

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 130**

**Elementary school Q130**

**200-01 42 AVENUE  
QUEENS  
NY 11361**

**Principal: MICHELLE CONTRATTI**

**Dates of review: February 21, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 130 is an elementary school with 313 students from kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 4% Black, 12% Hispanic, 21% White, 61% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 12% 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 95.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school community is committed to fostering a safe, nurturing environment that recognizes student accomplishments and encourages their social and academic development. (1.4)
  - o The school supports academic and social emotional progress of students through promoting the theme of “belonging” within the school community. Student of the month awards focus on both academic and character development. Additionally, every school day starts ten minutes early to allow for the entire school to eat breakfast together and socialize. The principal visits the cafeteria to share school news and recognize the accomplishments of classes, individual students and staff members. This anticipated routine and modeling of positive behavior sets the tone for each day and is reinforced throughout classrooms where students take pride in and celebrate their accomplishments and those of their peers and has resulted in very few school wide and classroom behavioral incidents and high attendance rates in all grades.
  - o Student self-assessment and engagement in their learning is a school wide goal and an expectation both in and out of classrooms. Students communicate that they feel they play an active role and have a voice in their school community. Within classrooms school wide, students are expected to engage in conversations with their teachers and establish rituals and routines and a class “constitution” that encourage learning and supports individual students needs. As a result of this school culture, they are able to articulate their strengths and areas that need growth, know where to go for support and are able to demonstrate where in their work they have achieved their learning goals.
- Through the development of effective data systems and analysis of comprehensive data, school leaders have a clear understanding of student performance that informs curricular and instructional decisions throughout the school. (2.1)
  - o Because of the limited summative academic data available to create a clear representation of student performance and progress on the early childhood level, and due to the reality that many of the students in the school score within the range of levels three and four, school leaders had to develop assessment tools and practices that appropriately portrayed student learning outcomes in order to create an accurate outline of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. Through continuous evaluation and tracking of data within the Teachers College Narrative continuum, Acuity and Everyday Math assessments, teacher conferencing notes, student report cards and student portfolios and work folders, the administration aligns key skills to curricular expectations in order to identify the needs of individual and groups of students. This data sets curricula and professional development goals that have led to improved learning opportunities and increased student outcomes in all focused content areas.
- The principal’s clear vision includes the development and communication of goals that are closely aligned to data and are embraced by the school community; these goals leverage ongoing changes to curriculum that accelerate student growth. (3.1)
  - o The school’s approach to improving student outcomes includes the collaborative development of focused school level goals linked to improving students’ skill base by infusing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) into the

curriculum, providing opportunities for students to construct knowledge and create viable arguments around real life situations and for students to have tools and strategies to self assess their learning. These academic and pedagogical values are the basis by which all learning happens within the school and are continually evaluated by staff and parents during grade, content area, teacher team, school leadership team and Parent Teacher Association meetings. An example of this planning includes the focus on developing critical thinking skills of kindergarten students through carefully evaluating and modifying curriculum. The administration, teachers and parents participated in this focus to prepare for and understand the increased rigor of the CCLS and to have all constituents collaborate in preparing these students to be the first to take a state exam fully aligned to the new standards. This ongoing focus on analyzing, modifying planning and implementing key standards in curriculum reinforces the multiyear planning and preparation cycles that exist within the school to continue the high standards addressed with the school's vision and support student growth.

- The principal strategically channels resources as well as staff and student time to support the instructional needs of the school resulting in improved pedagogy and continued student achievement. (1.3)
  - o The purposeful grouping of teachers and class assignments by strengths and weaknesses in practice using feedback from classroom walkthroughs, report cards, Teachers College and Acuity assessments and teacher conferencing notes helps build instructional capacity towards meeting the school goals. Additionally, those teachers needing additional supports to address the needs of student subgroups as revealed through data are scheduled to have service providers push into their classrooms and common planning time is programmed for these teachers to collaborate to meet the needs of the students they share. Paraprofessionals and student teachers are aligned to classes in order to reduce teacher student ratio. Finally, extended day is carefully planned to align students with teachers where data, both teacher and student, reveal student needs will most appropriately be met. These organizational decisions have led to improved teacher practice, more effective collaborations, and more efficient and targeted decisions around meeting the needs of students to improve outcomes as evidenced by improvement in differentiated and scaffolded strategies to meet the needs of struggling learners revealed through observation and feedback reports and an increase in English language learner language acquisition skills demonstrated in teacher assessment data.
  - o In alignment with the instructional goals and vision of the school, the principal has channeled resources to strengthen science and social studies curricula by incorporating these cluster programs into the school-wide work around infusion of the CCLS. Additionally, a great investment has been made to maintain the arts and technology classes. Within these content areas students inherit transferrable skills and content knowledge that allow them to better engage in the interdisciplinary, real life units and tasks, such as expository and report writing around science experiments conducted in class, historical time periods and art history in grades kindergarten through third, and has led to more rigorous work products within school portfolios in all grades within the school.
- Astute observation and feedback around effective pedagogy promote thoughtful reflection to support professional growth and elevate school wide instructional practice. (4.1)
  - o The principal and assistant principal visit each classroom weekly so that all teachers receive frequent feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching beyond

formal observation structure. This year the school's pedagogical focus is around developing an active classroom learning environment and improving questioning skills using Webb's Depth of Knowledge matrix. As a result, teachers say they are engaging in classroom walkthroughs with their students to measure effectiveness of their learning environments and both novice and veteran teachers report receiving specific feedback that has helped them strengthen their questioning techniques to allow students to engage in structured opportunities to articulate their skills and engage in authentic debate.

