

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Bay Terrace School

Elementary School 169

**18-25 212 Street
Queens
NY 11360**

Principal: Vanessa Chambers

**Dates of review: March 20-21, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Shirley Wheeler-Massey**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 169 is an elementary school with 397 students from pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 19% Hispanic, 45% White, 30% Asian students, 1% American Indian and 1% Pacific Islanders. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Instructional coherence across grades and subject areas is reflected in Common Core aligned curricula strategically emphasizing higher order thinking and rigorous tasks that cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
 - The administration and staff have been concentrating on the CCLS and the instructional shifts for the last few years via inquiry work, team meetings, summer planning and professional development. The school has utilized Teachers' College (TC) Readers and Writers Project (TCRWP) for English Language Arts for the last four years and Math in Focus for the last two years. The decision to remain a TC school was based on the expertise of teachers and the strong professional development and support that the program offers, as well as the alignment to the CCLS and the complex texts made available for students. Teachers have aligned units of study across disciplines to CCLS with a focus on key standards such as close reading, annotating texts and being precise, and having sustainability when solving math problems and explaining responses with details and evidence from the texts or problems. Teams are strategically preparing tasks based on what is needed for students to know in the next grade thus creating coherence across grades and subjects..As a result, culminating student work and projects demonstrate skills gained in literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, and content knowledge for all learners.
 - Teachers consistently use data and student work to plan and refine units of study to meet the needs of their students. To ensure students are being challenged and pushed to the next level, instructional teams revise TCRWP units of study based on the varying needs of students to include tasks from one grade level above, as well as differentiated tasks that support the needs of English language learners and special education students. In math, students are being challenged to create and solve word problems and then describe in written form the different methods and strategies used to solve them, while others are provided with a model to solve problems using specific strategies taught. Fifth grade students are provided with iPads that contain individual Dropbox resources that support their specific learning needs and moving their "grows" to "glows". As a result, all students have access to rigorous tasks and curricula and are cognitively engaged in classrooms through the thoughtful planning and revisions of curricula and tasks based on student assessment data and outcomes.
- The school conveys high expectations that promote parent involvement and supports learning so that staff, students and families work collaboratively to position students on a path towards college and career readiness. (3.4)
 - School leaders use Danielson's framework to communicate high expectations related to designing coherent instruction, using questioning and discussion techniques, and using assessment data to drive instruction. Teachers were exposed to professional development several years ago on the specific language of these components and have now been able to delve deeper into the rubric, thereby strengthening a common language and providing a multi-leveled understanding of what quality teaching looks like. One new teacher in one of the teacher team meetings shared that although the expectations are high she feels supported by her colleagues and administration and can go to them for help at any time. As a result, teachers are working collaboratively towards ensuring that those expectations are incorporated into their daily instructional

practices through the use of this framework. In addition, classroom visits and conversations with teachers demonstrate ongoing collegiality and mutual accountability towards ensuring a strong culture of learning.

- The school has a strong system to communicate expectations to all stakeholders that is linked to a path of college and career readiness to effectively support their children's progress. The School Leadership Team (SLT) is heavily involved in developing school goals alongside the principal and was instrumental in the most recent creation of the school's SLT website, which outlines the expectations for parent involvement, opportunities for parent workshops and decisions that are made by the team regarding academic and enrichment programs for their children. Families are also provided progress reports three times per year prior to report card distribution, as well as their child's "glows" and "grows" in all subject areas following assessments and written tasks. Data-driven support tasks are distributed to parents with "how-to support your child at home" packets that assist with identified areas for improvement. One parent shared how the school provided her family with a language program at home, which assisted with her daughter's language development and acquisition of the English language, and she is now better able to communicate and complete tasks at home and in school. These supports afford families the opportunity to collaborate and assist the school with moving students' "grows to glows", thereby successfully partnering with the school to support student progress.
- The principal and faculty create a safe, supportive, and mutually respectful school culture that positively impacts the academic and personal development of staff and students. (1.4)
 - Administrators, teachers, students and parents are all connected through a strong sense of community linked to the school's mantra; "Loving to learn and Learning to love." With the principal's "genuine" open door policy, all members of the school community feel respected, appreciated and valued. Student learning is cultivated in a "risk-free" learning environment, where students respectfully agree and disagree with their peers during class discussions. The school has a PBIS STARS program, which stands for Self-Respect, Teamwork, Action, Responsibility and School Community. As an incentive, students receive "Star bucks", from secret designees around the school, in exchange for special gifts and prizes when their class is caught doing something good. As a result of this program, school incidents have decreased over the course of the last few years. The Student Council with representatives from each grade has the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on topics around the school. Student members recently made a decision around school lunch to include more healthy choices, such as fruit and salads. Students are also afforded opportunities to engage in weekly enrichment clusters of their choice, such as robotics, scrapbooking and Iron Chef, which one student shared, "was the best part of his week". One parent shared that he truly feels valued and needed as a parent and appreciates the genuine level of care the administration and teachers provide to all of the children. As a result, students feel like valued members of the school community, as well as active partners and associates in school governance and improvement, which has led to meaningful interactions amongst all.
 - Parents appreciate the high levels of communication offered by the administration and teachers. Students receive progress reports mid-way through the marking period to inform parents of students' "glows and grows", as well as regular feedback from assessments that indicates their child's progress towards specific standards. One parent shared "the principal and teachers really care here and they avail themselves to discuss individual students' needs, after-hours and on the weekends, whenever it is necessary." Teachers also feel supported and respected since they are able to reach

out to the principal when they have a question or concern and are afforded opportunities to enhance their craft and understanding of student learning through professional development offerings on and off site and the collaborative teams that exist throughout the school. The PBIS team, which includes members of the teaching staff, helps coordinate the school-wide incentive program and communicates and supports staff with effectively using the program to promote effective behaviors in all students. As a result, students demonstrate good work habits, self-regulation and organizational skills in their classrooms which are cultivated by their teachers. Consequently, this transparent form of communication strengthens the home-school partnership and results in the students practicing effective academic and personal behaviors.

