Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 107 Thomas A Dooley

Elementary 25Q107

167-02 45 Avenue
Queens
NY, 11358

Principal: Lori Cummings

Date of review: December 17, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango
## The School Context

P.S. 107 Thomas A Dooley is an Elementary school with 969 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 31% Hispanic, 16% White, and 50% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.40%.

## School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>Developing</td>
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<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>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings
The school has developed rigorous curriculum and tasks within and across grade levels and content areas that embed key standards, the instructional shifts and the needs of all learners.

Impact
Curricula work and task design over the last two years has built coherence to appropriately address the rigorous demands of the Common Core Learning Standards and promotes higher level thinking for all learners.

Supporting Evidence
- Staff developers from Teachers College Reading and Writing Project have worked with teachers across grades over the past two years to plan, pace and align the reading and writing curriculum to the standards and the needs of their students. Currently teachers use on demand writing assessments and running records to make modifications to lessons and develop essential questions.

- Over the past two years, the school has transitioned from isolated math curricula within and across grades, to full implementation of the Go Math program with embedded tasks that include elements of writing that require students to explain their thinking. Tasks scaffold to address skill based areas of weakness and culminate with a final post assessment activity designed to measure student mastery of standard aligned concepts.

- The cross grade math team has worked to embed content specific math vocabulary into units of study and lessons to build consistency and scaffold math language and concepts to better support struggling and English language learners.

- The math leads meet with teachers in vertical bands to support planning of mathematical units to ensure appropriate scaffolds and coherence. Format contains standards, understandings, essential question(s), what students will know, skills learning plan and targeted assessments. These assessments are collected and collated by the school data specialist who provides grade level teams with lesson objective pre and post comparative results which are used to remap units.

- Key standards, embedded within all literacy units, include a philosophy of learning aligned to the standards and the instructional shifts. In writing, students are expected to make choices, use evidence to support claims, evaluate their writing and apply strategies to their decisions to make appropriate revisions. In reading, students are required to draw conclusions using text based evidence, determine theme, evaluate characters and analyze purpose of both fiction and nonfiction text to support their opinions and theories.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 2.2 Assessment | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
The school has effectively aligned assessments and rubrics to the curricula for teachers to benchmark student performance within lessons and accurately gauge student progress. However, implementation and use of these tools is at the nascent stages.

Impact
Currently, although the school has consistent expectations around the use of assessments in order to drive lesson planning and student groupings, there are not fully embedded practices within and across grades and classrooms, where both teachers and students measure their growth over time to support and accelerate learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has been working on implementing rubrics and checklists. However these newly implemented assessment tools are used inconsistently within and across grades. For example, during the student meeting, one child was able to articulate his growth along the continuum of the rubric comparing it to his pre and post assessment writing. However, another student could not explain the genre of writing she was required to do or how it connected to the rubric attached to her work.

- Across grades teachers are working with the school data specialist and have established tools to engage in checks for understanding during a lesson. However, teacher practices that check for understanding do not specifically align to lesson objectives. For example, in one classroom, although the teacher was looking at student work aligned to the scripted Go Math lesson, her assessment of deeper expectations of use of effective math vocabulary was not being addressed. Therefore, some students did not include this skill as part of their work.

- The school has adopted the use of Teachers College Reading and Writing assessments, Fountas and Pinnell running records and pre and post Go Math assessments to evaluate student progression within standards and units of study. Additionally, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) writing prompts are used by grade teams to determine student response to learning objectives. However, although these assessment tools are evaluated by teachers and used to make modifications to curricula, data streams revealed are used differently within and across classrooms for planning and activity design.

- Teachers consistently use grows and glows as ways to provide feedback to students across all content areas. However, feedback is not consistently connected to the key skills and standards addressed within tasks. For example, while some student work throughout the building displayed rubric based comments, other work focused on only one aspect of the task such as craft or grammar and did not address student work resulting from focus on the instructional shifts or standards.
Findings
The school has an appropriate instructional focus that is aligned to support teachers in aligning practice to the school’s curriculum. However, at this time not all instructional strategies and classroom activities provide sufficient access or enrichment or maximize student engagement and ownership of their learning.

