

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Satellite West Academy

Middle School 13K313

**209 York Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Suzane Joseph

Dates of review: November 29, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

MS 313 is a middle school with 132 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 64% Black, 33% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 89.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes deliberate organizational decisions to support school-wide instructional goals and meet students' needs enabling students to produce meaningful work. (1.3)
 - The school's instructional vision is to have a highly qualified teacher in front of all students enabling them to achieve at high levels. The school's organizational decisions are aligned with the school's belief on how students learn best and are evident with the purchase of interactive whiteboards in every classroom, external professional development consultants, and a variety of informational text to be used in all content areas to support the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Several teacher programs have been modified to provide part time on-site coaching and additional guidance support for students which have resulted in an increase in meaningful student work products.
 - Teachers programs are structured to include 1-2 periods per week of common planning time by department or grade. During these periods teachers discuss student work, teaching practices and student progress resulting in adjustments to instructional plans and student groupings. Students whose schedules include 'support' periods are effectively paired with staff to address their academic needs in small groups. Furthermore, articulation between teachers and school leaders ensure instructional improvement and student progress.
- All stakeholders are unified in providing a safe, nurturing environment that supports academic and personal growth of all students and adults.(1.4)
 - The school has made a concerted effort to ensure that the culture and climate are conducive for teachers and students learning. Team building activities have moved the staff from being collegial to collaborative thereby strengthening their ability to plan well together. School leaders are accessible and approachable to provide feedback and clarity around common teaching practices in a safe environment enabling professional growth to take place. Student government has the opportunity to meet with school leaders monthly to discuss school culture issues and make their voice heard in making decisions about advisory programs and providing feedback on the more demanding curricula. These endeavors to engage both students and adults enable the school to provide a positive school culture that is inclusive to all.
 - Since the school is small, all students are known by staff. The Children Are Reason Enough (CARE) team addresses personal and academic needs of students referred for some level of support. Advisory periods provide a safe environment for students to discuss academic and personal issues with staff as well as peers. The attendance team works with students and families who are in need of additional supports in order for students to attend school more regularly. This has resulted in a 15% increase in attendance for these identified students as well as a decrease in the number of classroom disruptions across the school.

- The school aligns assessments and its grading policy to the curricula to analyze information on student progress enabling them to make instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels. (2.2)
 - The school uses a variety of assessments and rubrics to determine the progress of students. Discovery, an in-house assessment program, has enabled the school to isolate key standards and concepts and determine students' strengths and weaknesses. Students receive the results of the assessments with suggested activities to strengthen deficient skills. Determinations for additional supports, programs, or program modifications are made based on student progress. All tasks have rubrics that are specifically designed for each task and are discussed with students prior to students working on the task. The rubric is referred to during conference sessions and used to provide feedback for next steps. Students' grades on report cards and progress reports reflect a school-wide grading policy aligned to the curricula and identified standards resulting in effective feedback to teachers and students regarding students' progress.
 - Common assessments across departments enable teachers and school leaders to monitor student growth. Benchmark assessments are conducted every six weeks and student performance is reported in levels which are coded for teachers. The data is analyzed and placed in a master assessment template which is further analyzed to highlight trends across grades, areas of concern, strengths, and re-teaching opportunities resulting in the schools' ability to make meaningful instructional adjustment to the curricula and instruction.
- The school uses classroom observations, the examination of student data and work to elevate teacher practice that encourages professional growth and reflection for all staff, focusing on those new to the profession. (4.1)
 - There is a wide range of experience within the teaching staff. Through the team structure, teachers are paired to support each other as they refine their teaching practices to reinforce the curricula and aligned key standards. New staff is provided with onsite mentors to discuss lesson planning and preparation and the effectiveness of their teaching based to student work and assessment data. Mentors have scheduled debriefing sessions with school leaders in order to determine next steps and necessary adjustments for professional development. School leaders provide feedback to teachers based on classroom observations and also have frequent informal conversations regarding their practices. This continuous loop of feedback and support is effective in supporting teacher growth and improving classroom practice.
 - The school uses a research-based common teaching framework to support teacher development. School leaders analyze their low inference observations notes and use the frameworks 'rubric to determine teachers' strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. During the post-observation conference teachers have the opportunity to be reflective on their own practices during the observation and rate themselves against the rubric. Leaders and teachers discuss the impact of what was observed on the resulting student work products and assessment data. In turn, next steps

are determined thus enabling teachers to have effective and actionable feedback that results in more effective teaching practices in the classroom.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to design a rigorous and engaging curricula that is coherent and aligned to CCLS resulting in meeting the needs of all learners.(1.1)
 - The school has integrated the required eight units of study as outlined in the citywide instructional expectations (CIE) across four content areas with the CCLS. With a focus on addressing student needs, primarily their reading styles, key state standards were highlighted providing students' increased opportunities to read informational and more complex text. Grade-specific math mastery domains were discussed, emphasized and incorporated in current curriculum maps using the updated scope and sequence. Other content area curriculum maps were updated infusing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies to address meeting the needs of all students. However, the identification of key standards in science and social studies was not as deliberate limiting the curricula from being rigorous across grades and departments.
 - State test data, common assessment results, and teacher-created assignments along with inquiry team agendas and minutes inform the planning of academic tasks. School leaders use low inference observations and the analysis of student work to determine whether tasks are rigorous and engaging for all students. Students with disabilities (SWDs) are a school-wide focus and have academic intervention services (AIS) as well as other reading programs such as Achieve 3000 and Read 180 embedded in their programs. However, there are limited programs and tasks to address the cognitive demand for high achieving students to succeed, thereby reducing the school's ability to provide rigorous curricula that cognitively engage all learners.
- Ensure coherence between the school's belief on how students learn best and the teachers' pedagogical practices aligned to the curricula leading to meaningful student work. (1.2)
 - Gearing lessons to meet the needs of students' learning styles and posing poignant questions with opportunities for students to have voice in decision-making is the inherent belief system at the school. Across classrooms, it is evident that teachers ensure students gain a deeper understanding of concepts. The common teaching research-based framework is used to monitor how teachers' effectiveness is developing across the rubric especially in areas of student engagement and questioning which are strong beliefs in the school that lead to higher student performance. However, limited discussions at team meetings and at the school level about teaching practices that are aligned with the curriculum and school beliefs results in less coherent practices.
 - Teachers provide feedback to students that are based on student work and test data. Strengths and weaknesses are identifying and student work is differentiated to meet their needs. For example, taking their

Individual Education Plans (IEP) into account, SWDs are provided with opportunities to represent their learning in various ways such as orally, through presentations, or visual displays. Across classrooms, teaching strategies such as questioning or strategic groupings rarely addressed students who are achieving at high levels. This limits the school's ability to challenge and engage all students in rigorous curricula and tasks and, in turn, hinders improvements in student work.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Satellite West Middle 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