



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Manhattan Beach

Elementary School 195

**131 Irwin Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Bernadette Toomey

Dates of review: Feb 13 - 14, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Maria Robustelli

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Manhattan Beach is an elementary school with 459 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3.5% Black, 2.4% Hispanic, 89.8% White, and 3.3% Asian students. The student body includes 6.8% English language learners and 9.2% special education students. Boys account for 52.7% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47.3%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school strategically aligns curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) across grades and subject areas as well as engages students in cognitively challenging tasks to increase college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - The school has constructed an interdisciplinary curriculum that is supplemented by Go Math, Expeditionary Learning, and Holt Science to support students' mastery of the CCLS. Teachers strategically emphasize the instructional shifts across grades by developing learning tasks that engage students in providing textual evidence in writing and discussions, use of academic vocabulary, access to grade level, complex informational texts, and connects and applies content to real world problems. These learning tasks require all students to develop critical thinking skills, thus promoting college and career readiness. For example, a review of a first grade unit of study included a math activity where students gathered their personal information and timelines from birth to create a multi-step number problem that included their own equation, illustrations to support their work, and an explanation of how they arrived at the answer. As a result, the school's curricula provides opportunities for all students to engage in learning tasks that prepare students for college and career readiness, thereby evidenced by the school's most recent progress report that indicates a score of 98.1% for middle school readiness compared to the city average of 93.2%.
 - Student performance data and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles are used to strategically refine curricula tasks so that students' learning needs are met. Academic tasks are adjusted to include opportunities for students to engage in investigation, and communicate their learning through varied opportunities which include modeling, prompting, sign language, symbols, graphics, pictures, and concrete objects that provide flexibility and equal access to the curricula for all students. For example, during a kindergarten technology unit, learning tasks provided opportunities such as video clips, modeling, and introducing content using the SMARTboard and Kidspiration templates to ensure that all students, including special education students and English language learners, have access to cognitively challenge learning. Samples of lesson plans show how teachers use previous performance data to form student groups, plan learning tasks which give all students access to the content that includes pre-teaching key vocabulary and symbols supported by the use of the SMART board and visuals. Similarly, other curricula adjustments integrate audio recordings to assist image recognition, sentence formation, and symbols to help students match pictures with words. For individual students, previously learned skills are highlighted through the use of discussion cards with various reading skills and strategies. Moreover, a review of a math learning task on regrouping to add two-digit numbers included the use of manipulatives and the emphasis of vocabulary such as re-grouping and subtraction, thus strategically engaging all learners in cognitively challenging learning opportunities. The school's most recent progress report scores indicate increases in the percentages of students at the 75th growth percentile or

above for almost all measured student subgroups in math and English language arts.

- Across the school, lessons reflect effective use of standards-aligned units of study consistent with school-wide beliefs that require students to engage in higher order thinking resulting in increased outcomes. (1.2)
 - Classroom lessons reflect the school-wide belief that children learn best when teachers model practical examples, set high expectations for learning, and facilitate inquiry based learning opportunities. Across the vast majority of the classrooms observed, teachers used modeling, Accountable Talk strategies, guided and independent practice to engage students in high level discussions, participation, and thinking. For example, in a third grade classroom, students were asked to compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in a story. Students engaged in discussions by reading small chunks of text and stopping to discuss the adventures and experiences of each character. Using evidence from the text, students built on each other's thinking by agreeing or disagreeing with information elicited from the two texts. In addition, learning activities engage students in self-assessment through peer reviews, checklists, student friendly rubrics, and exit slips, thereby aligning instructional practices to the school-wide focus on student engagement and independence. Furthermore, high-level discussion questions, student-to-student discussions, and small group and partner work were observed in every classroom. Students are also provided with additional materials such as highlighters, graphic organizers, outlines, task checklists, and sentence stems to further support learning. During the student meeting, students shared that these supports help "them to understand their strengths," as well as "what they need to improve and provide opportunities for them to become independent and express their thinking." As a result of these practices, a review of third grade reading levels for the winter collection period revealed that approximately 95% of students moved at least one to three reading levels, including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students.
- Teachers purposefully use common assessments to gauge progress, refine curricula and instruction, and provide meaningful feedback to students, thus ensuring increased academic outcomes for all learners. (2.2)
 - Teachers consistently analyze a wide range of summative and formative data that includes baseline assessments, CCLS end of unit tasks, running records, common rubrics, Fountas and Pinnell levels, student self-reflections and goals, daily observations, student work portfolios and exit slips to track students' learning progress. The analysis and triangulation of students' performance data allow teachers to provide immediate supports and make timely curricula and instructional adjustments to meet students' needs. For example, an item analysis of the NYS standardized tests in math and English language arts showed specific skills sets that teachers needed to address in their lessons to further provide students with targeted instructional support to address the learning gaps. In addition, it is school-wide practice to engage students in developing learning goals, and reflecting upon their progress via individual conferences and targeted teachers' feedback to address students' next learning steps. Teachers' feedback was evidenced on student writing, portfolios, and on student work placed on bulletin boards that provide students with specific areas of strengths and next steps linked to a rubric.

