

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**William A. Butler**

**K133**

**375 Butler Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11217**

**Principal: Heather Foster-Mann**

**Dates of review: November 29 - 30, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

PS 133 is an elementary school with 280 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 42% Black, 46% Hispanic, 10% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and cabinet make structured organizational decisions aligned to instructional goals resulting in improved learning experiences and student work samples. (1.3)
  - The principal and cabinet regularly configure their organizational and instructional decision making to advance student's learning experiences and the quality of their work. The purposeful decision of assigning Academic Intervention teachers to follow students to the next grade has resulted in a continuation of services that support identified struggling students. (c)
  - Staff time is coordinated so that school teams can meet regularly. All teachers are assigned to inquiry teams that meet at least twice per week. Additional meetings are possible due to the organizational schedule that contains additional common periods. Teachers on the Grade 5 team meet frequently to discuss the skills their students need in specific strands of mathematics. They have seen an increase in student performance as measured by rubric scores on math exemplar tasks as a result of this collaborative instructional planning time. (b)
- The school has created an atmosphere of mutual respect for all members of the community that support the academic success of students and the professional growth of teachers. (1.4)
  - The staff members know all students. Student academic performance and social and emotional development is monitored by the administration and the school cabinet during weekly meetings. Focused on increasing student time in school, the attendance team has targeted six students with poor attendance. The team has tracked the students daily, involved families, and provided incentives, resulting in a decrease in absenteeism for those students. After recognizing that bullying amongst girls in the school was a concern, female staff members were assigned to work with at-risk females enabling the incidents of arguments and disruptions during the lunch periods to decrease. (b)
  - The school has a welcoming and safe environment. The principal and designated staff members are present during the morning and afternoon line-up to answer parent questions and concerns. In response to the Learning Environment Survey results, the faculty has made a conscience effort to increase parental communication. Actively soliciting parental support this year has provided teachers with additional student and family information enabling teachers to focus on the needs of students while strengthening the school and home connection. (a)
- Parents are an integral part of school decision making and the school encourages reciprocal dialogue focused on student academic expectations. (2.4)
  - The School Leadership Team and the Parents Association are integral in ensuring that parent information is disseminated. Feedback sheets for

parents were instituted to provide reciprocal communication between the school and families providing the school with additional information in order to monitor academic programs as well as the importance of several services provided by outside agencies. In addition, the administration routinely involves families in school decision making. Parents initiated a conversation with the administration regarding the creation of a dual language program to attract students to the school. As a result, the school has implemented a French dual-language class in kindergarten with plans of expanding the program through Grade 5. (b)

- The administration and the teachers have created and modified structure in order to support families in using tools in order to track their child's academic performance. There is an 80% usage rate by their parent population of ARIS Parent Link, e grade books, and the school website. Monthly coffee chats, school newsletters, and an active parent coordinator have provided parents with the support to understand their child's performance in school. (c)
- The school has high expectations of all stakeholders and has embedded structures and supports that result in collective accountability. (3.4)
  - During one to one conferences, teachers meet with the principal to set interim and long term professional goals aligned to school goals, and frequent professional development based on a research based teacher effectiveness rubric the school has developed a mutual understanding of shared responsibility. (a)
  - The school has a cohesive belief about how students learn that leads to high expectations for all students, including high need subgroups. The principal said, "Our conversation is not different for closing the achievement gap. We expect all children to learn at high levels." This expectation leads to performance tasks assigned to all students with differentiated scaffolds of support depending on student need. Support staff and guidance counselors uphold the school vision by designing interventions and supports for students who exhibit behaviors that interfere with their academics. (c)
- The school uses well defined protocols and structured meeting times to ensure a school wide approach focused on student achievement and teacher practice. (4.2)
  - All of the teachers in the school are on inquiry teams. These teams are grade specific as well as across grades in order to facilitate team specific and school wide instructional and pedagogical expectations. Specialty teams to address enrichment opportunities, attendance, and student child studies also operate in the school providing additional data to support students. Professional development is provided to staff in order to have a unified protocol for all inquiry work ensuring consistency across all school wide teams. (a)
  - Teachers are encouraged to participate in leadership roles by making key instructional decisions school wide. Grades elect their grade leaders who are instrumental in ensuring that instructional coherence is evident from classroom to classroom. These leaders set the agendas for all grade

meetings and facilitate grade level inquiry teams. They also have the opportunity to attend executive cabinet meetings and external professional development with the responsibility of turn keying the training for their colleagues. This allows them to increase their knowledge and skills and play an integral part of key decisions and professional development support as the school continues to integrate the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards into the curriculum. (c)

