



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

I.S. 340

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 17K340

**227 STERLING PLACE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11238**

Principal: Mrs. Jean Williams

**Dates of review: Feb 11-12, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

I.S. 340 is a/an Junior High-Intermediate-Middle School with 271 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 91% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1 English language learner and 8% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 94.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes informed organizational decisions, to align resources and structure schedules, including teacher teams, to the school's instructional goals, in order to support student improvement and learning. (1.3)
 - Given the relatively small size of the school population and staff, the school leader is creative in making organizational decisions to ensure that all student needs are met. School budget and resources are leveraged allowing the school to replace antiquated technology in the science laboratory and other classrooms with SMARTboards and laptops for internet access to extend collaborative learning. The principal has identified specific emotional needs of students and carefully assigned extra lunch and recess duties to specific teachers who have demonstrated that they can support students' identified social needs. As a result, lunchroom incidents are reduced and students are better able to focus on academic assignments in order to meet instructional goals.
 - Through reflection on the time needed in the schedule to support students' progress, the principal reduced the number of lunch schedules to accommodate double periods in English language arts (ELA) and math for all learners. As such, students receive an increased span of ELA and Math instruction to process during the double block period. In addition, teachers see fewer students during the day, giving them more time for individualized instruction and concentrated learning for more in-depth exploration of content. In conjunction with this, on Saturdays students are learning the following concepts during the month of February: Ratios & Proportional Relationships, Number System, Exponents, and Key Ideas & Details in Informational Text, Literature and Craft & Structure in Informational Text. The principal also teaches a class to prepare students for the Integrated Math Regents during the extended day. Teachers utilize their 25th teaching period for planning each week with their colleagues and per session funding is made available for staff to meet for planning. In order to maximize teacher team collaboration. The school leader invests resources to give each teacher an extra professional period for co-planning in order to align student tasks and curricular to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Consequently, teachers are identifying best teaching practices, in alignment with the school's instructional goals, in order to increase student performance.
- School leaders apply an observation cycle to inform professional development opportunities. (4.1)

The school leadership has embraced the Danielson Framework as the shared understanding of instructional practice and set a school-wide goal around its application to advance student learning. The school leader recognized the need to set up a schedule and other structures in order to effectively implement frequent classroom observation and debrief cycles. Those structures are supported through the participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Intensive 3-Week Cycle that began in December 2012. Since that time, a talent coach visits classrooms to observe instruction in fifteen minute intervals using the Danielson Framework for Teaching in three competency areas (1e, 3b and 3d). Teachers reviewed the evaluation Framework and identified professional development goals to

work towards during the school year. The talent coach assists in calibrating understandings of the rubric, conduct rubric aligned observations and provides feedback. As such, teachers report that the staff has formed a professional development community that reflects on best practices and is vested in supporting school-wide instructional goals for professional growth.

The principal uses observation information to inform decisions about programming and teacher development. Teachers write their own goals based on their perceived deficiency areas. The administrative team uses classroom observations and teachers' self-assessments to design professional development for staff under their immediate supervision. The professional development cycles are based on these components: Planning & Designing Coherent Instruction, Effective Student Engagement, Use of Effective Questioning, Assessment of Student Learning, Managing Students' Behavior and Establishing an Effective Environment/Culture for Learning. One of the frequented professional development series focused on competency 3b "Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques". The administrative team also relies on NYS Teacher Data Reports. Teaching assignment decisions are based on teacher strengths matched to student needs, based on information gathered during observations and feedback conferences. As a result, professional development stimulates adult learning and creates professional growth which is demonstrated in observations and student work.

