

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Paula Hedbavny School**

**Elementary-Middle School 278**

**421 W 219<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10034**

**Principal: Maureen Guido**

**Dates of review: May 9 – 10, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Linda Trifon**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Paula Hedbavny School is an elementary-middle school with 509 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 83% Hispanic, 11% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 94.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Effective relationships across the school are warm, supportive, and inclusive of students, teachers, and parents resulting in a respectful environment. 1.4
  - Walk into this building and you are surrounded by student artwork masterfully displayed, conveying a positive school tone that supports the academic, social, and personal growth of teachers and students. Analysis of summative and formative data informs the school's next steps. A collaborative staff strives to ensure that the school's goals are met, and that parents, teachers, and students feel valued and take pride in being part of the school community. As a result, the school is a respectful place where teaching and learning is front and center. One parent stated, "We are all in this together for the good of the kids."
  - "Our teachers always encourage us to do better and are available after school to help us," shared a student. Whether creating a robot, a waterfall, or a memorial representing freedom of peace during the Civil War, students are interested and engaged in project based learning. During the construction phase of a peace memorial, one student shared, "The Civil War is a war that should be remembered. Many people died fighting for our freedom." When asked to describe their school, one student stated, "This is a friendly, clean environment where we learn a lot of things." Another stated, "This is a warm-hearted school."
- School leaders make informed organizational decisions that are aligned to the school's instructional goals that support teaching and learning. 1.3
  - The principal creatively marshals and generates resources to provide students with equal access to an enhanced curriculum resulting in heightened student engagement and achievement. The principal shared that literacy instruction needs to consistently include language acquisition for the school's English language learners and planning should reflect tiered instruction for students who may need additional support. Therefore, school leaders engaged the staff in a study around vocabulary enrichment, academic discourse and the use of graphic organizers to help students organize their writing. Multiple opportunities for students to engage in academic discussions throughout the day, is evident and teacher's feedback on formative assessments confirm that students are making progress as authors.
  - The principal pairs up experienced teachers with inexperienced teachers to increase instructional coherence. Teachers formally meet two periods each week to analyze student-learning outcomes to identify the subset of skills to be taught or to create common core aligned units of study. Strategic student groupings have been created by teachers who have identified higher performing students in the content area of math. Teacher's schedules are revised to engage these students in above grade-level math instruction part of the day, promoting postsecondary readiness.

- Leadership communicates to all its constituents, high expectations around teaching and learning to increase performance. 3.4
  - The Student/Parent Handbook captures the school’s mission statement, academic information, grading policy, behavioral expectations, and safety procedures, providing parents and students with necessary and important information to ensure that students come to school prepared to learn. The school’s Characteristics of Quality Instruction template, Lesson Plan template and Unit of Study template, collaboratively created with staff, exemplifies school leaders’ high expectations around teaching and learning resulting in a coherent accountability system school-wide.
  - Monthly award ceremonies provide a forum for school leaders to celebrate students’ academic success. Attendance awards and public announcements reaffirm to students and families the school’s expectations. The guidance counselor meets with students individually and in small group settings to ensure they are on track to succeed. When asked if their teachers had high expectations for their learning, one student responded, “My teacher is always telling me I can do better.” Another student stated, “Teachers always encourage us and they are available after school to help and check up on us.”
- School leaders use classroom observations and the analysis of student learning outcomes to determine areas of instructional need. 4.1
  - A collaborative and collegial environment enables school leaders, coaches and teacher peers to support one another to elevate practice and accelerate students’ performance. New teachers are paired up with teacher buddies, and their classrooms are strategically located within close proximity of each other fostering collegiality and enabling teachers to easily help each other. Moreover, teachers often meet informally to collaborate in examining student learning outcomes and plan effective lessons, ensuring that students make progress. Frequent and short-cycles of informal observations by school leaders, enables them to pinpoint areas of instructional need so that appropriate levels of assistance is provided to strengthen teacher practice.
  - Administrators use a research-based rubric to provide specific and direct support to not only determine the effectiveness of teacher practice but also address the needs of staff in a consistent manner. Feedback that captures clear expectations around pedagogy includes a continued plan of support and next steps. In one observation, after noting that the teacher needed additional support with pacing, the math coach was redirected to assist the teacher by modeling lessons to demonstrate effective techniques and strategies, resulting in the teacher’s deeper understanding of instructional moves and effective practice.
- A broad curriculum offers a wide range of learning opportunities that enrich and challenge student-learning experiences promoting postsecondary readiness. 1.1
  - The curriculum in kindergarten through grade 2 is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Teachers in every grade design and implement performance tasks, and are involved in an inquiry study of how

tasks across the grades and subject areas can be more rigorous. Teams of teachers meet with each other and the math coach to enrich lessons that ensure students' curiosity is nurtured and requires them to think creatively and independently. One parent shared, "We are all in this together for the good of the kids."