- The school utilizes community based organizations and higher educational learning institutions to engage students in academic, social and emotional growth. (4.4)
  - Students and families are supported in their understanding of the next steps required to prepare for college and career decisions. The school has instituted College Day and students visit campuses such as Pratt Institute and St. Francis College. Career Day enables students the opportunity to discuss career options with professionals in specific fields. The guidance counselor conducts information sessions and arranges middle school tours for families as they move along the pathway to supporting students towards postsecondary readiness. (b)
  - The school has developed partnerships that support the instructional programs and the social and emotional needs of their students. A partnership with The New York Food Bank and their Cook Shop program provide opportunities for students to prepare and learn about healthy alternatives and food choices. Families also receive groceries to take home to reproduce similar meals with their children. These types of partnerships also strengthen the internal partnership between the school and families. (c)

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Increase the use of differentiated instructional strategies and tasks to meet the academic needs of all students. (1.2)
  - Throughout classrooms, there is a clear evidence of the school priorities to align teacher practices to the Common Core Learning Standards, to provide entry points into the curriculum for all students and to have students reflect on their work. However, the differentiation of tasks and instructional strategies are not uniform across classrooms resulting in limited opportunities for some students to successfully build their content knowledge and skill abilities. While in some classes students with disabilities are exposed to adaptations of tasks such as checklists and students who have difficulty in reading are given pictorial supports alongside long passages of text; there is no deliberate school plan to address these populations across classrooms resulting in uneven teacher practice. (a, b)
  - The school has displayed student work illustrating an extensive level of student knowledge with assigned tasks. However, some students expressed their ability to complete the tasks with ease and were not challenged by many of the questions posed to them during class

assignments. Assignments do not consistently promote students to rigorously consider alternative views limiting the development of thinking skills in struggling as well as advanced students. (c)

- Ensure that classroom teachers across grades employ strategies to monitor comprehension and make appropriate instructional adjustments to meet student needs. (2.2)
  - Grade level inquiry teams and individual teachers use and develop multiple sources of assessments and rubrics aligned to key grade strands to periodically monitor student learning. While teachers provide students with feedback based on these assessments, the information was often not clear or detailed enough for students to understand what they need to do to evaluate their own work and progress to the next level. Additionally, across classrooms there was limited use of ongoing assessments that measured student understanding during the lesson narrowing the opportunities for teachers to modify and adjust their plans as needed. (a,c)
- Refine the analysis of data gathered through the observation of classroom teachers in order to strategically support and improve teacher practice. (4.1)
  - Through short and frequent cycles of observation, classroom snapshots, and views of student work, the school is able to provide feedback to teachers. There is a mutual understanding of the research based teacher effectiveness rubric which guides this feedback. However, future observation cycles do not utilize peer leaders and are not strategically planned to target the individual and school wide concerns surfaced during prior observations lessening the schools ability to develop a school wide professional development plan geared toward attainment of teacher goals. (a, b)
- Improve structures to evaluate effectiveness of curricular and organizational decisions to increase coherence and accelerate student academic growth. (5.1)
  - Schedule changes, such as back to back preparation periods, and mid-year goal revisions were put in to place this year to address low student performance on literacy assessments last year. However, there are limited structures in place to monitor curricular, program implementation and school resources throughout this year impacting the school's ability to adjust programs to promote student progress. (b)
  - English Language Arts instruction is currently addressed through multiple ways in the classroom. Students are exposed to balanced literacy, literacy circles and a new writing program that are based on differing beliefs about how students learn to read and write creating incoherence in the instruction students are receiving. While the school has recognized this, structures are not yet in place to consistently evaluate and adjust instruction and curriculum in order to provide a more effective program for students. (a)

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: William A. Butler</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				<b>X</b>
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			<b>X</b>	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			<b>X</b>				
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			<b>X</b>				
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			<b>X</b>				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>