

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The SEALL Academy

20K180

**5601 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Gary Williams

Dates of review: January 29-30th, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S./I.S.180 is an elementary/intermediate school with 1,166 students from Pre K through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% Black, 22% Hispanic, 36% White, and 39% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 96.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal strategically aligns hiring practices and scheduling to support the school's instructional goals, which results in improved student achievement. (1.3)
 - The use of staff and student time is structured so that teams have regular meetings two to three times a week to plan curriculum aligning the school's goals with the Chancellor's Instructional Expectations (CIE) and to improve teacher practice. All school support providers, special education teachers and English as second language (ESL) teachers, participate in meetings with teams in which they service the same students. Together they create instructional supports and scaffolds for general education teachers such as using videos and pictures to support language development for ESL students. This results in providing multiple entry points for all students to reach CCLS, as evidenced by more challenging tasks and engagement for all students.
 - The principal has hired an assistant principal in charge of Special Education who provides much needed support for the citywide special education reform, based on his extensive background in special education. Establishing a strong relationship with the District 75 School housed in the building, the assistant principal not only provides essential professional development, such as training all teachers in the Hess Depth of Knowledge Matrix used during all lessons, but also has been instrumental in pushing the movement of 14.01% of students with disabilities (SWD's) out of self-contained classes, into least restrictive environments. This has resulted in an increase in the performance of SWD's from 11.3% to 16.3% as reflected in the 2011-2012 English language arts State data. In math, students moved from 33.6% to 36.6% representing an increase of 3%.
- The school has established a culture of learning that maintains mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and social growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The assistant principal in charge of operations, the coordinator of student activities and two full time deans, ensure that all students in the building are supported emotionally and socially, resulting in an excellent tone throughout the building. The school *Enrichment Model* provides all students a choice in selecting the activities they are interested in, which provides them a voice through student leadership, in establishing a safe and respectful school environment. The *Respect For All Pledge* is the basis for all student discussions at the school. In addition, the school celebrates student successes for civic contributions, academic achievements, and personal successes. The success of these efforts is evidenced by a decrease in overall student suspensions from 64 last year at this time to 29 this year for all sub groups, which supports an inclusive culture.
 - The coordinator of student activities, along with the family worker,

reach out to parents to develop a plan of action such as daily monitoring of behavior and attendance, where students are experiencing difficulties or have poor attendance. The assistant principal meets weekly with the deans and the school psychologist to discuss individual student concerns. Specific school support teachers such as the guidance counselors are invited to these meetings as needed. They work collaboratively to develop a specific behavioral strategy plan for individual students, which are part of the overall Response to Intervention (RtI) philosophy. The parents are invited to the school to review individual plans and sign a contract in support of the plan, thus resulting in a strong school home connection. Consequently, all students are supported in developing positive social-emotional interventions to support their academic progress.

- School leaders and staff align assessments to curricula, using ongoing assessments and grading practices to analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions to increase outcomes. (2.2)
 - The school is informed by a number of assessments throughout the grades. In grades K-5, the continuation of the literacy program, Reading Streets, allows staff to analyze baseline and benchmark scores in conjunction with Teacher's College Running records which are used to establish inquiry focus and drive individualized and targeted instruction. Teachers use a color coded system to flexibly group and differentiate instruction which is based on three levels for both literacy and mathematics. Color coding creates flexible grouping after each unit of study in six week cycles. In grades Pre-K through eight, teachers have created a Common Core assessment based on Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) RI1 and RI6 to assess student progress with respect to the key standard. This results in not only the entire school monitoring progress, but affords staff the opportunity to set goals with measurable benchmarks for every student.
 - Rubrics and celebrations of student work reflect the goal setting process at the classroom and individual student level. *Monitoring for Results* portfolios are created to analyze the growth of independent reading levels for each child throughout the academic year. In addition, *Engrade* provides a means for classroom teachers and support providers to track the progress of students in content areas, as well as providing students with the ability to track progress on their own or with their parents in order to set their next goals. Students' academic growth is tracked using formative data, such as unit tests and work samples to ensure that instruction is rigorous as reflected in classroom level data and to inform adjustments to instruction. A selected conversion chart from a previous State exam, chosen because of its high expectations and cutoff scores is used for two years to measure rigor as a framework for discussing expectations, grading rubrics and creation of classroom assessments. This all results in improved academic performance as evidenced by 60.2% of all students making one year gain in the English language arts (ELA) State Exam and 61.7% making progress in the Math State Exam.

- The school has an engaging, coherent and challenging curriculum which prepares all students for college and career readiness that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCLS). (1.1)
 - The School's curricular provides students with an Enrichment Model that promotes college and career readiness skills. The Arts programs, such as violin, band, chorus and theater allow students to receive enrichment according to interest and ability. Students learn in a project based learning environment where they apply many of the skills they learn in the classroom. All key standards, specifically writing, target critical thinking and problem solving, focusing across all grades and reflected in updated curriculum maps leading to increased academic rigor and impacting student performance. The school has a strong emphasis on building student confidence and independence through a student council, cadets in the middle school, and an Arista /Archon program. This results in preparing all students with college and career readiness skills.
 - To push students' thinking, the school offers Regent's classes, Superintendent classes and Citywide Gifted and Talented classes for those who qualify. Teachers are trained on using DOK questioning in all of their lessons so that students are required to "think" about their responses as they engage in various activities. In addition, all students are provided with tasks that provide them with challenging academic skills, such as writing pieces at various levels that demonstrate rigorous text complexity as students move from kindergarten to grade 5, utilizing skills such as compare and contrast and argumentative writing, leading to increased academic performance. This is evidenced by an increase in the overall score on the New York City School Progress Report in both progress (from 22.7-36.1) and performance (from 7.1-13.5) respectively.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide multiple entry points into the curricula with appropriately challenging tasks and teaching strategies for all students, in order to close the achievement gap. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms not all teachers strategically provide multiple entry points and high quality supports with extensions into the curricula so all sub groups demonstrate higher order thinking skills in student work during lessons. In some classrooms, targeted questioning during the mini lesson is not scaffolded to students' instructional levels in order to push student thinking beyond basic recall, thus limiting targeted student participation for all students, including higher performing students, ELLs and SWD's to demonstrate critical thinking in their work.
 - Although all tasks integrate the CCLS and are designed to increase student engagement, accelerate student learning and provide appropriate challenges aligned to achievement levels, this is not evident when students participate in their enrichment subjects. For example, students do not engage in strategically planned tasks to push critical thinking and allow them to demonstrate ownership of their learning. During the

enrichment time, all students are given the same assignment. Since the school's focus is writing, there was little evidence of rigorous writing tasks aligned to the CCLS during the enrichment activities, thus resulting in missed opportunities to take advantage of a project based learning environment to increase students' ownership of their learning to promote increased academic performance.

- Expand use of the observation framework to identify trends in best practices across grades and to drive a purposeful professional development plan to improve professional growth. (4.1)
 - Although school leaders have made some changes to staff assignments based on the data gathered from classroom observations and student assessments, there is no transparent system for a professional development plan to elevate best practices and professional growth in alignment with school goals and to build coherence in practice across the school. Feedback to staff from the Danielson Framework remains broad, thereby not providing teachers with clear expectations to improve school wide instructional practice that supports increased student outcomes. In the absence of a targeted support plan for all teachers, opportunities for professional growth are limited.

3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013							
School name: The SEEALL Academy	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