

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Nostrand School**

**K269**

**1957 Nostrand Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11210**

**Principal: Jazmine Santiago**

**Dates of review: March 18-19, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

The Nostrand School is an elementary school with 457 students from grade 3 through grade 5. The school population comprises 91% Black, 6% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% and 0% Asian, and 1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.9%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal makes intentional decisions to support and augment classroom instruction to close the achievement gap. (1.3)
  - The principal judiciously organizes and allocates resources that lead to high levels of support for staff and students, and are responsive to the needs of the school community, resulting in the progress of students, as measured by improved outcomes on performance tasks. Teams of teachers meet a minimum of two to three periods per week to continuously engage in systematic, meaningful conversations, design complex curricula and assessments, and instruction that capitalize on the instructional shifts necessitated by the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and delineated in the citywide instructional expectations. They effectively use protocols such as the Collaborative Assessment Conference to engage purposefully in examining and analyzing student work against task-specific rubrics. In addition, these purposeful collaborations have enhanced the quality of the school's professional learning communities. Teachers, having greater clarity about their roles and responsibilities for getting students invested in content and increasing their learning around targeted learning areas, are intentionally focused on systematic cycles of data analysis. In addition, to ensure transparency, the principal ensures that the stream of information culled from these teacher team meetings is shared with the staff at large during faculty meetings. Furthermore, teachers, who take full responsibility for their work and the work of their students, continuously share ideas, strategies, and resources and modify their practice to enhance the quality of instruction and improve students' conceptual knowledge to reach desired learning outcomes and school goals. Several staff members, who are provided with time to serve on the school's vertical team, and who are responsible for particular subgroups of students, work with teachers to develop and disseminate resources to fortify school-based professional learning. These members employ the use of *IReady*, a robust online platform purchased by the principal to provide students with opportunities to engage in a computer-adaptive diagnostic, personalized data-driven instruction, enhance foundational skills, and provide access to CCLS aligned materials. This mechanism has resulted in the improvement in teachers' skills for analyzing multiple measures of student learning and identifying strengths and areas of need relating to key standards such as explaining how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text. Consequently, teachers and teacher teams are creating well-structured lesson plans that support increased instructional outcomes for all students and have resulted in improved student performance. For example, in grades 3-5, the level of students performing at levels 3 and 4 in English language arts have increased by 52%, 15%, 23%, respectively as measured by the comparison of baseline and culminating performance tasks. Moreover, 64%, 48%, and 54% of English language learners in grades 3-5, respectively, have advanced by at least one proficiency level on these tasks. Similarly, 21%, 37%, and 32% of students with disabilities have progressed by one proficiency level, thus, achieving great strides towards reducing the achievement gap between performance and standards.
- Teachers' unit and lesson plans aligned to the CCLS introduce material that builds conceptual understanding and knowledge around specific content that ensures improvement in student outcomes. (1.2)

○The school's belief around the value of integrated learning across the curriculum is informed by a research-based framework for teaching and is evidenced in the design of coherent instruction across classrooms. The school employs the workshop model and lessons, across classrooms, have a clearly defined structure. Moreover, teachers organize flexible instructional groups based on data-identified students' needs, which build on strengths, engage students in CCLS-aligned instruction, and optimize learning. Additionally, in collaboration with teachers, students set their own goals and monitor their progress, using language from task-specific rubrics to guide their own learning. Accordingly, teaching strategies and assignments that meet varied student needs are consistent across classrooms, resulting in the deepening of quality of student work products as evidenced by vastly improved results on CCLS-aligned embedded performance tasks, particularly in response to informational texts, which is one of the key standards of focus this year. Students' appropriate use of vocabulary, text structure, text-based evidence, including concrete details and quotations in their writing, provides further evidence that teaching practices have translated into advanced student learning. In addition, as a result of these shifts in teaching practices, the quality of student work products that demonstrates the goals of designated standards, such as explaining how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, have improved.

- The school leader is able to articulate clear trajectories of teachers in various performance categories, along with their data, feedback history, next steps, and plans of action that improve teacher practice. (4.1)
  - The principal supports the achievement of teachers through the integration of a cycle of continuous improvement for sustained, ongoing professional learning using a research-based framework. She seeks and implements targeted designs for professional development to achieve adult learning goals through her observations, focused walkthroughs, and formative feedback loops, which are posted on GoogleDocs. In addition, the school leader encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and share their perspectives on their professional and instructional practices, noting progress toward individual learning goals using a developmental continuum. Through structured, focused dialogues with teachers, she identifies teachers' strengths and areas for growth, plots out individual learning plans, and customizes professional learning experiences to support the improvement of instruction and achievement for all students. This ongoing, actionable, transparent feedback, measured against a research-based framework, provides teachers with opportunities to self-reflect, supports the types of knowledge acquisition and changes in instructional practices called for by the Common Core standards and assessments, and ensures continuous adult learning. As a result, teachers are advancing their professional learning and improving their effectiveness, as evidenced by the alignment and coherence in their instructional practices and rigorous student work products in the classrooms. Moreover, this growth-based, evidence-supported, results-driven evaluation system has resulted in specific, observable outcomes such as increased levels of teacher effectiveness in the areas of questioning and discussion techniques and using assessment in instruction. As noted in the principal's observation records, 21% of teachers have advanced in the domain of questioning and discussion techniques and 31% in the area of designing coherent instruction.
- Teachers collaborate on grade wide standards-aligned curricula and task-specific rubrics, and assessments to meet the needs of all students and improve learning outcomes. (2.2)

- Teams of teachers engage in discussions to support growth in student performance, including strategies for quoting accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text, explaining how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence to support which points, writing informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic, and convey ideas and information clearly. In addition, they collaboratively develop their own baseline, embedded, and culminating tasks along with task-specific rubrics that are aligned with the CCLS and citywide instructional expectations. Additionally, teachers administer, analyze, and interpret results from baseline, formative, summative, and self-assessment measures to determine student mastery of the standards. Furthermore, they require students to write reflections to elicit measurable evidence of assessment of student learning. The analysis by teachers of these data sources, coupled with actionable verbal and written feedback to students, long- and short-term goals for individual and groups of students, and ongoing conferences with students, informs teachers' instructional decision-making, including flexible student groupings noted on charts posted in the classrooms, and instructional strategies to meet student needs. As a result of this school-wide practice of using cohesive and comprehensive curricula, teachers' strategic efforts to improve students' learning outcomes ensure ongoing engagement by teachers and students, as evidenced by the design of coherent lesson planning as well as in student writing product across classrooms and grades.

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

- Ensure that teacher employ a scaffolded approach to the integration of the CCLS by embedding rigorous habits and higher order skills in order to challenge and engage all students. (1.1)
  - Teachers across the school facilitate combinations of instructional approaches by embedding key pedagogical practices, such as modeling, frontloading academic vocabulary, and using graphic organizers. However, the provision of scaffolds, such as technologically-enhanced learning, and interventions and extensions to advance high level thinking, promote meta-cognition, and elevate levels of student discourse is uneven across classrooms. Thus, opportunities to guide all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities to independent and self-regulated competence of skills and motivate them to excel beyond their current skills levels to close the achievement gap, are hampered.
- Foster a culture that communicates high expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness to prepare students for future learning. (3.4)
  - The school communicates and reinforces high expectations with staff through faculty conferences, grade meetings, inquiry teams, school leadership team meetings, school newsletters, and parent workshops, all of which is resulting in a collective awareness. In addition, the school has channels of communication for parents to receive information about student progress toward specific learning goals as well as to share their thoughts on parent surveys that inquire about goals for their children, ways the school can support them, and indicate whether or not they have computer access. Furthermore, "exit reports," which request parents to write about three things they learned, two things they still want to know, and 1

clarifying question, are disseminated following parent workshops. However, with the exception of Spanish, notices of parent workshops and meetings are predominantly in English, resulting in limitations to accommodate the school's diverse population, thus, resulting in low attendance rates at informative sessions planned by the instructional cabinet and parent coordinator. Consequently, opportunities to engage in accelerating conversations regarding the embodiment of college and career readiness competencies set forth in the CCLS, including priorities set by the school's curricula and how mastery in one grade prepares students for subsequent grades, are limited. Thus, the school's efforts to address the broader school culture and support student advancement toward college and career readiness are hindered.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Nostrand School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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					
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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 <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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>