

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Roy H. Mann

K078

**1420 East 68th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11234**

Principal: Anthony Cusumano

Dates of review: May 29-30, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Roy H. Mann is an intermediate school with 1,024 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 75% Black, 8% Hispanic, 13% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 19% 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 94.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers scaffold instruction so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level, including effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and student participation, which extends learning. (1.2)
 - Teacher practice, across grades and subject areas, hold students to high expectations, engaging them in discourse through high-level questioning, and providing multiple entry points into the curricula so that all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks. Across classrooms, strategies and tasks infuse high-level questioning and discussions that build on prior knowledge, immerse students in academic vocabulary, and build on students' strengths. Students eloquently articulate their understanding using grade appropriate and content-specific academic language, reflect on their learning with peers, or explain their work to the class collaboratively with peers, which have led to ownership of classroom discourse. For example, in a mixed-ability sixth grade math class, the teacher asked the students to think about how phone companies look at the amount of data teens send, which led the students to express the purposes of using data. They elicited how they are used for identifying trends and then worked with their peers to create a real-world problem with a data set using a minimum of six numbers with an inter-quartile range of 15 to construct their own box plots and calculate measures of variation. They then shared their strategies and solutions with the class, emulating a math "congress," in which they asked and responded to high-level questions posed by their fellow students, such as "How do these statistics relate to real life?" In an eighth grade English language arts (ELA) integrated co-teaching class, the students were required to craft opposing persuasive arguments using non-fiction articles entitled: "What in the Name of High School Football?" and "Are High School Sports Good for Kids?" to analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation. Using a task-specific rubric, highlighters, and graphic organizers, the students, in their respective data-based groups, prepared their collective stance, used text evidence to support their claims, and shared their arguments with their peers, who were then afforded opportunities to question the presenters or dispute their fellow classmates' assertions. Consequently, these types of project-based learning activities trigger student thinking about what they are going to learn, how they will be expected to demonstrate their learning, and their work products and discussions reflect high levels of cognitive engagement and participation, which has led to deep critical thinking supported by inferential or textual evidence, performance tasks and projects, which is evidenced in student folders. Data comparing fall and spring Acuity results reveal increases in students performing at levels 3 and 4 in ELA and math. There was a 7% gain of all grade 6 students performing at levels 3 and 4 in math and a 10% gain of all grade 7 students in ELA.
- The principal, with a strong, focused leadership, makes strategic organizational decisions around schedules and programs that are aligned to the school's instructional goals, for continual improvements in learning for all students. (1.3)

- The principal has scheduled all teachers to meet regularly once per week to engage in inquiry work and delve deeply into ways to improve instruction and immerse students in rigorous learning tasks. In addition, he has ensured that all students, including SWDs and ELLs, are taught by content area specialists. This structure assures the inclusion of teachers of SWDs to participate in content area inquiry teams and regularly collaborate with peers to improve professional practice. In addition, diverse student learners are afforded extra support to enable them to meet grade-level benchmarks and promotion criteria through the school's establishment of a 90-minute after school tutorial program that takes place Monday through Thursday and focuses on CCLS, with a particular target on writing arguments and using text evidence to support their positions and constructing viable arguments and models in ELA and math, respectively. The school has established an 8-week 'Super Saturday' academic program in preparation for the standardized ELA and math exams, as well as an after school promotional 'Success Academy' for eighth graders who need support with class work and a 'Success Promotion Academy' in which students receive assistance with exit projects in ELA, math, French, science, social studies, and research based projects, taught by an eighth grade content area teacher. Furthermore, accelerated students are afforded the opportunity to participate in after school programs for living environment, earth science Regents preparatory classes, a French proficiency class once a week for 90 minutes, and an Integrated Algebra class that meets 2 hours per week in a series of 9 sessions. The school has applied for a grant from the NYSED for 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs for which they would receive \$450,000 for a period of three years to enable them to provide funding for academic enrichment, youth development activities, professional development, family literacy workshops that include topics such as High School application process, raising a teenager, peer pressure, test preparation, navigating ARIS parent link, along with health and nutrition. As a result of these academic programs, interventions and teams of teachers' shared accountability for all learners, student work products are showing progress in closing the achievement gap for cohorts of students.
- School leaders use a uniform protocol for observations aligned to a research-based teaching framework, which provides a common lens for appraising teaching practices to improve student outcomes and professional growth. (4.1)
 - The administrative team consistently employs the use of Danielson's research-based teaching framework to communicate clear expectations for teacher practice and provides actionable feedback from classroom observations that makes explicit connections and ensures the clarity of expectations around standardized teacher practice. They schedule their formal and informal observations for teachers during their weekly instructional cabinet meetings and ensure that they observe seasoned teachers at least once formally and two to four times per year informally and, for those teachers new to the profession, at least three times a year formally and three to six times informally. The principal and assistant principals then share feedback sheets with teachers on which they capture observed instructional strategies, effective instructional practices, desired outcomes, and next steps. For example, a review of school leaders' observation reports reveal a clear connection to pedagogy and a consistent approach to noting key aspects of the instructional strategies observed and specific next steps such as "work on wait time" after posing questions' and use the "ask-don't-tell" questioning model. The feedback supports adult learning and development in the areas of

using questioning and discussion techniques, planning coherent instruction, and using assessments, and enables teachers to provide a clear and cogent direction for elevating instructional practice school wide and improving student achievement. As a result of this actionable feedback to teachers, relevant to improving their instructional practice, teachers have become self-reflective and use feedback as a way to adjust their instructional practice, as evidenced by a 32% increase in their effectiveness, gauged by the teaching framework, in the questioning and discussion techniques competency and students' use of critical thinking during discussions.

