Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Toussaint L’Ouverture School
Elementary School K221
791 Empire Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11213

Principal: Clara Moodie-Kirkland

Date of review: March 9, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Shenean N. Lindsay
The School Context

PS 221 is an elementary school with 425 students from grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, and 2% White. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 92.0%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
qualityindicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development

rating: Proficient

Findings
Across the school, horizontal and vertical teacher teams engage in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations using assessment data and student work.

Impact
Inquiry based professional collaborations result in improved pedagogy, coherent implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and progress for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly, and have developed structures including agendas, tuning protocols, minutes, and supplemental materials such as professional articles to support progress toward goals. The focus of these meetings has been improving student writing of narratives. During the teacher team meeting, the group conducted a gap analysis on student writing to surface the gaps between the task and Common Core Learning Standards. The facilitator wrote the findings shared by team then, they discussed next steps to support the students writing such as scaffolds and citing evidence from the text.

- The school leader supports teachers and builds capacity through providing the minimum of once a week professional development facilitated by the school assigned Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) specialist, teacher leaders, administrators, and network staff. This has led to increased opportunities for teachers to learn instructional strategies which could be used to reteach lessons from colleagues which resulted in an increase of student mastery toward school goals as observed when reviewing school artifacts such as third teacher grade books, baseline, and middle of school year data.

- A review of minutes across the school year demonstrate horizontal and vertical teacher teams analyze common assessments to determine areas in which students meet the standard and/or require further support. Additionally, teachers share strategies to improve lessons. For example, during the teacher team meeting, teachers shared that they regularly engage in Instructional Rounds and model best practice for one another to strengthen pedagogy school-wide. This has resulted in improvement of instruction. A review of teacher observations indicates the majority of teachers are trending in the effective category.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for teaching and professional development that is connected to a path of college and career readiness. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students. However, the school is in the process of expanding a system to further engage all parents in the community.

Impact
School leaders have a system for holding staff accountable; thus, staff is fully aware of school-wide instructional expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- During interviews, parents expressed information is communicated to them through meetings during Tuesday parent engagement time, school calendar, phone calls, school-wide newsletter, and memorandums from school leaders and teachers. For example, one parent stated, “I know in advance how I can support my child at home.”

- School leaders provide ongoing feedback to teachers which outline strengths and areas for growth. The principal stated she gives a video resource list with links and recommends videos to staff which will help them improve in specific areas, she also allows teachers to engage in learning walks with peers using Danielson Framework for Teaching as an area of foci. The principal also conducts snapshots in which she gives teachers feedback through Glows & Grows. Then, she allows grade leaders, vendors, or network staff to work with teachers one to one or in small groups. Thus, teacher observations indicate trends of improvement in the area of discussion and engagement as well as using questioning and discussion techniques.

- Every school year, the school leader distributes a handbook of expectations for students, parents, and staff. She also hosts a Back to School / Meet the Teacher night which is well attended by families. The parents stated during interviews there are structures in the school which prepare students for middle school as well as college and career readiness. For example, on Career Day students dressed professionally and participated in discussions with visiting adults to learn more about their jobs. Additionally, fifth grade students visit middle school in the community to learn more about expectations. Last, one student mentioned every Friday, he is able to engage in conference time with the teacher to discuss his work and next steps.
Additional Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
School leaders and teachers effectively align the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and ensure the integration of the instructional shifts. School-wide, teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact
The use of curricula has provided coherence across all grades and college along with career readiness skills for students. The planning and refinement of units and academic tasks based on the needs of all learners, has provided students with access to learning opportunities in which they are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet weekly in horizontal and vertical teams to examine Common Core aligned units of study, analyze data, student work, and adjust lesson plans which results in tiered tasks which provide multiple entry points for all students. For example, a second grade lesson plan reflected refinements for students who were struggling with regrouping in subtraction. Additional tiered tasks were created to support students such as use of a number line and subtracting single digit numbers.

- The reading, writing, math, science, and social studies units of study are closely connected to Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts. Additionally, the school subscribes to Ready Gen and Go Math curricula. Examples of student tasks were observed such as responding to questions using text base evidence, writing opinion pieces on topics or texts, engagement in student to student discussions, in groups, or teacher led. For example, a fifth grade unit of study indicates writing activities for students such as choosing an example of inequality/injustice that inspires them and then write a speech to share with the class, advocating for change.

- Lesson plans in all content area reinforce higher order thinking skills and represent various instructional strategies such as Turn and Talk, graphic organizers, and citing textual evidence. Tasks and groupings are also assigned to students based on data such as student work and common assessments. For example, students in a fourth grade class were asked to Turn and Talk using pre-written questions from the lesson plan. The teacher collected student data and regrouped based on findings. The lesson plan also reflected evidence of questions students had to respond to in writing as their Exit Ticket.
Findings
Across classrooms, pedagogy is aligned to the curricula and reflects a school-wide belief about how students learn best that is aligned to the Danielson Framework through high level of student discussion and engagement.

Impact
There is implementation of multiple entry points, consistent student engagement by all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in all student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- School-wide, teachers believe students learn best when engaged in tasks which require *Higher Order Thinking Skills and Question & Discussion*. In a fifth grade class, the teacher asked students several questions such as “What is voice? What do I mean by that?” Various students gave a response to the question. The teacher asked all students to go back in the text to find evidence. The students were citing from the Ready Gen text *Heart & Soul: Story of America & African Americans*. One student said, “The type of tone they have. When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “Free at Last, Thank God almighty we are free at last.” Other students also responded whether or not they agreed citing from the same text.

- In a second grade Science lesson, students were engaged in *Question and Discussion* with the teacher. The teacher discussed the weather word list with students and asked the class, “What do you think milder means?” She encouraged the students to write their thoughts on a paper. The teacher asked students to review responses written by their peers and share it aloud. One student responded, “I think it means change.” Another student mentioned, “When you change from cold to hot.”

- During a fourth grade English language arts lesson, students were instructed to *Turn and Talk* to their partner to discuss why tall tales use exaggerations. The students were observed in discussion with one another, then asking one another their opinion using sentence starters which were taped on every table. Meanwhile, the teacher facilitated the classroom while taking notes on a chart. A few minutes later, the teacher asked students to share their findings with the entire class while citing evidence from the text.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. The use of assessments has led to actionable next steps so students are aware of areas in need of improvement, teachers use data to inform instruction and groupings.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and content areas, rubrics are aligned to the school's grading policy. During an interview, one student stated, “Rubrics help me improve by telling me what to do and check for what I don’t have.” Thus, students are able to plan next steps independently, with peers, or the teacher which has led to an improvement in the learning process. This was evident as during the interview, another student stated, “I know I am doing well because I see my level and next steps that the teacher writes tell me what I need to work on.”

- Teachers use Ready Gen, Go Math, and end-unit assessments, Pre/Post T tests, Show What You Know and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) to determine student growth. During an interview with members of the vertical teacher team, it was stated that assessments take place frequently to determine student strengths and areas which require further support. All teachers maintain an assessment binder in which student progress is tracked for further supports such as remediation, a reteach, or enrichment.

- It is evident feedback is given to students verbally and in writing. Additionally, students engage in peer and individual assessment. While visiting classrooms and reviewing portfolios of student work, actionable, rubric-based feedback with next steps was written on all tasks. For example, a student was told she cited evidence properly but needed to learn how to write it in her own words. During an English language arts class, students used a checklist to determine if the expectations of the task were met.