- School leaders and teachers provide students and families with the information and tools necessary to actively participate in and effectively support the goals of the school and learning needs of students, leading to increased student progress. (2.4)
  - o The school includes families in the work they are engaged in around the CCLS. Parents attend Teachers College and Lincoln Center seminars and the school runs monthly parent workshops to update parents on curriculum, instruction and assessment through exposure to models of student work, effective use of rubrics to measure student strengths and areas of growth and classroom visits. Additionally parents take on school leadership roles such as running the school library and participating in the redesign of the school report card to reflect clearer benchmarks, to further break down skills and to provide next steps. Parents claim that this culture of community learning and active participation helps them to better guide their children towards meeting key standards and they are seeing signs of growth in their children's areas of need.
  - o The school has invested in instructional tools, such as Brain Power, that allow parents to engage with their children using both elements of play and technology. Additional supports such as these allow parents to understand and work to strengthen their child's targeted deficiency areas and to better reinforce home-school connections through a common alignment between classroom learning and home supports.

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

- Continue the work of curriculum alignment to key standards and the integration of the CCLS using student work to enhance the rigor of academic tasks and student work products. (1.1)
  - o The school curriculum currently addresses key standards around students constructing viable arguments and representing their thinking mathematically. Additionally teachers have carefully studied the citywide expectations and are infusing the CCLS through crafting integrated units within social studies and science curricula that address deconstructing elements of nonfiction text and text structure to inform informational writing skills. However, through a gap analysis, administration and teacher teams recognize the need to embed more rigorous habits and emphasize higher order skills for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners. As a result, not all classroom expectations and tasks promote deep thinking across grades and subject areas.
- Further develop teacher capacity around effective strategies of differentiation, questioning as well as lesson and task development to ensure high levels of cognitive engagement in student learning. (1.2)
  - o Teaching practices within the classrooms reflect the school's philosophy that children learn best when provided opportunities to construct knowledge through socially active learning and expression through the development of writing skills

in a variety of genres. Within all classrooms, teachers engage students in active thinking and learning activities such as “stop and jot” and through open-ended debatable questions. Additionally, student dialogue with both teachers and peers is part of lesson expectations making students active participants in classroom discussions. However, at this time, not all classrooms display strategies of purposeful entry points aligned to individual student needs and questioning strategies, task expectations and classroom routines in some rooms were not always structured to address targeted supports and extensions. As a result, instructional strategies and classroom tasks do not always leverage work products that promote levels of thinking aligned to students’ level of cognitive rigor leading to general levels of thinking and participation for some students.

- Refine assessments and rubrics to ensure that students and teachers can more accurately evaluate and better guide next steps for needed improvements in student achievement. (2.2)
  - o School leaders and staff consistently explore assessment tools used to measure student growth along the curricula continuum of grade expectations. Currently they are using Teachers College, Everyday Math and teacher generated assessments such as a math problem of the week, conferencing notes and student work samples to measure student outcomes. However, at this time and with the infusion of the CCLS and the reality that many of their students’ ability levels fall within the range of low to high level three, teachers are currently working to appropriately gauge how their assessments and rubrics inform their instructional next steps around aligning student strengths and weakness to the rigor of the CCLS and whether or not they accurately identify actionable feedback and next steps for individual or student subgroups. Because this work is still developing, clear portraits of where students are achieving mastery in terms of the CCLS are not yet complete and, as a result, feedback is not as meaningful and strategic as it could optimally be.
- Formalize periodic check points to evaluate professional collaborations and provide ongoing support that ensures timely adjustments as needed to build school wide capacity through team and teacher leadership. (5.4)
  - o At this time, the administration engages in informal conversations and periodic visits to monitor the work of teacher teams and make recommendations regarding their work. However, there is no formalized administrative or teacher leader feedback process to build coherence within the school, leading to a lack of alignment across teams and inconsistencies within teams around the rigor of their teacher collaborations and the instruction evidenced in their classroom, which in turn limits teacher capacity to move their inquiry work forward.
  - o The principal has a select group of teacher leaders who attend the Teachers College teacher leadership initiative seminars and who participate in network professional development to turnkey to the staff. Additionally, each teacher team has a teacher leader to monitor and support the work of the teams. However, currently these teachers do not meet with leadership on a regular basis to gauge the effectiveness of their work and to ensure it is aligned to school goals limiting teacher leadership capacity and their role in school decision making around student learning consistently across the school.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 130	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
<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>	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
<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>	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
<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>	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**

<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>
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