- To satisfy their thirst for learning, students self-select various topics of interest to study over a period of time. During the course of two periods each week some students are studying architecture, while others may be studying French or jazz. The seventh and eighth grade debate team traveled to suburban schools engaging in debating issues of importance. Struggling students who are involved in the debate team have excelled socially and emotionally, and this activity has enabled second language learners to acquire language skills at an accelerated pace. "PS 278 takes environmental consciousness to the next level," shared the principal. Via a small group project, "Kids created power point slides about energy conservation and presented it to the student body as well as to professors from Columbia University." As a result, students' attentiveness to their learning is heightened and academic, social and emotional growth is fostered.
- Strategic student support services and effective collaborations provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially. 4.4
  - When asked to share something about their school, one student said, "It's a safe school where no one is harassed and everyone receives equal treatment." Another student said, "The school is educational and a great learning environment." The regularly scheduled services of the guidance counselor allows her to meet with students individually and in small groups to ensure that, their social, emotional, and academic needs are addressed. School leaders and teachers who take time to celebrate and recognize student accomplishments further generate a sense of pride for parents, teachers, and students relative to their social/emotional growth.
  - Effective external relationships with community organizations such as the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, the Jewish Museum and Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, engage students in meaningful, real-world learning experiences. In an effort to raise awareness of cancer and childhood diseases, students organized a walkathon to raise money. This event has had a significant impact on all members of the school community resulting in a heightened awareness of the benefits of leading a healthy life. This school-wide effort has not only increased the amount of money raised from \$5,000 to \$14,000 for an admirable cause, but has given students the opportunity to demonstrate character while providing social and emotional support to one another. The principal shared, "Students know that to be a good citizen, you need to think about other people."

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

- Promote greater consistency in Common Core aligned instruction that includes appropriate extensions ensuring all students have access to complex texts thus meeting grade-wide expectations. 1.2

- In several classrooms, academic tasks and teaching strategies provide differentiated and enriched learning experiences for all students. Students in the middle school science class work in small groups creating and constructing models that demonstrate their understanding of concepts. In an early childhood classroom, students were strategically grouped, some engaged in hands-on literacy activities while the teacher worked with the most struggling students. However, the practice of planning for and providing specific support to struggling students and creating challenging extensions for higher performing students is not consistent across all classrooms and subjects resulting in student learning not being fully maximized to students' potential.
- Expand data-driven, goal setting procedures to include measureable interim- and long-term instructional goals for relevant student subgroups so that timely and appropriate revisions are made. 3.2
  - In some classrooms, teachers are developing systems whereby students set learning goals for themselves and measure progress toward its achievement. However, a data-driven, goal-setting process is not fully embedded across all classrooms, grades, and subject areas. When asked about learning goals, one student responded, "To do better in social studies," while another stated, "To increase a reading level." Currently, teachers do not consistently set goals or include students in developing differentiated and precise instructional goals, putting both teachers and students at a disadvantage of ensuring success.
- Provide support to teachers and teacher teams to ensure that they continually track progress of student subgroups to ensure accelerated learning. 3.3
  - At this time, school leaders insufficiently track progress of identified students and groups of students, hindering their ability to consistently make timely midcourse adjustments to resources as needed. Similarly, teacher teams do not consistently use formative assessments to track progress and adjust learning goals for student subgroups, resulting in an inability to plan precise instruction and design specific tasks to accelerate all students' progress.
- Create a transparent system for measuring progress of student subgroups towards interim benchmarks to effect timely revisions. 5.3..
  - The school analyzes student performance and teacher development data when it revises its school-wide instructional plans. As of yet, the school has not fully developed a system for measuring student progress toward interim goals for identified students and/or student subgroups. As a result, school leaders do not always have a complete and accurate picture of areas needing improvement so that relevant mid-year revisions can be made.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: The Paula Hedbavny School</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>

**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>	<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>

**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>	<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>