

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Dumont School**

**School 19K174**

**574 Dumont Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Ingrid Mason**

**Dates of review: October 24 - 25, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Sara Carvajal**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Dumont School is an elementary-middle school with 473 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 67% Black, 30% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 14% 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 92.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is underdeveloped.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- All school constituents are working collaboratively towards the safety and well-being of students so that a productive learning environment exists for adults and students, thereby moving the instructional agenda. 1.4
  - This year, the school has implemented several new initiatives, including interim progress reports and after-school extracurricular programs, including karate, to guide students steadily with developing a sense of self-discipline, although several students continue to feel that the cafeteria environment during lunchtime requires much more work to curtail the food throwing, foul language and spitting that occasionally occurs. Also, the vast majority of older students feel confident that they have ongoing access to one or two adults in the building when a need arises to discuss an issue that derails their focus or inhibits their learning. In particular, students consistently laud the availability of the school guidance counselor, who provides one-on-one support at the students' request. Students attribute an emerging sense of trust in the building, and the resulting decrease in student fights, to the great investment of individualized attention provided through this key school resource.
- Programming at the school positions teachers to collaborate regularly so that they own opportunities to plan for students to undergo more complex learning experiences. 1.3
  - Teachers' schedules strategically allow for sharing of at least one official common period each week to plan curriculum vis-à-vis the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Classroom and enrichment teachers take this steady opportunity to discuss curriculum and instruction in alignment with the school's vision to improve teacher practice and increase the quality of student work, but have not yet begun to look at student work samples. Consequently, the discussions of teacher teams occasionally focus on the inconsistencies in the alignment of the CCLS expectations and the school's current units of study and instructional practices.
- The school community has generated a short list of goals with the intention of shifting the academic and personal behaviors of students, thereby increasing their awareness of college and career readiness. 3.1
  - Although it is not yet clear what comprehensive set of data supported the principal in prioritizing student needs, the principal readily articulates that, in general, the English language learner population has doubled over the last two years and that middle school students recently demonstrate the lowest growth percentiles in the school. In addition, the school leader acknowledges that the limited experience of novice teachers resulted in declined student outcomes on the most recent State assessments. These are among the cursory observations that have prompted the principal to develop a series of school-wide goals, focusing on refining curriculum and instruction. Thus, through a tiered professional development plan, which includes individualized support for new and

struggling teachers, the school expects to equip staff so that they, in turn, effectively prepare students for the future demands of college and career readiness.

- Although there exists a slight undercurrent sentiment that teachers are unable to make serious academic suggestions to the principal, administrators often enlist teacher and parent leaders input in school-wide decision-making discussions during monthly school leadership team meetings. As a result, the community's sense of commitment is on an evolving trajectory to significantly impact academic change across the school.

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

- Improve unit planning to include a menu of grade-appropriate strategies and approaches suitable for students with disabilities and English language learners, resulting in academic and personal success. 1.1
  - Administrators and staff members state emphatically that the school employs an effective backward-planning model to ensure a rigorous, standards-driven curriculum across subject areas. At this time, however, it is not evident that the units of study have been structured to address the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Whereas the method of backward planning is, in fact, being used during teacher team meetings, the instructional tasks which have been generated demonstrate a great dependence on copied worksheets and low-level, linear questioning. Units also suggest minimal inclusion of visual aids, multimedia technology resources, and small-group strategy lessons for struggling students. As a result, teachers do not benefit from a list of easily accessible instructional supports and choices in the written curriculum, and consequently, they are not prepared to meet students' varying learning needs and challenge them accordingly.
- Embed rigor across classrooms so that multiple critical thinking opportunities are part of the daily learning experiences of all students, resulting in higher and consistent cognitive engagement and authentic writing. 1.2
  - At this time, a great deal of students' learning experiences consists of the completion of worksheets during independent work time. The implementation of planned units across the school inconsistently reflect instructional shifts to offer students ample opportunity for grappling with academic challenges via discussion and debate between peers. Real life application of content is also absent from most lessons. As a result, there are many missed opportunities to maximize students' time on task with authentic writing products and performance-based projects that build camaraderie, stamina, and deep understanding of content. Consequently, many students appear uninterested and unengaged with the lessons at hand and are hindered in their academic progress.
- Develop consistency in the use of interim assessments to drive adjustments to classroom instruction, thereby meeting the needs of all students, including advanced students. 2.2

- The school has made a great financial investment in a new interim assessment system that has the potential to support teachers across all grades with gauging student achievement in English language arts and math over time. In addition, teachers throughout the school employ a variety of other assessment measures, such as one-on-one conferencing, rubric grading, classroom performance tasks and homework assignments. However, at this time, the school does not yet demonstrate consistency in the way these assorted data streams are used by individual teachers and teacher teams to develop comprehensive portraits of students. As a result, there exist grave deficiencies in the way that teachers across the school strategically group, set meaningful goals and make timely adjustments to the delivery of instruction for targeted students who either struggle academically or demonstrate the potential to exceed the standards. Consequently, many students across grades, including students with disabilities and English language learners, exhibit uneven levels of engagement during classroom instruction.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Dumont School					UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>					X			
Instructional Core								
To what extent does the school regularly...					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								
To what extent does the school ...					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								
To what extent does the school ...					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 <b>inquiry approach</b> 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	