



**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**

**P.S. 361 East Flatbush Early Childhood  
School**

**Early Childhood**

**3109 NEWKIRK AVENUE  
BROOKLYN  
NY11226**

**Principal: Dianne S. Martin**

**Dates of review: December 4-5, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Rhonda D. Farkas, Ed. D.**

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

### **Information about the school**

P.S. 361 East Flatbush Early Childhood School is a/an Early Childhood school with 622 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 92% Black, 6% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 8% 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 83.9%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school cultivates a safe and inclusive learning environment that supports the adoption of effective personal and academic development of students and adults.(1.4)
  - Students state that they feel safe and comfortable in the school and that there are various adults including administrators, teachers, guidance counselor, parent coordinator, school safety agent, and others who “will listen” when they have problems and need to talk. Support staff, such as the academic intervention teacher, who provides math instruction to five to six students on a daily basis, are matched with and take ownership of targeted groups of students based on results of classroom performance assessments, attendance data, and teacher recommendations to ensure that students’ academic and social and emotional needs are met and students are motivated to learn. Students also articulate how they have a key voice in school initiatives, citing their membership on the school’s “trash mashers” team that leads decisions regarding recycling and its impact on the school environment. Students, known as “recycling ambassadors,” develop posters and projects to encourage their peers and members of the school community to make responsible environmental choices, such as conserving energy and recycling, that are beneficial to their school. In addition, parents confirm that their children are valued and safe and that school leaders and teachers are caring and supportive. This positive and hospitable environment results in students’ persistence, motivation, and determination to learn and engage in school wide activities, as evidenced by higher levels of satisfaction with regard to engagement on the most recent learning environment survey.
  - Partnerships with various community-based organizations, such as Ifetayoa, named for the West African Yoruba word meaning “love brings happiness,” provides opportunities for students to participate in drumming, crocheting, and ballet dance, during which time they work with their peers to experiment with technique and learn to express themselves creatively. As a result, students are developing behaviors, such as communication, collaboration, and perseverance that are helping them to improve their concentration and focus and interact more successfully with one another.
- The school is developing the use of data from common assessments to gauge student progress, provide feedback to students, and make curricular adjustments to meet students’ needs. (2.2)
  - Individual teachers and teacher teams across grades use pre- and post- unit assessments and rubrics to identify student strengths and weaknesses and monitor student attainment of reading and math Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Through the data gleaned from these unit assessments, teachers are provided with interim indications of how well students are making progress toward

unit and annual goals and are able to make decisions for grouping students in an effort to meet their particular needs. In addition, school leaders recently purchased Datacation, a technology-based program, intended to facilitate teachers' abilities to upload assessments, obtain immediate results to track student progress, and provide feedback to parents and students. Hence, there is a deliberate focus placed on increasing the consistency of teachers' assessment practices and analyses of student learning outcomes to make strategic instructional adjustments at the grade and classroom levels to accelerate student learning and improve standards-based outcomes.

- School leaders are consistently communicating high expectations for staff and students and are building systems of feedback and accountability that are aligned to college and career readiness. (3.4)
  - The Principal espouses and supports a culture of high expectations for professionalism, increasing time on task, and improving instructional practice and learning outcomes for all students, which are communicated and emphasized at faculty conferences, teacher team meetings, and individual teacher meetings. For example, teachers are required to have lesson plans that include teaching points and assessment plans. As a result of these clear expectations, teachers are held accountable and students are aware that their learning is connected to their achievement and to the future of their academic success.
  - College pennant door toppers adorn classrooms and offices in the school, which illustrate the school's high expectations connected to a path for college and workforce readiness. Parents state, "The Principal wants to take the school to a higher place and has a view that all students are expected to go to college." In addition, "Parents' Corner," a publication created by the parents, publicizes school wide events as well as meetings and workshops for families around the CCLS. As a result of these efforts, families are aware of the major changes and expectations required by the CCLS to support their children's learning and help them reach targets for mastery of pertinent skills and content. Moreover, as evidenced by the most recent learning environment survey, 94% of the parents assert that the school has high expectations for their children and 97% affirm that the school clearly communicates those expectations.

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

- Modify curricula to emphasize the Common Core Learning Standards across all grades and classrooms to promote rigorous habits, complex tasks, and high order skills for all students. (1.1)
  - The school has made great strides in creating curriculum documents to align with the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the identification of key standards, such as a focus on academic vocabulary and text complexity in reading and conceptual understanding and applications in math, which help guide teachers

through the planning process. Although there is evidence in the written curriculum to convey the expectation of teachers' use of essential questions and interactive prompts to ensure multiple entry levels and access for a variety of learners, lessons do not consistently encourage students to cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text or apply math concepts in real world situations. Furthermore, observations of lessons as well as discussions with teachers do not provide clear evidence that the standards addressed in curricular units progress coherently across the grades or provide multiple paths of access for English Language Learners (ELLs), Students with Disabilities (SWDs), and advanced learners. Hence, there are missed opportunities for students to engage in higher learning tasks, thereby limiting the rigor of instruction and academic demands essential to their future success, as required by the CCLS, to ensure that all students, including relevant subgroups, are held to equally high standards and are on track for future college and career readiness.

- Increase teacher capacity to consistently utilize strategies, scaffolds, and tasks that challenge all learners and promote high levels of thinking. (1.2)
  - The school is developing alignment in curricula to their belief about how students learn best through the Balanced Literacy framework including shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading to match student needs across classrooms. Whereas in some classrooms, activities are structured to allow for students to work independently with scaffolds including the use of charts, graphic organizers, and technology, the majority of classrooms is structured around teacher directed instruction, over dependence on worksheets, whole class lessons, closed, low level questioning techniques, or Early Performance Assessment in Language Arts (EPAL) test preparation. Consequently, strategic scaffolds, such as teacher modeling of strategies or tasks for students at varied entry levels and lesson extensions for high level learners, are not fully embedded across the school. As a result, opportunities for students to explore text complexity, participate in discussions grounded in text evidence, assume responsibility for their own learning, and increase their academic potential, are uneven.
  
- Promote teacher leadership capacity across teacher teams in analyzing student data and work products to identify the root causes of current achievement levels and improve teaching and learning. (4.2)
  - The school has established grade-aligned teacher teams that meet once a week during common planning periods and, as a result of the principal's decision to utilize a school-based option, on Thursday afternoons during extended day, to develop unit lessons and work collaboratively towards addressing the school goals. However, the teachers do not consistently use specific protocols to examine student work products, identify students' learning needs, address dilemmas of practice, and align their work to the integration of the CCLS. Consequently, opportunities for teachers to engage in strategic

practices to address gaps between what students know and need to learn and ensure access to high levels of engagement, thinking, and achievement for all students, including ELLs and SWDs, are hampered.

- Structures for the distribution of leadership, including the assignment of teacher leaders, are emerging, and underpin the leaders' efforts to support capacity building. Presently, however, only a limited number of selected teachers participate in curricula design, unpacking curricula expectations, and making purposeful decisions that facilitate the cognitive engagement of all learners. This impedes the school's potential to increase teacher ownership for student and school success and influence key decisions that affect student learning across the school. In addition, opportunities to provide timely and appropriate interventions and extensions for relevant subgroups, adjust curriculum maps to include rigorous tasks and spiralled units that leverage school-level curricular resources, and accelerate student learning are thwarted.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 361 East Flatbush Early Childhood School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score		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>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed

