

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Leonard Dunkly Elementary School

K016

**157 Wilson Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Mary Renny

Dates of review: March 14 - 15, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P. S. 16 Leonard Dunkley is an elementary school with 291 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 28% Black, 70% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration effectively uses a research based teaching framework to support teacher development with feedback leading to enhanced pedagogy and improved student performance. (4.1)
 - The principal and the assistant principal regularly visit classrooms, conduct formal and informal observations and systematically provide all teachers with actionable, instructional feedback that is guided by the Danielson's framework for teaching, thus offering on-going support for developing common professional language and understanding of the school's expectations for effective teaching. Frequent cycles of classroom observations, shared with teachers electronically, specifically and cohesively target questioning, student time on tasks and teacher wait time. Furthermore, the administrators continuously include the review of student work and achievement data in their feedback conferences with clear actionable next steps. Several teachers said that instant and specific feedback ensures that they are reflective of their teaching practice and they are now asking more open-ended questions. Furthermore, the trends identified across observations are effectively used to design professional development in higher order questioning that is successfully planned by the assistant principal who actively partners with the principal in leading teacher development. In addition, recommendations from observations guide school wide and specifically targeted professional development, thus meeting the specific needs of individual teachers. Additionally, the principal made several strategic decisions this year to improve student achievement and promote faculty leadership. For example, several teachers were assigned to different grade levels for this school year based on their expertise and success and to better service groups of students as evidenced in programming of special education teachers and academic intervention providers. Similarly, the principal identified instructional leads for literacy and math who share their professional practice with their colleagues and their classrooms serve as lab sites for the in-house professional development. As a result, teachers have demonstrated improvement of their pedagogy in questioning and assessment and student time on task increased to 80% across all classrooms as evidenced by trend analysis from the data system used for monitoring by the administration. In addition, resulting from increased time on task, students improved their writing across grade levels, at least one level on rubric-based scores on final work products in student folders.
- The school upholds an inclusive culture of mutual respect and trust, supportive of student voice resulting in the academic and personal growth of students. (1.4)
 - The school tone and culture, as observed throughout classrooms and hallways, are exceptionally respectful and inclusive. Parents, students and staff state feeling safe, welcome and respected. The entire school community is actively engaged in the Leader in Me program that is purposefully implemented across grade levels in support of maintaining

the trusting and safe environment. Student leaders serve as peer mediators and everyone, including a safety officer and school support staff, follow the guidelines for 7 Habits of Highly Effective People that are embedded in the daily curriculum and lessons conducted during commonly scheduled morning meetings held in individual classrooms, thus providing opportunities for students to practice effective academic and personal behaviors. Additionally, student interviews revealed that peer mediators have been taught and implemented strategies for problem solving that guide their decision-making. The school also encourages students to express their voice and opinions. For example, several school policies concerning students, such as fairness in group and individual consequences, were brought by classroom leaders to the principal's attention and changes to consequences were made as a result. Moreover, six students identified for most infractions last year were given leadership opportunities and now are part of the peer mediation team. Additionally, the school offers ongoing professional development for all staff members and workshops for parents based on the Leader in Me theory of action that results in progress toward school goals and is evidenced by structures such as a vertical team called The Lighthouse, or a CARE team, inclusive of guidance counselors, two school psychologists, and intervention and special education teachers. These teams and personnel offer ongoing support and mentoring for identified groups of students based on discussed academic and social emotional needs. Moreover, parents say that teachers have effective strategies to help students solve their problems. As a result, the number of student infractions dropped dramatically as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Report System (OORS) showing a decrease of 59% as compared to last year.

- School leaders effectively communicate and embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, successfully partnering with teachers and families to prepare all students for the demands of future college and careers. (3.4)
 - The principal shares her goals with all teachers and speaks about high expectations for teaching and learning, guided by the Danielson's framework, during faculty and grade level meetings. Furthermore, she collects student work on a weekly basis and gives teachers and students feedback that targets instructional expectations. Additionally, the administrators effectively provide all teachers with instant feedback related to the school's expectation to increase student time on task and support them with professional development and training in the Habits of Mind and classroom environment, thus partnering with them in creating a culture of mutual accountability for student success. Moreover, the administration, in collaboration with the support network, offers a multitude of training opportunities for teachers in the understanding and implementation of effective teaching strategies such as wait time when questioning students. As a result, student stamina and problem solving skills increased as evidenced by student performance in class and on end of unit assessments.
 - The school includes families in dialogue about academic and behavioral expectations. Multiple parent workshops and newsletters provide families with opportunities to learn about grade level benchmarks, problem solving, and understanding the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The principal meets with individual parents

to explain college readiness while the parent coordinator facilitates workshops and communiqués around grade level benchmarks such as periodic assessments in Acuity. Families also receive training in how to access additional resources on the New York State website called engageNY. Additionally, the principal holds teachers accountable for ongoing school-home contact and monitors its frequency. Parents say that they have opportunities to communicate with teachers in various ways. For example, they can write questions and comments in a child's notebook related to student work and achievement. Furthermore, they are able to support their children with strategies they learned at workshops or those that are provided along with curriculum documents and parent-teacher conferences such as solving math problems in multiple ways. As a result, all families speak highly of being well-informed about the school expectations and are given opportunities and resources to partner with the school, thus supporting all students in their work toward college and career readiness.

- Across classrooms teachers align common assessments with the key standards and use the results to adjust curriculum and instruction to increase student progress toward goals. (2.2)
 - All teachers use 4 point standards-based rubrics to assess student work in math and writing. Weekly and unit tests are aligned with the CCLS in literacy and math and their results are included in the school's grading policy. The Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) and Acuity are utilized for monitoring performance and progress, and to create common periodic assessments in upper grades. The principal collects and analyzes student work and assessment results and gives teachers and students feedback that is specific and inclusive of teaching and learning strategies. For example, after reviewing the results of a math unit, the principal addressed the grading policy and recommended writing diagrams. As a result, all children across the grades receive timely feedback on their work and all teachers are supported with actionable feedback. Likewise, teacher teams and the administration use unit pre-assessment evaluation to determine teaching points, skills, and strategies that have to be taught within an instructional unit of study, thus using student work for planning and preparation of lessons. Moreover, teacher teams adjust the school's reading program by supplementing it with more complex texts, and by adding skills and strategy lessons. In math they supplement the Go Math curriculum with rigorous performance tasks. Additionally, teachers periodically administer Fountas and Pinnell running records to monitor student progress toward goals in reading resulting in student growth in reading comprehension as evidenced by class data binders. Furthermore, students set individual goals in English language arts (ELA) and math, based on their academic performance as evidenced by teacher conference notes, collected data and interviews with the students. Students and teachers list strategies such as context clues or highlighting text to further their work toward goals. As a result, students and teachers use assessment results to monitor academic progress and these practices result in instructional adjustments leading to meeting all learners' needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that academic tasks across content areas include well planned supports and extensions for all learners so that they are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - Teachers implement units of study from the Treasures program in reading and the writers' workshop following the Teachers' College curriculum the school reintroduced this year. In addition the school increased reading informational text to 75% and chose text complexity, compare and contrast two texts, and building academic vocabulary as key standards in literacy in alignment with the CCLS. Furthermore, the school incorporates social studies and science units in its literacy curriculum. In addition, teachers use the Common Core library available on the Department of Education website to plan and implement instructional units of study with academic tasks embedded. In math, the school implements the Go Math curriculum and supplements it with student performance tasks from the Exemplars, a standards-based, hands-on assessment and instruction program. A review of curriculum artifacts revealed that teachers are beginning to plan for higher order skills and for flexible groups to support diverse learners. However, the recent reintroduction of the writers' workshop and the alignment of units with the CCLS have not yet yielded the desired outcomes in planning for supports and extensions for English language learners, special education students or high achievers. Similarly, as observed in classroom visits, although some teachers use higher order questioning techniques and teaching points to promote development of rigorous habits, these practices are not yet implemented school-wide. As a result, many learners are provided with cognitively engaging and challenging tasks as outlined in the CCLS, but some students are limited in their acceleration of achievement.

- Improve instructional practices across classrooms to ensure that diverse students are consistently provided with multiple opportunities to access curriculum and demonstrate higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - The administration has provided professional development in designing open-ended and text-based questions, and in the use of different scaffolding strategies to build teacher capacity in developing multiple entry points to engage students in discussions, following the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and the Danielson's framework for teaching. In most classes, teachers are beginning to focus on higher order skills by including them in their teaching points and in their questions, but in some classrooms questioning techniques are of low level. Similarly, embracing a developing school belief around student engagement, teachers in most classes are beginning to implement instructional shifts such as student discussions about tasks in flexible groups. Some lessons, however, are still predominantly teacher-centered with all students working on the same problem. While some scaffolding strategies for accessing curriculum such as a picture walk, the use of manipulatives or graphic organizers were evident, teachers are yet to embed multiple entry points into instruction for some students to be able to access rigorous materials and tasks. Similarly, teachers' developing attempts to raise the level of higher order thinking skills are sometimes limited to questioning during a mini-lesson, thus hindering student opportunities to discuss, extend and take ownership of their learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Leonard Dunkly Elementary PS 16	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 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to 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 support 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 them?				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 students' 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 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
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