

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 399 Stanley Eugene Clark
Elementary School K399**

**2707 ALBERMARLE ROAD
BROOKLYN
NY 11226**

Principal: Marion J. Brown

Dates of review: December 2-3, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Veronica Yurcik

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Stanley Eugene Clark is an Elementary school with 527 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian students, and 10% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- An outstanding sense of community and a shared feeling of responsibility motivate all students to achieve academic improvement within a supportive, safe, and work-oriented environment. (1.4)
 - o Staff members are well focused on providing a safe, calm environment and a positive work ethic, which translates into excellent student behavior and positive attitudes toward schoolwork and peers. As one student stated, “You don’t slack in this school.” A daily mini-assembly designed to “celebrate personal milestones and achievements” and to encourage student self-affirmation sets a positive tone and serves as a venue for daily public tracking of attendance. Through the school’s analysis of behavior records, they identified a need to focus on interventions for Black and Hispanic males. As a result, the school has seen a decline in behavior incidents for targeted sub groups, and it enjoys a low suspension rate. Students express that, “We don’t have bullies in this school,” and “We don’t see a lot of kids trying to hurt other kids.”
 - o The principal places high priority on respectful behavior and care of children and has used inquiry work to focus on social-emotional needs of students. Parents and teachers describe the school as an extended family that is vigilant regarding the needs of children. Students readily name adults who watch out for them and with whom they feel comfortable seeking help. Attendance and incident tracking, and the school’s close relationships with parents, ensure students are known well. Students’ self-confidence and conscientious work habits and achievement attest to their social-emotional well being and academic focus.
- Proactive inclusion of families through frequent communication and engagement furthers family investment in supporting home and school activities that promote development of academic potential. (2.4)
 - o Parents acknowledge enthusiastically that the principal involves them in decision-making. They express appreciation for the autonomy she gives them in organizing a yearly family day and for her receptivity to their requests for tap dancing, basketball, and a mother-daughter day. Demonstrating their gratefulness for such inclusion, they come out in large numbers to volunteer. They express great allegiance to the school noting that they “come in as a village” when any student or family needs the community’s support.
 - o The parent coordinator, office staff, administration, and teachers provide ready access to school computers and technical help, and regular assistance to parents in using tools to support student learning. As a result, a great number of parents use one or more tools such as ARIS link; RAZKIDZ, an online reading program, and/or the school’s website class pages with work tasks, resources or homework postings, all of which allow access to information in a timely way for on-going support and learning opportunities for their children.
- The school communicates expectations clearly and provides extended day supports so that all students have more time-on-task to improve academic skills. (3.4)
 - o The school consistently communicates high expectations to students and families, placing a priority emphasis on academic learning. Students who attend Saturday programs must enroll in an academic course in order to participate in

- extracurricular arts or sports programs. Daily public announcements to students and parents, automated phone reminders, and provision of uniforms to students in need, reinforce the necessity to be in school, on time and in uniform daily, resulting in full uniform compliance and a 93.5% attendance rate. In addition, the parent coordinator offers bi-weekly workshops, and the school's teachers and guidance counselor work with families to share individual learning goals and information about articulation for students transitioning to middle schools so that families feel they have essential information and are preparing their children for the next level of study.
- o Teachers' respectful interaction with students fosters trust and open communication that guides necessary counselor support and/or family interventions. In addition, a high degree of volunteerism among staff allows for numerous before/after school and lunchtime opportunities for students to work under the watchful eye of a caring adult who furthers their academic and social-emotional development.
 - An emphasis on youth development insures that students and their families have access to support and enrichment that promote student engagement in their school and in their work. (4.4)
 - o The school sends staff members to outside training for helping youth at-risk and provides staff development in speaking and listening to children. Accordingly, staff members speak courteously to students, and students, in turn, speak politely to adults establishing a safe, inclusive, and respectful school culture.
 - o Several partnerships insure that students have access to arts programs such as violin and dance and technology programs in robotics. Additionally, students increase their investment by engaging in other real world learning activities such as community outreach food and clothing drives. Furthermore, in order to provide additional social service supports to students and families, the school partners with CAMBA, a non-profit agency.
 - The principal has made strategic decisions that facilitate a variety of support services and extracurricular enrichment that promote student engagement in their learning and academic achievement. (1.3)
 - o The principal's proactive identification of resources enables arts programs and an increasing investment in technology that provide students with a rich array of extracurricular activities. Decisions to introduce comprehension and vocabulary programs further the school's attention to needed skill development. After school and weekend extended day, a mandated four month after school test prep with two hour sessions three times a week, and daily mainstreaming of at-risk and advanced students for special learning periods help students attain median adjusted growth percentiles of 67% in English and 60% in math on the school's most recent Progress Report.
 - o Teacher grade teams now have a weekly double period that allows them time to learn protocols for looking at student work and engage in the inquiry process.