- Teacher teams engage in collaborative inquiry to examine student work and data and make key decisions about curricula and teaching practices aligned to CCLS to increase students' learning outcomes. (4.2)
 - Grade and vertical teams are provided with daily and weekly common planning opportunities, when they are expected to plan curricula, analyze student work and data to inform their next instructional steps. Teachers are provided a planning session guide from the principal that informs the work of all teams. Teachers complete a cycle of pre-planning, planning and after-planning sessions where they must submit the planning prototype to the principal at the close of each planning session which outlines the outcomes of all meetings. Horizontal and vertical teams are facilitated by a teacher leader who also represents the grade or discipline as a member of the instructional cabinet to ensure coherence toward goal attainment across the school. Teachers state that they feel empowered to have input on school-wide curricula, as well as instructional decisions for their class or grade. They affirm that the administration is open to their ideas and their voice is respected. Through the well-structured team meetings, teachers consistently analyze student work, summative data, curricula and academic tasks. During one team meeting, teachers were looking at the results from a recent practice exam to make decisions for the grade and individual classes, that is, whether to re-teach identified skills using whole class or through a "station" or center approach. Teachers made decisions on the resources to be used, scaffolded supports for students with disabilities and approaches for re-teaching skills in need of improvement. As a result of the collaborative work occurring on and across grade levels teams, teachers are equipped with tools and strategies to move their practice and develop strategies, approaches and materials to address the needs of their students who, in turn, make progress toward goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the use of assessments and analysis of data to inform goal setting and make ongoing and timely adjustments to instruction to ensure that progress is made for all groups of students. (2.2)
 - The school uses Common Core aligned assessments and performance task rubrics to determine student progress toward benchmarks and goals, for individual students, across classes, as well as grades. The results of these assessments are analyzed to inform the next instructional steps for students, subsequent lessons to address students' strengths or areas in need of support and small flexible groups. Teachers maintain binders to track student progress and the data collected from these summative assessments are used to look for patterns and trends, within classrooms, on the grade and across the school. However, teachers inconsistently track data collected from formative assessments during lessons, to drive their instruction, thereby

preventing them from effectively using all possible student data, to make adjustments to their lesson and address individual students' needs. For example, in one class, the teacher taught the mini lesson, followed by having students complete an exit slip and then created small groups, which were assigned differentiated tasks, to address their lack of understanding or mastery of the skill and had students discuss and track their grows and glows for the lesson. Conversely, in another classroom, the teacher used a seating chart to circulate the room and check on students' understanding, without making any notations of student understanding and stated "good job" or "you moved that grow to a glow", without specifying what the child had done to improve. While ongoing checks for understanding were seen in most classrooms visited, making timely and effective adjustments to instruction and small flexible groups are not yet firmly embedded school-wide, thereby limiting teacher's opportunities to address students' individual and specific needs.

- Expand the use of strategic teaching strategies that consistently embed multiple entry points into the curricula, divergent questioning and discussion techniques so that all learners engage in high levels of thinking. (1.2)
 - The school's belief is that teachers should employ strategies that allow students to participate in some levels of disequilibrium, productive struggle and be provided with toolkits specific to their needs, in order for learning to be meaningful and engaging. While this was evident in some classrooms, it was not a consistent practice across classrooms visited. For example, in one classroom, students were provided the opportunity to work with a partner using different level reading books and different tasks to "stop and jot" facts from the texts, using various tools, such as sticky notes and magnifying glasses to look closely at the texts and identify their noticings. However, in another class, students were sitting in small groups working on the same task, which required them to write a sentence with one word, while others who had already completed the task were disengaged, not working on any given task and simply watching the teacher work with another small group. While most students are being challenged and are engaging in tasks that allow for productive struggle and disequilibrium, some are not. As a result, opportunities for all students to reach their full potential are hampered.
 - Across classrooms, it was evident that administrators have stressed establishing a culture for learning through specific instructional strategies such as close reading across the subject areas, creating flexible groups based on assessment data and using scaffolded questioning to drive discussions. Student groups reflected various ability levels based on reading levels or summative data to support their needs. However, students were not always provided with differentiated tasks that addressed their needs and were at times not challenged to engage in appropriate tasks that pushed them to participate in high levels of discussion within their small groups. While some teachers are employing questioning techniques that required students to think critically and prove their ideas, others are not at that level. For instance, in one math class, the teacher encouraged students to closely read a math problem and followed up with "How can you confirm that answer?", "How does the key word relate to the rest of the problem?." In another class, the teacher required students to show the text evidence to support their claims during a writing activity, while another student presented work on the board, with the other students providing feedback to the student based on the teacher's question, "What could she do to improve her claim?" However, these questioning strategies to push high level discussions were inconsistent during visits to classrooms. Some teachers asked basic questions, such as "How many square units are there?", "Is this a waterfall?", "Have you ever run through a sprinkler?". Consequently, students demonstrate uneven opportunities to exhibit their thinking through deep discussions that maximize learning for all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Bay Terrace 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 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