

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Frank D. Paulo

Intermediate School 075

**455 Huguenot Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10312**

Principal: Kenneth Zapata

Dates of review: December 10-11, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

I.S 75 is a middle school with 1,343 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 12% Hispanic, 78% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 19% 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 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula, purposefully aligned to key standards and to the instructional shifts, offer a wide range of rigorous learning opportunities that promote high levels of student learning leading to cognitive engagement for all students. (1.1)
 - The school uses the Teachers' College Reading and Writing project resources and philosophy as the basis of the English Language Arts program. Expectations have been raised so that students produce a fully processed piece of writing on a monthly basis enabling them to experience writing in different genres reflected in the Common Core Learning Standards with appropriate scaffolds. There is also a school wide focus of students reading text closely and annotating reflected in curricula units across subject areas including science, social studies, physical education and the arts. Math units reflect students problem solving with real world applications with an emphasis in writing their thinking along with the solution path. Multiple resources are used in planning math curricula and are based on the standards. The acquisition of academic language across content areas is also a major focus this year and is reflected in units of study. This focus and planning results in students being exposed to the standards and instructional shifts necessary for success.
 - Students, across grades and including students with disabilities are consistently expected to learn the same concepts and ideas across disciplines. Student routines include annotating and pulling detail from text and information to support their thinking and writing. Consequently, students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are supported with scaffolds including chunking text, varying graphic organizers or levels of complexity in a task that they are asked to complete based on prior student work and assessments. Math problem solving incorporates real world situations and students work individually and in pairs and groups on the path to solution. As a result, students are supported in meeting the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards across all content areas.
- The school aligns common assessments to curricula and uses rubrics to provide feedback to students, determining student progress towards goals and makes adjustments to curricula and instruction. (2.2)
 - Teachers check for student understanding using a variety of methods including exit slips, the use of post-it notes that are posted on charts as "parking lots" created with areas with each student's name, conferencing, data from recent assessments as well as in the moment grouping after a mini lesson. Using these tools as well as data from the citywide performance assessments, students are provided with supports so that they can be met at their entry points which included text that was annotated or chunked. This work is modified based on student needs. Assessments were viewed across all disciplines with rubrics and provide actionable feedback for students. Students consistently are able to speak to the use of these rubrics and to their next learning steps. Students also receive feedback through conferencing around their reading and writing.

In addition, students have the opportunity to self-reflect on their work and students peer assess classmates work. Protocols are in place around doing this work in a respectful and helpful manner. With all of this information, students write their goals in their notebooks and revise them after each unit of study across content areas. Using rubrics and feedback, students are aware of what they have mastered and what they still need to master. Grading policies are provided to students in each subject area and have been revised to meet the demands of the Common Core standards with writing in each core area receiving a heavier weight as more emphasis has been placed on writing school wide. As a result of this work, students and teachers have a more focused picture of student strengths and areas for improvement.

- The principal strategically uses time and resources to further the school's instructional goals resulting in improved teaching practices and outcomes for students. (1.3)
 - As a school that does not benefit from Title I funding, the principal carefully utilizes the school's budget to support the school's instructional goals. The school receives a grant from the Staten Island Foundation to defray most of the cost of the Teachers' College Reading and Writing program's resources and staff developer, Twenty school days with a staff developer and attendance at the calendar of professional offerings have enabled the school's focus around close reading of text and writing to become commonplace across all content areas. The school funds a Math coach position. The coach works with teachers around curriculum and assessment development and their teacher teamwork. The school also has an autism spectrum disorders (ASD) Nest program with a Nest coach who supports Nest teachers around strategies to better meet these students' needs academically and emotionally. They in turn utilize the strategies with other classes they teach that are not Nest classes. The principal has used room conversion funding to create a digital arts classroom and program for students and plans to convert another classroom into a dance studio for next school year. There is an array of extracurricular activities and courses in the arts and sports. Additionally, the school has a partnership with Tottenville High School's Beacon program. Students from the school may attend courses offered as remediation and enrichment after school and on Saturdays. The school is also partnering with Tottenville as the Nest program expands from the school to Tottenville next school year. As a result, teachers have improved in their practice utilizing the Danielson framework and the expectations of the CCLS with student work products consistently focusing on writing with an emphasis in providing evidence from text.
 - The principal and his team are strategic in their hiring of new faculty. Many teachers have served as student teachers in the school. They are strategically placed with experienced and effective teachers whom they learn from and model in their own practices. These same teachers serve as mentors during their first year. Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) pairings are also made with thoughtfulness around teachers' strengths. Pairs work together teaching the same subject classes in the majority of pairings in the school. In this way, the licensed special educator becomes more familiar and expert in the content area and can work with students using strategies to support students with content expertise. The general education teacher further learns the strategies to meet students'

entry points. Teachers of the four major core subject areas are also located to the best extent possible on the same corridor and share the same students. In this way, teachers are able to plan together, discuss students' strengths and needs, data and know students very well. As a result, teachers are able to grow in their practice, meet students' needs and are accountable for particular students' progress.

