

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Henry Longfellow School

Elementary-K094

**5010 6th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Janette Caban

Dates of review: October 24 - 25, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 94, The Henry Longfellow School is an elementary school with 1364 students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 0.6% Black, 45.6% Hispanic, 3.4% White, and 50.2% Asian students. The student body includes 55.4% English language learners and 6.2% special education students. Boys account for 49.3% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50.7%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.88%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration effectively uses a research based framework to identify teacher needs, provide targeted feedback, and create professional development plans that enhance teacher development and student growth. (4.1)
 - The school's targeted use of a research based framework forms the underpinning of all teacher support, especially for the seventeen newly hired teachers this school year. Short frequent cycles of observations provide teachers with immediate feedback through one to one conversations with administrators as well as written feedback. Professional development plans are then developed for all teachers and implemented by coaches, lead teachers, consultants and network personnel. Special care is taken to ensure that new teachers are provided with mentors. Additionally, they are supported by consultant training in the Teachers' College balanced literacy approach. Follow up observations target identified needs to ensure that they are addressed and professional growth is monitored to ensure that progress is seen. In addition, a needs assessment survey was utilized to help develop teacher goals in line with the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, teachers share universal expectations, such as teacher conferencing and targeted instruction in academic vocabulary, and instructional protocols are consistently implemented school wide, to positively impact staff and student growth.
- The school has created a culture of trust and respect within its highly diverse community that underscores its belief in the ability of students to succeed and a commitment to raising levels of achievement. (1.4)
 - Beginning with the school wide concept that every classroom is a safe and respectful environment that enables teachers to consistently interact positively with students, the school utilizes all members of the faculty to support student growth. Reading reform teachers in the early childhood grades and Response to Intervention teachers with bilingual or English as a Second language certification provide academic and social-emotional support for students. For example a special schedule was devised and implemented for a student, to address his inability to stay in a class for the whole day, and permit him to receive content area instruction, one to one, from out of classroom support personnel. Furthermore, student chat groups with the guidance counselor and other staff, during lunch enable students to bond with adults in the building. Consequently, though the school is incredibly large, (nearly 1500 on register) students are well known to adults who team up to meet their learning needs, and students attend school regularly, as evidenced by an attendance rate of over 96%.
 - Reflecting on the data from state assessments that indicated significant declines in English language arts and mathematics proficiency for current grade five students, and concerns that students did not have sufficiently in-depth writing and problem solving skills to support a smooth transition to middle school, the school departmentalized fifth grade for the first time this year. Professional

development that targets individualized content support for each teacher and fosters reflections on Common Core Learning Standards across grades, has provided a foundation for this change. This has enabled teachers to more profoundly focus their individual content area strengths to help students engage more deeply in developing content area knowledge and skills. Further, parental outreach in three languages (English, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese) has enabled parents to support their children in this new endeavor. As a result, students use academic vocabulary consistently and teachers indicate that though it is early in the year, student achievement, as measured by rubric driven analyses of students' written responses to literature, has improved.

- School leaders embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, focusing on college and career readiness, in alignment with the citywide expectations, to raise levels of success for all constituents. (3.4)
 - The school's expectation of professionalism begins with a new teacher academy for a week, prior to the beginning of the school year. Administrators use weekly grade meetings and monthly professional development sessions and one to one conferences with all teachers, to clearly communicate expectations and accountability standards, aligned to the research based teaching framework. Professional development aligned with short frequent cycles of observations and effective feedback and support, further enhances this transparency. Hence teachers are fully cognizant of and accountable for the school wide beliefs, protocols and key standards, such as academic vocabulary and writing, which are addressed in every classroom.
 - In order to develop a culture of college and career readiness, the school fosters partnerships with community organizations. For example, the school hosted a "College Month," with fifth grade students and parents attending workshops and visiting New York University. Staff members from Banco Popular conducted a bilingual workshop on how to save and fund college and Health Plus representatives presented a workshop on careers in the health fields. Staff members share information about their own colleges, place college memorabilia in their rooms and talk to students and families about college experiences. These activities allow parents and students to see members of their own community who are successful professionals, learn about college and career readiness, and recognize the possibilities for their own success. These experiences, combined with curriculum nights that focus on Common Core Learning Standards and target goals carried by students on key rings and updated monthly, have raised expectations for student achievement school wide.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the implementation and planning of academic tasks across all grades and content areas to ensure that students are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
 - The school has aligned its curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the citywide instructional expectations. Curriculum maps reflect the integration of CCLS units and academic vocabulary and improved writing skills are the key standards planned for and implemented uniformly, to support the

learning needs of the predominantly English language learner and former English language learner population. All students utilize the writing genres of the writer's workshop, with a current unit on realistic fiction. However, though these standards are targeted school wide and planned for at teacher team meetings, rigorous tasks that tap into higher order skills are not evident in all classrooms or across all content areas for all students. As a result, the taught curriculum is not yet consistently providing the challenge that is the aim of the CCLS, and student achievement is hindered, as not all students are cognitively engaged.

- Enhance instructional practices to guarantee a range of entry points to rigorous learning that challenges all students to produce meaningful work. (1.2)
 - Teaching strategies, including small group and individualized, differentiated instruction reflect the school's beliefs about how students learn best and are evident in all classrooms. Teachers routinely conference with students and model how to complete tasks. However, teacher modeling and tasks do not always provide the appropriate scaffolds that enable all students to access curricula and develop strong thinking skills. For the most part, tasks are not challenging and student discussions are not driven by higher order teacher questioning. For example, in one classroom, work in academic vocabulary required students to write the words five times each and in sentences. In another classroom, the model for realistic fiction was a fable. Consequently, students demonstrate uneven levels of thinking and student work products are not consistently indicative of challenging tasks.
- Improve feedback from assessments to provide teachers and students with a clear understanding of next steps to address needs and improve achievement. (2.2)
 - The school uses targeted assessments aligned to the Readers and Writers Workshop. Students are assessed for their Fountas and Pinnell levels three times a year and teachers use and create rubrics that are aligned to classroom assignments. Additionally, teachers conference with students to promote ongoing assessment. However, the use of note taking from these conferences and the depth of reflection on the data gathered, vary from classroom to classroom. For example in some classrooms, teachers utilize a self-developed conference tool to record student progress and target student needs while in other classrooms, teachers monitor student activity without taking any notes. Further, teacher comments on student work do not specify next steps and, in some cases, consists of only a check indicating that the work was done. Therefore, students lack feedback that identifies next steps for achieving learning goals.
 - Teachers routinely circulate during guided reading and writing as well as work in small groups, providing support and conferencing with students. However, ongoing checks for understanding, though seen in some classrooms, are not yet firmly embedded school wide. Student self assessment is somewhat limited and at both large and small student meetings, the majority of students commented that "I know I am doing well when the teacher tells me I am." As a result, teachers do not adjust instruction frequently enough to ensure that all students' needs are met in a timely manner.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: The Henry Longfellow School | 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 |