

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Asher Levy Campus**

**Elementary School 019**

**185 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
New York  
NY 10003**

**Principal: Jacqueline Flanagan**

**Dates of review: December 19 - 20, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Sheila S.- Gorski**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Asher Levy Campus is an elementary school with 303 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 50% Hispanic, 11% White, and 13% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.0 %.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty consistently articulate effective instructional practices that are crafted by teachers, informed by a common set of beliefs about how students learn best, and yield high quality student work. (1.2)
  - The belief that students learn best when they are actively and independently engaged in their learning is evidenced by school-wide teacher practices driven by a research-based framework, leading to meeting the needs of all students. Teachers develop and use support tools stemming from Danielson's Framework in order to facilitate comprehension and/or extend thinking that help students in effectively working with various academic tasks. Strategies that include peer editing, reinforcing student thinking through the use of writing checklists, prompts and conversation starters, and student reflections, are implemented in all classrooms, and create instructional coherence affording students writing autonomy as evidenced on hallway bulletin boards and in student work folders.
  - Across classrooms teachers choose various question-scaffolds that offer access points and challenging tasks to meet the needs of all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), resulting in students producing meaningful work products. Students working in flexible groups use a template, 'Differentiated Guiding Questions Used to Develop Theories' that helps them build on higher-order thinking skills. While reading from her independent book a student used this tool to answer questions such as, "Why do you think the author wrote the story? What are you learning about life from your story?" She then cited page-specific evidence from the text to support her answers. Thus, this work encourages multiple-thinking leveled work, choices, and/or extensions. This is evidenced by Teachers College (TCRWP) recent data indicating that 62% of the students are at or above reading level.
- A positive tone permeates the school, cultivating a safe and orderly learning environment that bridges the home and school community and results in student academic and personal success. (1.4)
  - Students speak of the continuous support and encouragement their teachers provide, leading to warm and reverential relationships that govern the school. Speaking of his teacher one student stated, "All they want is your success and they will never give up on that." Accordingly, academic improvements are noted in work folders. Likewise, families agree that the school is welcoming and have no concerns bringing their children to school every morning knowing they are in a safe learning environment. Via a student leadership council, students are offered opportunities to become school leaders. Additionally, teachers submit names of students who show leadership qualities, high academics, and exemplary attendance, allowing them to serve as monitors in the cafeteria, for the nurse and for teachers, providing for meaningful engagement in school initiatives.

- Students indicate that teachers encourage attendance via one-on-one conversations regarding the importance of being present in school, and staff makes sure students attend so that they can do well and meet their individual goals. The principal has taken the lead on collaborating with guidance and the parent coordinator, formulating an attendance plan to monitor daily student attendance, with built-in rewards such as participation in an extra recess period, commendation of students via daily morning announcements, and opportunities to go into the treasure chests and select prizes. Classrooms with 100% attendance also get certificates. The parent coordinator monitors attendance via a log of assistance and provides family outreach to further support efforts. Parents express their satisfaction of the attendance growth their children have made, mirrored in gains from 93% in the 2011-12 school year to 94% thus far this year.
- School leaders and staff model and convey high expectations to students and parents that reinforce the school's exceptional, positive culture. (3.4)
  - Parents are supportive of the school's high standards and welcome the ongoing communications that include timely notifications of events, curriculum changes, and tests. The literacy coach and parent coordinator conduct workshops, building parent capacity to support their children's learning, resulting in a shared responsibility in preparing students to meet the school's high expectations. Specific training includes the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in the content area, and home support. The Family Instruction Morning is an opportunity for parents to attend their children's class and partake in the instruction, thus building their knowledge of curricula. Consequently, all constituencies share in an understanding of clear, and effectual feedback around educational experiences that prepare all students for the next level, and is evidenced by parent attendance at workshops, School Survey responses, and parent reflections, provided at parent/teacher conferences.,
- Teacher teams thoughtfully collaborate by sharing effective practices and data analyses that results in increased teacher capacity and mastery by students of identified targets. (4.2)
  - Members from an inter-grade teacher team monitor school progress, and inform discussions in their own grade-specific teams so that instructional revisions are vertically aligned. Data results indicated that the skill, "Determining Importance", was a need across grades, and now serves as a baseline guiding the team's work in designing support tools, for ongoing CCLS alignment to curricula, while also strengthening teachers' instructional capacity. Thus, during an inter-grade meeting, team grade leaders, the literacy coach, and the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, shared proposed graphic organizers for writing essays. Consequently, this school-wide collaboration is yielding writing improvement for all learners as measured by a Response to Reading Rubric and evidenced by work displayed on bulletin boards showcasing student work using the writing process culminating in published essays.
  - Teacher teams effectively and consistently hone in on data results to identify skill gaps and set appropriate student goals, leading to a positive

impact on instructional practices and student work. The school's key instructional shift that highlights nonfiction in writing units across the grades prompts team discussions of nonfiction essay structures, informs teacher efforts of ongoing adjustments to student-support tools, and provides for a focus on writing independence of text-based essays. As a result, teacher practice reveals continuous professional growth in their plans and noted achievement of goals by student groups as evidenced in student writing folders.

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

- Further refine academic tasks to elevate rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subjects and ensure that individual and groups of students demonstrate their thinking. (1.1 )
  - The school has aligned its literacy curriculum to chosen key standards and teachers encourage rigorous habits and higher-order skills. Teachers scaffold the learning utilizing Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) as a tool against which to assess the complexity of tasks. Activities include scaffolds via graphic organizers, use of prior knowledge, visual aids, and high interest programs, so that students, including relevant subgroups, are appropriately engaged. However, there are gaps around math curriculum planning, and rigor of math tasks. In spite of the school's efforts to consistently use math supplements, CCLS library math bundles, and create math support tools, there is not yet a school-wide approach to strengthen instructional math work. School-based math unit adjustments are not yet fully aligned to the CCLS. Thus, this impacts student performance as evidenced by results on the most recent math periodic assessment.
- Strengthen the use of common assessments to support key standards in all content areas so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet student-learning needs. (2.2 )
  - The school uses the Teachers College Reading/Writing Project (TCRWP) Reading Level Assessments or running records to determine students' reading fluency and comprehension. Teachers use data results to form groups, give interventions, and adjust lessons. The majority of classrooms use rubrics and or checklists to routinely assess math progress. However, there is not yet sufficient use of CCLS in-depth assessments around math learning needs to guide teacher discussions and create a clearer picture of student math progress. Students say that if there were one thing they could change it would be the math tasks because, "...they are easy and not challenging enough!" Consequently, there are missed opportunities to attend to students' math skill gaps as noted on the most recent math Acuity results and students are not yet showing acceleration in math.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

|   |                   |    |            |   |            |    |                |
|---|-------------------|----|------------|---|------------|----|----------------|
| School name:  | Asher Levy Campus | 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>   |                   |    |            |   |            |    |                |
| UD  | Underdeveloped    | D  | Developing | P | Proficient | WD | Well Developed |