

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The John Tyler School

31R045

**58 Lawrence Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10310**

Principal: Christine Chavez

Dates of review: May 19 - 20, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Jessica Jenkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The John Tyler School is an elementary school with 896 students from kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 20% Black, 43% Hispanic, 30% White, 5% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created a rigorous curriculum across grades and subject areas aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and integrate the instructional shifts resulting in deepened coherence across grades. (1.1)
 - School leaders and teachers have strategically implemented CCLS-aligned curricula through a partnership with Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project as well as through the implementation of Envisions Math. A thoughtful integration of the instructional shifts, particularly in reading and writing grounded in evidence from texts, expose students to a rich and rigorous curriculum while simultaneously infusing college and career readiness skills such as exposure to complex text and the use of text evidence, resulting in coherence across grades. For example, in a fourth grade informational reading and argumentative writing unit, students read and analyzed a variety of opinion pieces on relevant and interest-based topics such as school lunch and school uniforms. Students were required to make a claim with a clear position and demonstrate that they understood the complexity of the issue through sufficient text evidence. Across classrooms, support for special education students and English language learners were provided through the use of vocabulary banks and targeted conferences that addressed specific skills such as organization and structure. Consequently, all students generated high-quality writing pieces that demonstrated notable growth across the unit evidenced by careful analysis of written work that the teacher uses to support individual and groups of students. Similarly, a fourth grade unit of study requires that students compose a historical fiction short story, applying content from Social Studies, using authentic details true to the time period in which it was written, academic vocabulary, and internal conflict. These units resulted in high levels of engagement and ownership of learning, evidenced in multiple conversations with students who were able to articulate their process of learning.
- The principal prioritizes all organizational and budgetary decisions to address the instructional goals of the school, which are well focused and aligned to the school's needs, resulting in improved student outcomes. (1.3)
 - A partnership with Marquis Studio has supplemented the school's work around the integration of the arts into Social Studies across grades. For example, a 12-week residency immersed fourth grade students in architecture while third grade students learned economics through a study of the African Marketplace. Evidence of the school-wide focus on the instructional shifts of the CCLS is embedded across these 12-week cycles, resulting in meaningful work products. This is illustrated in the development of business plans for craft items students created and sold at the school's culminating "Marketplace Fair" where each group of student entrepreneurs sold the items they made to raise money for a local charity. The principal has also partnered with Teacher's College and has allocated funding for an onsite staff developer who provides coaching to teachers in reading and writing instruction, provides feedback and next-step goals, and supports teachers use of assessment data. This support has resulted in a variety of meaningful

work products across grades, particularly in the area of non-fiction reading and writing.

- The principal has strategically scheduled teacher and student programs to maximize support for students. For example, Integrated co-teachers provide additional special education teacher support services five days per week utilizing a push-in model and have been strategically scheduled to ensure that common planning takes place between teachers at least twice per week. This has resulted in meaningful collaborations and mutual accountability for groups of teachers in that both teachers strategically plan lessons to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed. Students are grouped across classrooms according to level of language proficiency, maximizing targeted support provided by push-in personnel. Additional differentiated support for beginner English language learners provided twice per week after school advances the acquisition of language through targeted practice using content-specific language so students can successfully communicate, and apply this vocabulary across contents. Furthermore, a Response to Intervention Team monitors and tracks the progress of special education students and English language learners. and provides teachers with additional strategies or resources based on each student's identified needs, Such strategies and resources include vocabulary banks, semantic maps, and visual aids. Weekly check-in's on individual student progress via the Response to Intervention Team's tracking system ensures that the staff collectively holds themselves accountable for the progress of these students.
- School leaders and staff work cohesively to foster an inclusive and highly respectful environment that enhances students' academic and personal growth as well as supports adult learning. (1.4)
 - The theory of action that reinforces how students are supported is expressed through the acronym SOAR standing for: Safe, Organized, Attitude, and Respect. This theory is aligned to the school's goals in that the school is focusing efforts on increasing proactive approaches to discipline such as developing a school-wide staff understanding of how behavior escalates and utilizing strategies to de-escalate the problem at hand. Expected and acceptable behaviors which include uniformity in how students enter and exit the classroom, the use of a respectful tone with classmates and staff members, and using positive words toward each other are taught directly via character books, peer intervention, and assembly. These behaviors are modeled by staff and practiced with frequency. For instance, staff utilizes the book, "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" to encourage students to understand the rewarding feeling one gets when expressing daily kindness and appreciation. Staff consistently reference "bucket filling" and "bucket dipping" as metaphors for understanding the effects of one's actions and words on the well-being of others. As parents and students confirm, a school wide positive behavior model supports these efforts through routine celebration and recognition for students who exhibit desired behaviors, evidenced by eagle dollar rewards earned by students who are caught doing well. Furthermore, a SOAR Team, facilitated by the guidance counselor, consists of students who lead assemblies that emphasize character development such as showing respect and appreciation highlighted in the school-wide book, "Have you Filled a Bucket Today?" and monthly student and citizen of the month recognition ceremonies. A deliberate and strategic action to improve school culture has taken shape through the successful