- Teachers are engaged in regular professional collaborations to promote achievement and assume a variety of leadership roles and decision-making to support all students with post secondary skills. (4.2)
 - The school has vibrant teacher team structures that are both departmentalized and interdisciplinary. Both groups spend time working towards alignment with the CCLS, for example, in an observed Math team meeting; the teachers reviewed a task and evaluated the alignment to CCLS of content and performance. In addition to teacher teams, the school leader has established several teacher leader opportunities. Two individuals serve as ambassadors for the CCLS work and others assume leadership positions as content experts or designated points of contact for partnerships. As teachers meet, they come prepared to engage in discussions and to share their experiences. During interviews, teachers state that they see this process as a collaboration that opens up the lines of communication amongst colleagues to build capacity and coherence amongst grades. Meetings serve as a venue for support in building teachers' capacity around using protocols to ensure that their voice is heard and that the meetings remain productive and goal oriented. As such, the collaborations provide teachers with training to work with students and prepare them by demonstrating professionalism and accountability to teams which prepare students with college and career readiness skills.
 - Ambassadors are created by the administrative team. Based on teacher observations and willingness, administrators provide opportunities to build capacity such as grade and content leaders. At one team meeting, members had the opportunity to ask clarifying questions, independently review the work to identify the student's strengths and struggles and then provide suggestions to the presenting teacher for next steps. The integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) across the curriculum and the refining of performance tasks is

also dedicated work of teacher teams to advance school wide goals. The teacher team work at this school, with the support of the Network, has particularly impacted the work of teacher collaboration, which is promoting meaningful conversations and analysis of student work and is developing sound instructional practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the curriculum emphasizing rigorous habits, identify key standards and higher order skills for a variety of learners with different needs in order to elevate achievement for all students. (1.1)

The school has spent significant time on integrating the CCLS into the day to day curriculum. The ongoing conversion of the curricula to a backwards design format is setting the stage for alignment of curriculum. Whereas the current curricula has made notable advances in aligning units of study and rubrics with the CCLS, an explicit emphasis on key standards focused on addressing individualized student needs is not yet present. The results of the NYC Progress Report for the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years show flat levels for students' academic outcomes. For both school years (2010-2011 and 2011-2012), the school yielded an "F" in student progress. Several students interviewed, reported not being challenged and/or bored in some of their classes. In an enrichment class, students were working on Math problems, however since the classroom was a music room, it did not have regular desks with tops to support the students writing out the Math problems. Although some students shared out amongst themselves, there were students observed who were not working and others expressed confusion with their answers. As the teacher facilitated, there was a lack of evidence of higher order questions to push students to "think" about and discuss their problem solving strategies. Thus, students are not afforded adequate challenge in tasks, thereby thwarting meta-cognition and the development of critical thinking skills in preparation for college and career readiness skills as evidenced in State assessments and student work samples.

- Ensure that lessons are consistently rigorous and suitably planned to challenge all students and lead to active student engagement. (1.2)

The school's focus this year is the development of questioning and discussion skills. However, the majority of lessons observed did not reflect intentional teacher inquiry that incites student discourse. Based on classroom observations students with disabilities as well as enrichment student struggled with content. During the feedback session, the teacher shared that the task was too difficult for the children and was not scaffolded to address their needs. Moreover, in a few classrooms, students were disengaged as evidenced by sleeping and/or body language. Conversely, students were observed to thrive in group settings where they had multiple opportunities to express themselves as in the technology class and explore hands-on projects as in the Science class. The majority of lessons demonstrated planning for a limited learning style and more often than not included teacher-centered whole class instruction with students working in groups, but not necessarily differentiated tasks. As such, not all students are fully engaged in the learning process to support increased academic performance as evidenced in a lack of rigorous student engagement and participation in class.

- Strengthen teacher use of assessment to reflect interim checks of students' strengths, needs, and progress in order to make necessary adjustments to instructional practices that heighten proficiency. (2.2)
 - The school leaders have begun to analyze the alignment of curriculum and summative assessments in the process of identifying strengths and needs of all the school's identified sub-groups. The school utilizes an array of assessments, such as Acuity, ARIS, unit assessments, NYS examinations and bundles to gauge student learning. However, the frequency and strategic use of this information to support identified student needs, in the week-to-week planning, was not evident across content areas. The lack of regular structures and ongoing classroom checks for student understandings makes it difficult to respond and revise instructional tasks to support students' progress. While the school uses common assessments as well as the data from Performance Series, they are not specific enough and therefore minimize teachers' ability to identify effective tasks or teaching strategies to support the needs of different learners for understanding of content. The lack of targeted and consistent classroom checks for student comprehension, results in minimizing teaching opportunities for differentiation to increase student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: I.S. 340	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