Students were able to communicate how the use of rubrics and meaningful teacher comments helps them to recognize what they were doing well and identify next steps to support deeper levels of understanding. One student stated, “My teacher’s comments show me what I need to review and understand, and what to look for in my next writing piece.” Consequently, teachers’ strategic and timely instructional adjustments supported students’ ability to articulate their individual learning goals and academic progress. As a result, in the school’s most recent progress report, the school scored above the City’s average in the English language arts and math State assessments.

- School leaders conduct strategic cycles of observations and analysis of student work using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to support teachers’ instructional practice and development. (4.1)
 - The administration supports the development of teachers through daily walkthroughs and short, frequent cycles of observation aligned to the domains of The Danielson Framework for Teaching to support teachers’ instructional practice and goals. The administration uses evidence from previous classroom observations and student data to guide conversations and feedback about effective instructional practices, student learning outcomes, self-reflections, and next steps aligned to teachers’ professional goals and the school’s goals. In observation reports, next steps included various professional development opportunities, inter-visitations, and coaching sessions to support teachers’ work in developing a clear and shared understanding of the school wide instructional expectations. Furthermore, the administration maintains a professional portfolio for each teacher that includes teacher goals, observations, artifacts, and feedback forms, thus tracking teachers’ professional needs and supports. A new teacher commented that the support she has received through inter-visitations and individualized coaching has allowed her to reflect on her practice and improve instruction. As a result of the feedback teachers receive from the administration and ongoing supports from peers and coaches, approximately 80% of teachers have currently met an effective or highly effective rating on many Danielson Framework competencies.
 - Classroom observations, student data, and ongoing conversations with teachers are used to determine ratings aligned to the Danielson Framework, and is further used to develop action plans to support teachers’ professional growth. The administration has created a system of charts and graphs to analyze overall school-wide growth across the Danielson domains, and monitor individualized teachers’ progress. Data results indicate that through frequent observations and targeted support with clear next steps, teachers have shown a 36% growth for using effective questioning and discussion techniques in the classroom, and 40.9% growth for engaging students in exploring content, creating productive and appropriate instructional groupings, and effectively pacing the lesson by allowing students more time for reflection. In addition, the administration has identified areas of expertise for each teacher and has created an inter-visitation and a teacher peer coaching program that allows teachers to model best practices. For example, one teacher observed a lesson in a first grade classroom with a focus on Accountable Talk to hone on her instructional expertise for effectively engaging all students in rigorous discussions. She commented on how the strategies she observed, including teacher modeling, use of talk stems, charts,

effective teacher questioning that sparked student discussions has yielded positive results for her students in her classroom. Consequently, the school's emphasis to provide a coherent and strategic approach to professional development has resulted in increased teacher's effectiveness across the school.

- Teacher teams effectively collaborate to strengthen instructional practice, analyze student work and performance data, and develop academic interventions to increase student learning. (4.2)
 - The administration has provided opportunities within the school's schedule, including a double collaboration period, for teacher teams to meet on a weekly basis to review student work and assessment data, refine units of study, analyze the effectiveness of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies, and use the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a tool to improve instructional practice. In addition, school leaders have provided support in facilitation techniques and protocols for looking at data and student work to further assist teachers' discussions in developing purposeful next steps. For example, a team used a student work analysis protocol and the rubric from a writing assignment to analyze student work samples from different levels of proficiency and identify students' strengths and needs. Teachers noticed that the supports provided from the previous unit of study led to significant progress in sentence structure, including linking words, organization, introduction, and conclusion across all the classrooms. Furthermore, vertical team meetings also provide an opportunity for teachers to identify trends across and within grades, and share effective strategies for low and high proficient students as well as English language learners and special education students. Moreover, school-wide data analysis of the CCLS aligned rubrics also demonstrated an increase of students moving from level two to level three. In one lower grade classroom, 85% of students had scored a level three on the most recent CCLS aligned performance task. Consequently, all teachers participate in inquiry work that leads to strategic discussions and analysis of student data to support school-wide instructional practice, and maximize academic achievement for all learners.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen communication with families that clearly informs student goals and progress to develop strategic supports for increased student achievement. (3.4)
 - The school consistently communicates expectations for teaching and learning to students, staff, and families through ongoing feedback, thus, placing a high priority for maintaining strong communication with families. For example, attendance, behavior, and academic expectations are initially messaged through an orientation and distribution of the parent handbook at the beginning of the school year. Other types of communication include homework agendas, notes in students' folders, e-mails, and a monthly newsletter to inform parents of important school events and activities, including the focus for the monthly parent workshop. Teachers also send home suggestions that parents can use to further support their children with CCLS aligned assignments. In addition, the Parent Coordinator conducts parent workshops on the middle school process to prepare parents and students for their next academic level. Recently, the school added an interim progress report that includes

progress notes in English language arts and math, as well as students' short term goals for each content area with the strategies used in the classroom to support students in achieving their goals. Although this communication enables parents to provide their children with academic support at home, parents expressed that the daily feedback teachers give students are often general, and do not provide targeted information and differentiated strategies for individual students. Consequently, parents lack a deeper understanding of targeted skills and content needed to further support their children in meeting their academic goals and achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: | 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 |