- The principal communicates high academic expectations to the staff, families and students, to support all learners with preparation for college and career readiness skills. (3.4)
 - The principal, upon taking the lead of the school, has conveyed well-defined, comprehensible, and transparent expectations around instruction and parent involvement and communicates these expectations to all staff and families, with supports to prepare all students with college and career readiness skills. He articulates these expectations at faculty conferences, Parent Association meetings, departmental meetings, School Leadership Team meetings, and voluntary “lunch and learn” sessions facilitated by assistant principals and teachers. In addition, the school leaders provide training to support high standards in instruction. For example, they have trained the staff on CCLS, the Danielson teaching framework, effective questioning to promote critical thinking and academic rigor, including Depth-of-Knowledge levels in the content areas, and using unit assessments to support students' needs. Additionally, teachers and school leaders have attended training provided by the Network, such as learning specific strategies for adapting instruction for ELLs to increase student engagement and learning potential and using fiction and nonfiction text to learn about the intersection of complexity and skills. The principal also regularly sends memos to staff regarding his expectations of fidelity of implementation of the training received, as well as requirements for timely displays of rigorous student work products inside and outside of classrooms, replete with specific comments and actionable feedback to students to help them advance to higher levels. Students stated that their teachers' comments help them to recognize their potential, push them to higher levels, and prepare them for their future. One student expressed how his teacher takes him on the side and tells him when to, ‘step it up.’ Another stated that what helps him do well is when he ‘gets good feedback from his teachers’ The students also expressed that their “teachers create tasks just like in the real world” and they are constantly expected to analyze texts, research, and support their claims with text-based evidence. Additionally, the principal's credo, “It's all about creating,” is embedded across the school. This is illustrated by the robust cross-curricular projects across grades and classrooms. Moreover, three eighth grade students won a New York City History Day award for their group exhibit entitled, *Dancing in the Streets: Motown and the Rise of Civil Rights*. Three students received honorable mention in the Ezra Jack Keates bookmaking competition, and, two eighth-grade students and one seventh-grade student won first, second, and third place in the District wide Science fair with their projects on *Alternative Energy*, *Tooth Decay*, and *Home Insulation*, respectively. Along with his administrative cabinet, the principal has established school wide grading, attendance, and discipline policies, and has disseminated this information via letters and memos, email communiqués, School Messenger, and personal phone calls to parents. In addition, the Parent Coordinator hosts various

workshops to parents throughout the year to help them support their children at home, including the CCLS, standardized testing, ARIS, High School application process and Respect for All. The school also utilizes Engrade, an online data management and grading system, which enables parents to log in at any time, to gain access to their child's grade page for any class or teacher, in order to support learning at home. Furthermore, there has been a 39% increase in attendance at parent meetings since the inception of the new principal. As a result, teachers across the grades, as well as parents, have developed a shared conception of what they are expected to accomplish in meeting high standards to support all students in meeting college and career readiness skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine curricula and tasks in order to offer opportunities for the lowest and highest achievers in order to engage them in rigorous learning experiences that result in increasing levels of achievement. (1.1)
 - The school uses curriculum maps that support rigorous habits, higher order skills, and implement the integration of CCLS-aligned lessons in all subject areas. The maps, which are continuously updated, include the standards such as determining central ideas or themes of a text and writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. In addition, the maps include enduring understandings such as 'an argument is not just simply stating your side, but also recognizing the opposing sides with essential questions,' key vocabulary terms, assessments, activities, and resources. For the seventh grade ELA curriculum map, a conscientious group of teachers created a performance based task, which was based on the concept of intellectual property and included 'step back' questions as a formative assessment such as requiring the students to indicate the steps taken to complete the task and evaluate the tasks by identifying what they found easy and challenging about the task. However, curriculum maps do not yet consistently use student work and pre and post data to refine units of study and tasks that meet the needs of all students, particularly high achievers. Consequently, opportunities to collaboratively plan and adjust curricula and tasks that reflect gaps in students' learning and extensions for some learners are limited.
- Extend the strategic use of assessments and analysis of data in all content areas to inform goal setting and make ongoing adjustments to planning and instruction to ensure that progress is consistently made for all groups of students. (2.2)
 - All classroom teachers maintain data binders, which include formative assessments and work products for the students in their respective classes and they regularly discuss student work at teacher inquiry team meetings. They also use a uniform writing rubric across the school. However, the use of common formative assessments and ongoing classroom checks for student understanding, such as systemic entry and exit slips, and granularly analyzing student data to confirm mastery of standards and identify gaps in learning, are not yet pervasive across all classrooms. As a result, grade wide trends and patterns are not easily discernible and opportunities for teachers to make immediate and effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs, including the school's relevant subgroups and high-level learners, are hampered.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Roy H. Mann	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