

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Building Academically Successful Students**

**20K971**

**6214 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11220**

**Principal: Ruth Stanislaus**

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**Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino**

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

### **Information about the school**

P.S. 971 is an elementary school with 222 students from Pre K through grade 2. The school population comprises 1% Black, 39% Hispanic, 4% White, and 55% Asian students. The student body includes 60% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 97%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school designs engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula for a variety of learners aligned to key state standards which improves student outcomes. (1.1)
  - Using the Rubicon Atlas curriculum software, the school is aligning their units of study effectively with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Citywide Instructional Shifts (CIE). This results in a coherence of instruction across grades and curricula. The focus of the school is on implementing non-fiction reading and writing, using informational text and math problem solving. Throughout the curriculum, the school integrates its themed “Healthy Choices” curriculum, which challenges students to make real life connections and applications. These result in helping students become independent learners, promoting college and career readiness.
  - The school uses Depth of Knowledge (DOK), which provides teachers with a clear common understanding of rigor across all grades. The school’s goal is to provide higher order questioning to support developing higher order skills during each lesson, guided by student assessment. For example, during a math lesson, the teacher gave each group of children a bin filled with items that needed to be counted. Each group had to find a way to count the inventory and explain why they selected that particular way to count. Every bin contained items that the students would have to count in real life and that they were familiar with such as, coins, buttons, pens and cubes. Then as a group, the children explained why their method was an efficient one. This process guides the development of support for English language learners (ELLs), as well as Students with Disabilities (SWD), by providing them with visual and tactile items, which results in improved academic performance.
- Ongoing assessments and grading policies are aligned to the curriculum and teams analyze data on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions in order to increase student achievement. (2.2)
  - The entire school uses a computer program entitled “Smart Sheet”, which enables teachers to record all assessments given on line and can be shared across grades within the school. This results in the identification and tracking of academic trends in the school which guides student performance. In addition, teacher teams on every grade use protocols during team meetings to efficiently manage their time and discuss strategies to improve student performance by analyzing student work. Students use rubrics to self correct their work. Each teacher brings their examples of student work to the table which gives them the opportunity to see and address trends in student outcomes and generates the development of teaching strategies that can be used across the grade, thereby improving academic performance. The Learning Environment Survey reflects that 90% of the teachers agree that curriculum, instruction, related services and assessments are aligned to students individualized needs which improve their overall performance.

- The principal makes strategic use of resources and scheduling decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student needs as evidenced by student work products. (1.3)
  - The school has SMARTboards in every classroom that provide multiple entry points for students during lessons and results in maximizing learning time for English language learners and Special needs students. In addition, the principal introduced Mondo, a new curriculum which has a strong visual piece that targets the large English language learner (ELL) population in the school. Consequently, there has been an increase in the performance of ELLs as evidenced in the progress on English language learners' assessments administered by the ESL teacher.
  - The school has allotted all grades weekly common preps with which to conduct inquiry work. The teams use protocols as they analyze student work and its alignment to the CCLS. The results of the team meeting are then shared with the administration and staff, empowering teachers to implement school wide strategies and design challenging tasks which improve student achievement.
- The school has established a culture of learning that ensures all students are known, with professional support for staff, resulting in the academic and social growth of students and adults. (1.4)
  - The school is currently serving grades kindergarten through three with two classes on a grade, so teachers in the building know every child by name and provide additional support for every student. In addition, the school has an active Pupil Personnel Team that meets weekly to discuss specific students, their progress and next steps. Chaired by the Guidance Counselor, the team includes the psychologist, social worker, speech teacher, reading and math specialist and the principal. The team engages in sharing progress and data for targeted students and then recommends next steps, focusing on the methodology of the Response to Intervention (RtI) for academic or social improvement. This results in coordinating attendance, social emotional concerns and supports that align closely with student needs and results in improved student performance.
  - Teachers correspond extensively with parents, who agree that the school clearly communicates its expectations for their child's learning to them and their child. Parent events, such as *Parents as Learning Partners* and *School Leadership Research Initiatives*, are in place to enhance parent involvement which is strengthening the home school connection. In addition, 100% of the teachers indicate on the Learning Environment Survey that they feel supported by the principal, receiving extensive training and information on such school initiatives as peer mediation and conflict resolution, anti bullying and sensitivity training, resulting in coherence in the building among the school community.

## What the school needs to improve

- Engage more effectively a variety of learners, including English language Learners and Students with Special Needs in lessons and scaffold instruction to enable the school to close the achievement gap. (1.2)
  - Although all teachers plan for differentiation of instruction, it is not seen consistently during the classroom lesson. Classrooms observed that teachers provide uneven levels of instruction to meet the varied needs of all sub-groups. For example, in one classroom the reading teacher was administering a lesson on healthy foods and children were to create a face using healthy foods from a picture that was on the SMARTboard. However, English language learners were not able to complete the assignment, which resulted in frustration and an inability to produce a meaningful end product. Thus, the uneven use of strategies aligned to students' needs, limits opportunities for all students in the school to improve their performance.
- Align professional development to overall school goals to elevate school wide instructional practice and implement strategies to promote professional growth and reflection among all staff. (4.1)
  - School leaders conduct classroom observations using a common teaching framework and provide feedback, including next steps, to all teachers. Teachers receive professional development, as needed, and they also make requests to attend professional development sponsored by the network. However, there is currently no system in place across the school to dictate professional development to ensure that all teachers are receiving support in best practices, aligned to school wide instructional goals and classroom observation feedback. Consequently, opportunities to note trends among teacher practice, in order to build coherence of best practices across the building, as well as offer individual support, are lacking. As a result, informed decisions that support school wide instructional needs and teacher assignments, as well as individual needs for professional growth, are hindered.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Building Academically Successful Students	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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>