implementation of the Institute for Understanding Behavior, an innovative and proactive program initiated through collaboration between the United Federation of Teachers and P.S. 45. Based on the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention model developed at Cornell University, participation in the Institute requires the buy-in of all staff members. This model is designed to teach staff how to help children learn constructive ways to handle crisis and operates from the belief that the ability of the entire staff to respond effectively to students in crisis is critical to promoting growth and development. To date, 86% of staff members, including secretaries and paraprofessionals, have received at least 25 hours of training focused uncovering belief systems about student misbehavior, awareness of self, and strategies to de-escalate atypical behavior. A team consisting of volunteer teachers and staff, who meet regularly with an assigned behavior specialist, report that there has been a 56% decrease in student infractions as evidenced by reports generated by the Online Occurrence Reporting System.

- Critical analysis of a variety of student performance data provides school staff with a comprehensive view of students' strengths and weaknesses and results in targeted supports to positively impact student performance. (2.2)
 - Teachers work collaboratively to accurately identify specific instructional responses such as re-teaching content and modifying instructional approaches, utilizing a range of data. Prior to the beginning of each unit of study, students are administered both on-demand written pre-assessments as well as common core aligned assessments created by Envisions Math reflective of the content to be taught over the course of the unit. Strategic decisions with regard to pacing, resources, small group, and individualized instruction are made from this assessment data, allowing teachers to create skill-based teaching points based on area of need. Common rubrics for all writing genres allow teachers to norm student work and provide clear and consistent feedback to students. A review of written work for a historical fiction unit by several English Language Learners included targeted feedback and growth over time utilizing a consistent student-friendly rubric. Across subjects, pre and post assessments are broken down by skill and teachers identify strengths and weaknesses related to particular areas to plan small group instruction and individual conferences, allowing strengths to be enhanced and areas of need supported. For instance, in fourth grade math, teachers utilized a fluency in multiplication post-assessment to inform small group instruction for a multiplying two-digit numbers unit, as some students did not demonstrate proficiency with the pre-requisite skill of multiplying by one-digit numbers. While all units of study are paced in advance and aligned to the CCLS, individual lessons may be removed, provided additional time, or enhanced, as appropriate as evidenced by a differentiated math lesson in which one group of students productively struggled through a set of word problems on units of time while in another classroom, students engaged in book talks utilizing tiered questions. This maximizes instructional time across classrooms as lessons are tailored specifically to the strengths and needs of individual and groups of students. Individual progress and grade level performance is tracked to support independence and application across the yearlong units of study in all subject areas. Consequently, there was a 7% increase in the number of English language learners scoring in the proficient range on the June reading Teacher's College Reading benchmark and an 8% increase for special education students. Whole school end-of-year assessment data reveals an 11% increase in the number of students scoring in the level three and four range.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance teaching practices to ensure teachers plan lessons that challenge all students and result in high levels of student thinking and ownership of learning. (1.2)
 - Professional learning on the Danielson framework for teaching coupled with the principal's emphasis on student learning through collaborative engagement is influencing pedagogy. For example, in one integrated co-teaching classroom, fourth grade students worked in differentiated groups to discuss and convert units of time using real-life examples. In another classroom, students engaged in a variety of book talks utilizing a protocol. Students were able to describe how placement in book clubs was based on their independent reading levels and all members of each group participated in a lively discussion using text evidence. Although teachers across the school focus on improving pedagogy and engaging all students in the learning process, inconsistent levels of questioning and teacher-directed lessons in some classrooms limited the opportunity to promote engagement and ownership of learning. For example, during one lesson on creating stories to make a reader shiver, the teacher's rapid fire questioning limited student thinking and interaction with the text evidenced by several students who had not annotated the text midway through the lesson. In another classroom, second grade students who had finished a measurement activity waited for direction for several minutes, unclear as to next steps. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to extend thinking, thus limiting student ownership of learning.
- Deepen teacher development practices through the expansion of tailored professional learning that results in enhanced instruction and professional growth. (4.1)
 - School leaders conduct formal and informal observations of teaching practice using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The principal states that these observations are used to inform professional development offerings and to identify teachers in need of support, which is provided by school leaders, network support and a Teacher's College consultant. Additionally, teachers and school leaders maintain professional logs of support that enhance the school's professional learning community encouraging reflective practice evidenced in multiple logs and in conversations with teachers. While school leaders are working to expand teacher leadership opportunities, a strategic plan for teacher peer development is not yet in place, limiting the rate at which teachers develop. Although measurable professional goals are created by school leaders whereby teachers self-select from two goals in English language arts and one for math, goals are not yet connected to improved pedagogy. For instance, the math goal reads, "By June, 2014, "80% of all students performing in the bottom third of my classroom will progress one performance level as measured by Envisions' data and performance tasks." This, coupled with inconsistent professional development in math, limits teacher capacity in deepening content knowledge and pedagogy, particularly around mathematical fluency, an instructional shift the school has identified as an area of focus.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The John Tyler 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