Impact
Although teachers have built capacity and consistency in their practice, not all teachers are using strategies effectively to strategically guide students to meet the rigor of the tasks, limiting student ability to fully produce high level work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Many classrooms included opportunities for students to engage in a variety of tasks that were well matched to their achievement levels. However, while some classroom tasks provided supportive entry, they were not scaffolded and did not bring students to a solid understanding of content. For example, in one classroom, although there were vocabulary scaffolds, they were all the same words and in another class students had folders with supporting goals to support their work that included editing wheels, planning pages and paper choice. However, all students had the same scaffolds and some were not using them appropriately.

- In some classrooms, student activities and materials did not align to the planned teaching point. For example, in one classroom, the teacher allowed students to brainstorm topics unrelated to the lesson objective and in another lesson, groups of students were expected to research non-fiction topics and write introductory paragraphs, using only one trade book per group.

- Although some teachers are struggling with the implementation of curricula, there was evidence of consistent teaching practices aligned to the instructional focus, such as activities designed using assessment tools, small group work, effective pacing and student expectation to explain their thinking, either through turn and talk strategies, using evidence from text in their writing and in math tasks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**
Leadership has communicated a clear curricular and instructional improvement vision that is consistently communicated to the school community.

**Impact**
The school has built a coherent understanding of the instructional focus and has translated consistent teaching practices through feedback aligned to the Danielson framework that also determines professional learning for staff and is positively impacting pedagogy and student outcomes. Students and their families have a clear understanding of student work expectations and the tools being implemented to support their learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The administration and teacher leads have developed a professional learning plan and school wide goals directly aligned to the Danielson Framework and the instructional focus: creating targeted learning experiences through the use of assessment. Professional learning aligned to this focus, such as forming effective instructional groups using data, is provided to staff weekly. Instructional leads work with teachers to support and ensure consistency within and across grades.

- As weekly professional learning is provided to teachers, the administration ensures that feedback in this area is provided to the staff on a consistent basis. For example, staff engaged in activities regarding pacing and structure of lessons and units of study. Feedback documents reviewed demonstrated that administration provided targeted feedback to all staff in this area.

- During the small group student meeting, students sharing their work were able to articulate expectations of assignment and units. For example one student explained his literacy essay and the expectations found within an aligned rubric to support him in developing a strong thesis. The student was also able to articulate his reading and writing goals and how he incorporated these expectations into his writing piece.

- School wide events such as coffee and curriculum with the principal, monthly grade level parent letters and tools such as I-Ready and Class Dojo, keep parents informed of the curricula expectations, what it looks like in their child’s classroom and ways they can support their children at home.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teachers are working in collaborative teams and engaged in targeted inquiry and professional learning. The school community embraces leadership pathways which have elevated teacher leads and the acceleration of the instructional vision of the school.

Impact
Action research conducted by teachers throughout the school has led to the implementation of successful instructional strategies and is impacting student work products in all content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- The kindergarten teacher team engaged in inquiry this year where they are looking at student weekly writing assessments more deeply, as MOSL assessments were not an accurate measure of student growth. In reviewing student work on a weekly basis, they have developed consistent classroom environments with supportive charts, such as reading/writing super powers in every kindergarten classroom.

- Third grade teachers conducted inquiry study around the use effective teaching strategies to infuse both content and high frequency words to best support student subgroups. For example, during the observed teacher team meeting, teachers were focused on ways to incorporate the word “significance” into all content areas as post assessment data revealed students understood content, but struggled with applying this word when responding to both short answer reading comprehension questions and math word problems.

- The principal formed a collaborative professional development team made up of teacher leads who select professional learning options for the staff. Once the principal provides professional learning to staff, these teacher leaders meet with their colleagues weekly as teams and support implementation of expected instructional practice. For example, teacher leads are currently supporting teams with implementing the instructional focus by modeling effective ways to use assessment tools to create targeted learning experiences for individual and groups of students.