

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

P.S. 175 City Island

Elementary & Middle School 175

**200 CITY ISLAND AVENUE
BRONX
NY, 10464**

Principal: Amy Lipson

**Dates of review: Jan 7-8, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 175 City Island is a K-8 school with 325 students from Kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 6% Black, 26% Hispanic, 62% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has made strategic decisions around resources allowing for collaborative processes and targeted supports that lead to improved student engagement with tasks. (1.3)
 - Capital, human and structural resources are aligned to school goals of strengthening curricula and teacher practice to improve student performance. Retaining two instructional coaches, along with external literacy and mathematics consultants, is prioritized in order to provide professional development to teachers through various support models including co-planning, co-teaching, and observation-feedback cycles. Planning time is built in to the schedule so that teachers are able to meet regularly by grade, content and vertical teams. Teacher teams use protocols to look at student work and curricula, making adjustments to instruction and supports as needed. Prioritizing small class size enables staff to have a more comprehensive understanding of students' academic and personal needs. As a result of the systems and structures put into place to support instructional practice and student performance, observational data has shown a 41%point increase in the effectiveness of lesson planning. Additionally, observational data show a 32% point increase in student engagement measured by opportunities for higher level conversations, with Depth of Knowledge questioning prompts and challenging academic tasks in both English language arts and mathematics. Students are demonstrating increased ability to construct viable arguments using text based evidence in English language arts and supporting arguments using data in mathematics.
- The school has developed a positive and inclusive school culture where student voice is valued and relationships are fostered, supporting students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - The principal's theory of action is the belief that students learn best when they are well known by the adults in the building and the school educates the whole child. This includes supporting and involving families and the surrounding community. The school engages parents in decision making through Parent Teacher Association and School Leadership Team meetings. The school has made adjustments based on the Learning Environment Survey to improve communication and student support systems. Student Government Association (SGA) allows students to take an active role in creating a positive school climate. SGA focuses largely on organizing cultural and charitable events but also reports having regular access to administration to discuss ideas for school improvement. These systems ensure that student voice is meaningfully involved in the school improvement process.
 - The utilization of resources to keep class size small enables staff to know each student well. Vertical team meetings using protocols promote effective "kid talk" and other formalized structures, such as Pupil Personnel Team, ensure students receive appropriate academic and social emotional supports. The school takes a proactive approach to promoting positive behaviors through Citizen of the Month. Students are recognized at monthly assemblies for exemplifying identified character traits. Counselors provide additional support services to students and families in crisis. The school has seen a reduction in Online Occurrence

Reporting System infractions and school-level detention and improved Learning Environment Survey scores from both students and parents as a result of the strategic approach to school culture.

- A reflective and collaborative process to formulate school goals along with the creation and monitoring of action plans have led to improved teacher practice and increased student growth. (3.1)
 - The school uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to drive effective instructional practice. Common Core Standards (CCLS) and attention to instructional shifts drive curriculum goals along with student performance data. School goals are established through a collaborative review of data and previous goals by instructional and school leadership teams. Goals encompass strengthening teaching practice and curricula with leading to increased cognitive engagement for students. Identified goals in instruction, curriculum and student performance lead to the creation of action plans with support structures and ten week benchmarks. Teams monitor progress towards goals and make adjustments as needed. Information around school goals and progress towards them is communicated regularly throughout the community through a number of teacher, student and parent meeting venues. To date, there have been notable shifts towards effective and highly effective practice as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In addition, observational data indicates improvements in student engagement which are credited for increased progress on performance tasks as well as reductions in student detention.
- Across classrooms common assessments in English language arts and mathematics are used to track and monitor student performance and select appropriate extensions and supports to meet the learning needs of students. (2.2)
 - Students have exemplar tasks, aligned to the curriculum, along with rubrics for assignments to provide clear expectations and targeted feedback towards next steps. Teachers keep comprehensive assessment binders that include formative and summative assessments. In class checks for understanding include the use of questioning and conference notes and lead to grouping decisions. Teachers are able to monitor independent and group progress through performance tasks and iReady. Student progress is regularly examined alongside instructional expectations and performance tasks to identify if next steps will lead to re-teaching, intervention, extensions or curricula adjustments.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen collaborative processes to increase cognitive engagement for all learners, specifically the highest achieving students, in higher order tasks with the Common Core aligned units of study. (1.1)
 - Lesson and unit plans indicate the school is consistently using a Common Core aligned curricula with attention to instructional shifts. The instructional objective for a 7th grade special education class was, “using primary and secondary sources to understand the roles of women and children in the American Revolution. Another class was developing an argumentative essay supporting their belief on whether colonization helped or hurt Native Americans. Teachers plan utilizing various

strategies to provide access to all learners including, tiered tasks in mathematics, front loading, leveled text and questioning scaffolds in English language arts. Lesson plans indicate attention to various groups of learners but sometimes state “use easier numbers” in mathematics, simply have higher expectations for higher level students or include lists of potential strategies that could be used with students across tasks, rather than explicitly address strategic interventions and extensions for specific groups of students. This limits the opportunity for all students to demonstrate their thinking.

- Expand teachers’ utilization of multiple entry points and student choice to include high quality extensions and increase student ownership. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms, students were engaged in challenging tasks supported by tiered questioning and peer discussion. However, while struggling students receive support, higher achieving students noted often having to wait or “just help” other students. Rubrics were used consistently as a grading tool and to provide next steps for individual and groups of students, but less so for self and peer assessment reducing student ownership in the learning process. Students generated little questioning among themselves and some differentiation strategies did little to provide enrichment for higher level students. For example, during a mathematics lesson, two students who had mastered the concept of recording two-digit addition with base ten blocks for regrouping were given an alternate activity with money that included single digits and mainly did not require regrouping. The use of choice boards was noticed in some classrooms but this practice, as well, was limited. Presently, the lack of strategic supports and extensions limits the engagement of student groups in challenging tasks and prevents student ownership.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 175 City Island	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	