What the school needs to improve

- Evaluate curriculum alignment to State standards to ensure that all students engage in challenging tasks that promote higher order thinking and skills needed to close the achievement gap and promote post secondary readiness. (1.1)

- o Although, this year, teacher teams have begun the process of mapping curriculum and creating their own Common Core units of study, the school cannot articulate how the new learning standards will be successfully integrated into current teaching. The school relies on packaged instructional programs advertised as standards-based, precluding relevant purposeful key standards selection and the development of well-matched curriculum maps to meet the school's and students' needs. Across grades and classes, this reliance results in an emphasis in completing program tasks rather than emphasis on conceptual understanding. This creates a lack of the necessary strategic focus for raising students' average proficiency scores to close the achievement gap and prepare college-ready students.
- o Across classrooms and grades, student tasks are not characterized by a coherent approach to higher order thinking skills. This limits opportunities for students to engage in challenging tasks and to demonstrate critical thinking. Some students in a fourth grade class summarized text details, while others answered prompts without being required to use text evidence. Students in a fourth grade at-risk grouping worked in pairs to complete a chart about an introduced non-fiction text but were unable to use text to support their responses or explain their thinking, stating that they had written what the teacher had told them. In a third grade class, students used low level step-by step procedures to solve two digit addition problems and advanced fifth grade math students were not challenged by a task requiring them to classify angles, labeling them, cutting them out and pasting them into categories.
- Create a cogent plan for on-going observation of classroom teaching and professional support so that teachers benefit from timely feedback that improves their pedagogy. 4.1
 - o While the school has chosen a research-based teacher effectiveness rubric, it has not provided staff development and therefore teachers cannot speak to a focus of professional learning. The principal states that they have an observation and professional development tool, PD360 "but have not used as yet", and that they "need to memorialize effective feedback and support for teachers." One assistant principal has used the rubric headings for only eight informal visits to early childhood grades during this school year. Thus, not all teachers are benefitting from feedback based on a common rubric that articulates clear expectations for effective practices to improve student-learning outcomes.
 - o The school does not have a system for managing staff development. The principal states that the professional development plan for this year is "looking at student work," but acknowledges that network training on looking at student writing has not yet occurred. As a result, teachers do not have the information they need to improve their own skills which are necessary for moving students to the highest levels of achievement. In addition, the school does not have a structure for making informed decisions about teacher assignments and retention. While the principal states that she strategically matches teachers to serve at-risk and advanced students, she is unable to explain how she judges effectiveness in terms of overall assignments and retention systems. This lack of transparent criteria makes it difficult to evaluate and rate teachers accurately, thus precluding effective decision-making for tenure of teaching staff.
- Develop data tools to aggregate performance trends clearly to inform curriculum and instructional modifications to improve students' academic performance. (2.3)

- o Although the school uses Scantron Performance Series, Trophy literacy test summaries, and Acuity assessments, to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, they do not have tools to aggregate data. Consequently, teachers and administrators are unable to identify overall or key relevant groups and individual trends astutely, or to interpret needs and determine significant next steps. Additionally, as teachers manually enter individual student data on academic inventory sheets, this data cannot be sorted by class, grade, or school-wide. Consequently, the school does not have the information it requires to clearly recognize and understand trends to guide curricular and teaching decisions effectively.
- o The school gives performance level marks on report cards. However, there are no methods to determine global performance for each class, by grade or school, leading to an inability to compare report card evaluations against student performance on State assessments. As a result, administrators and teachers cannot capture meaningful performance trends to assess progress precisely toward achieving State standards. This limits their ability to make timely and strategic interventions to support student-learning needs.
- Develop a goal setting process that sets clear measurable objectives to steer instruction that accelerates student learning. (3.2)
 - o Although the school initiated student goal setting this year, teachers focus mainly on using data to re-group or re-teach. The school does not yet sufficiently use information to set specific goals for groups of children. Thus, opportunities for impacting student learning based on data identified needs are missed. The principal describes goal setting as "a process that we are beginning."
 - o Team goals and classroom goals center on planning and on achieving aims of curriculum programs respectively. The school places focused emphasis on providing extra time-on-task and extra work to students overlooking the potential of effectual pedagogy adjustments and resulting leveraged practice that improves teaching and learning.
- Establish a school-wide system of interim benchmarks so that responsive adjustments are made to achieve long-term stated goals. (5.3)
 - o While school leaders use Scantron Performance Series to gauge student progress, they do not set interim performance goals as benchmark indicators. The insufficiency of systems, to measure progress, reduces the school's ability to take timely action in improving strategies and plans toward achievement of long-term goals.
 - o Teachers use Acuity and Scantron Performance Series to identify strengths and weaknesses to re-group students. However, a lack of defined systems for measuring interim progress hinders staffs' ability to target instruction effectively and accurately assess progress toward goals they have set for their students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Stanley Eugene Clark	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?	X			
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?		X		
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		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		X		
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?		X		
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?	X			
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?				X
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.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?		X		
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?	X			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		X		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			X	

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?	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		
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?	X			
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?			X	

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.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
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?		X		
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?		X		
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?	X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		X		

Quality Review Scoring Key

UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed
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