the realization of the school vision. Finally, the commitment to 21st Century learning through the incorporation of technology is supported via the allocation of funds for laptop carts and SMART boards in all classrooms, and software programs such as I- Ready and Imagine Learning to provide individualized supports and scaffolds for all learners. As a result, of these decisions, teachers receive appropriate supports and build curricular and instructional knowledge that provide rich experiences for all students as evidenced in student writing portfolios and projects.
- The principal ensures parallel scheduling exists in each grade to allow for movement of special education students to least restrictive environments and provide consistent support for the bottom third of students in every grade. An additional teacher was hired to provide intervention services for students in the upper grades as data reveals this is an area of need. In addition, teacher and student time is structured to provide targeted support in the extended day program, and a comprehensive enrichment model that offers a menu of classes, such as creative writing, bracelet making, cool facts and crafts for nocturnal animals, scrabble, mad scientists club and mind aerobics where the curriculum is developed by teacher interest and students choose which classes to take. Finally, based on data and collaboration with staff and parents the principal developed a multi tiered plan to restructure the fifth grade into teams. This model supports teachers in developing deep content and curricular knowledge in math or English language arts, provides teachers with additional planning time and preparing students for middle school responsibilities. As a result of these strategic planning structures, teachers are positioned and supported to share accountability for manageable groups of students leading to improved task development and student outcomes as evidenced in curriculum maps and data from the school progress report revealing growth for all students within the school, above citywide and peer school averages in progress and performance.
- The school has effectively aligned assessments and rubrics to measure progress school wide throughout units of study, and within daily lessons that guide curricula adjustments and student participation in their learning. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams engage in rigorous analysis to ensure rubrics, grading policies and other assessment tools are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and provide a portrait of student achievement. In all grades and content areas students use rubrics, check lists and strategy charts to guide their work. They highlight targeted skills, and have the opportunity for student reflection, feedback and next steps provided by the teacher. As a result, teachers and students share a common language on next steps and student achievement.
 - Included in curricula design for all content areas are pre and post assessment tools, quick checks in math and Teachers College running records used by teacher teams to gauge student skills, and progress and to adjust curricula and instructional practice. Consistent in all classrooms is the routine of conferring with students and evidence of tracking student progress in assessment binders. Teacher teams engage in data

dives using these assessment tools and information to guide school wide goals. For example, when running record reading levels did not align with progress on common core exams, teachers revised these assessments to better align and measure student progress towards reading at grade level. Teachers revised curriculum calendar and tasks adding more inferential thinking. In math, teachers observed fluency and stamina concerns by way of common assessments and goals to target these shifts. As a result of these systems, and evaluation of student learning, teachers provide supports that meet the needs of all learners and improve student outcomes, as evidenced by student work products that measure growth in targeted areas.

- The principal fosters a community of shared accountability for student learning and plays an active role in communicating high expectations to enhance teacher practice and student outcomes. (3.4)
 - The principal sets the tone at the start of every school year by reflecting upon the work of the prior school year and aligning the work to the citywide expectations and the needs of students revealed in student data outcomes analyzed over the summer. This year, during monthly faculty conferences and grade meetings, the staff has engaged in a deep dive of the domains of the Danielson framework and has calibrated expectations of highly effective teaching practices and what those look like at the school level. Additionally, it is the expectation that every staff member understands where the instructional shifts are highlighted in the curriculum and can identify in student work samples where students demonstrate mastery, or are in need of further guidance. To support this work, the principal distributes a weekly calendar showing useful videos and trends revealed through daily observations. The faculty understands these expectations and works closely in teacher teams to analyze curriculum, instruction and student work to ensure efforts are effectively supporting student learning. Throughout the year, they engage in “share fairs” where they present best practices to their colleagues and serve as advisors for the implementation of these expectations. This collegial accountability ensures student readiness for higher levels of learning reflected in improved student work products that demonstrate increased knowledge of research based writing and student work that demonstrates real world math applications throughout the school.
 - The school has established a coherent framework of high expectations that are understood and recognized by parents and students. At the start of each year, every class has an orientation for parents and students where teachers discuss the goals of the grade, the curricular expectations to lead students towards meeting the standards within each subject area and what students needs to accomplish to get to the next grade. Teachers send monthly newsletters to families describing each unit of study and providing ways for parents to assist their children at home. Finally, students use child friendly rubrics in all content areas that highlight learning targets to set goals throughout each unit, measure progression, and evaluate their completed work. Teacher feedback is clear and students identify their strengths and needs and are able to highlight ways in which they use teacher feedback to improve their work. As a result of this shared culture of responsibility, parents feel they are active participants in their children’s learning and students take ownership of their work in order to further their learning experiences.

- Astute observation, feedback and professional development practices promote thoughtful reflection and involvement of teachers in their learning elevating school wide practice. (4.1)
 - The administration visits classrooms daily and uses Teach Boost to capture teacher practice and provide timely feedback and next steps grounded in elements of the Danielson Framework. The principal uses this tool to track teacher trends within the domains and provides supports to build coherence across classrooms. An example of effective work is the broad focus on professional development when observation data revealed weakness in teacher planning. Strategic professional development and a focus on effective planning for student engagement have yielded evidence in classrooms allowing students to thrive academically, as evidenced in increased student access through a school wide focus on multiple entry points for all learners and teacher planning strategies to motivate student participation and engagement with their peers. Additionally, the administration and teacher leaders plan monthly professional collaborations that support new staff members to ensure they are employing essential practices during their own instructional planning. This work has created an environment where teachers are reflective of their practice leading to improved pedagogy.
 - The principal has developed a comprehensive professional development plan, and calendar using teacher goals, Common Core Learning Standards, instructional goals, the instructional focus, demands of the curricula and data analysis from teach boost. This calendar is a “living document” developed in collaboration with lead teachers. Sessions are added as needed to include network support, lunch and learns and classroom support offered by the administration. As a result, teachers align their practice to the rigor of the curriculum and have developed tasks and resources to support all students’ learning. Analysis of tasks demonstrate student progress in reading comprehension skills, the ability to explain text based evidence, math fluency and ability to solve multi step problems, as evidenced by student performance and progress on the school progress report exceeding both city wide and peer group growth in English language arts and math, as well as, growth in the lowest third within the school in English language arts.

What the school needs to improve

- Further support the infusion of high level questioning strategies to enhance student engagement in rigorous tasks and deepen student thinking and participation in their learning. (1.2)
 - The school wide belief of how students learn best centers around the workshop model with a clear teaching objective. Teachers model skills and strategies aligned to the curriculum and provide students with opportunities to work in groups to engage in tasks leading them to a clear understanding of their coursework. For example, in math classrooms, students are consistently asked to demonstrate multiple ways to solve a problem and to engage with their peers to effectively explain their thinking. This work coupled with the instructional focus of the effective use of multiple entry points such as picture supports, sentence and discussion starters, graphic organizers, checklists, manipulatives, and student friendly rubrics is consistent across classrooms, and engage all students in rigor of the curriculum. However, at this time, although there is continuous professional development on high level questioning strategies, in many classrooms, teacher

questioning is not yet strategically designed, limiting the high level thinking necessary for students to critically engage and take full ownership of their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Edward Hart	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
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