- The school is a safe place where students and adults benefit from the support they receive for their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - The school is a safe place where students are encouraged to learn in their classrooms as well as to become good citizens who contribute their time and efforts to the school community and the community at large. This belief system is central to the school community's approach to developing students who are academically and socially ready for high school and beyond and who will contribute to their community in years to come. This includes their interactions with students with disabilities from within the school as well as students from the District 75 program that share space in the school building and who are mainstreamed into many classrooms. For example: students from the Nest program along with support from adults are staging an autism awareness night. The Nest students created a power point containing information around autism and their feelings when they are hurt by ignorance and when they are given a chance to use their talents. In addition, the student council is an important part of school life and takes part in many activities. Representatives encourage excellent attendance by visiting classrooms monthly and discuss the importance of coming to school regularly. Philanthropic activities that students participate in include a traditional toy drive with toys donated to children in a hospital, participation in the Tunnels to Tower annual run and an annual 9/11 ceremony with student created readings and performances. Students also have many activities to participate in including Night of 100 Pizzas and a Door Decorating contest as well as an award winning school band, drama and chorus. As a result, students have the opportunity to become leaders and to participate in a meaningful way in the life of the school community.
 - Three guidance counselors track student attendance and provide outreach to students' families. They also study each student's academic profile and are charged with coordinating what programs or assistance is available to each student to enable them to be successful as well as tracking their progress, a new practice this school year. Additionally, an assistant principal and a dean are assigned to students at each grade level. In this way, staff, in addition to teachers, track student progress and make connections to families to work together. A full-time SAPIS teacher pushes into classrooms providing sixth graders lessons around making the transition from elementary to middle school. Seventh and eighth graders are provided with lessons around drug and alcohol prevention. All students are provided with lessons around good decision-making. Students are consistently encouraged to think about their next level of school. Seventh graders and their families have a high school night in the spring to look at the application process as well as to think about the many options available. Eighth graders and their families attend a fall session, provided annually, around the completion of the application process. Representatives from high schools around Staten Island set up tables to discuss their school with interested families. The

focus on increasing attendance, including student council peer discussions, and a monthly pizza lunch program have contributed to the rise in attendance, 0.5% year to date. Students spoke to genuinely feeling cared for and that teachers and staff are approachable to them. As a result, students receive support and the tools to adopt and improve in their academic and personal behaviors.

- School leaders monitor pedagogy with a focus on deepening adult learning resulting in improved teacher practices. (4.1)
 - School leaders believe that in order to support teachers around the Danielson Framework for Teaching and to support their practice, they should be provided with quality feedback and excellent professional development. Clear expectations around the school's focus around close reading and writing in all areas and student work products are discussed with teachers and are referenced in teacher feedback. Supervisors give actionable feedback and next steps tied to teachers' goals, established at the start of the school year, after every observation. Additionally, all teachers, no matter their discipline, are expected to be teachers of reading and writing. Teachers also receive feedback around student work, particularly around the writing that is produced. Teachers visit classrooms of colleagues three times a year in a structured way and meet to debrief to add to and share in their learning. Teachers are provided with support in a myriad of ways. In addition to the professional development provided to all English language arts teachers through the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, social studies and science teachers receive five days of training around content area reading and writing to meet the expectations of the Common Core learning standards. A Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) coach also works with content area teachers around their reading and writing instruction. A full time math coach works with math teachers around providing multiple entry points for students and to encourage student centered instruction and dialogue. Mentors are provided for all new teachers. Struggling teachers are provided with additional coaching by TC and MSQI coaches as needed. Additionally, a leadership instructional team was instituted this school year with teachers representing departments as members of the team. They meet every two weeks and share work around a lesson plan template that was developed to help teachers plan as well as the work of the teacher teams. Information comes to this team and discussion and learning goes back to the department and grade level teams. As a result, teachers' practice and student work products have improved as evidenced through classroom visits and observation reports.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to promote the use of teaching strategies, linked to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, that enable all staff to further develop questioning and discussion practices to extend learning and result in high quality work products. (1.2)
 - In visiting classrooms, the vast majority of teachers provide multiple entry points for students such as text that is annotated and/or chunked or with additional picture cues. Student writing is supported in all areas with the

use of various graphic organizers and writers' notebooks to pull together ideas for summative assessments. Students commonly work in groups around problem solving in math. For example, members of a sixth grade class worked together on a problem to determine the price of a product with tax, with tax and a single discount or with tax and multiple discounts. The complexity of the problem for each group was based on math unit assessments and exit slips. Students in an eighth grade living environment class were assigned in groups, based on prior exit slips, to look at a specific gland that affects the human body and the affect if it were failing. Students used multiple texts and resources to complete the task. Students also participated in discussions in most of the classrooms viewed as they were working in groups and discussing their work or in discussion as a whole class with students directing the conversation. However, these practices were not evident in the vast majority of classrooms. For example: in some classrooms, teachers were dominating the questioning and direction of the discussion. This practice does not allow all students to have true ownership of their learning as well as for all students to have a voice in or to extend their thinking and learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: Frank D. Paulo | 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 |