

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S. 087 William Sherman

Elementary School M087

**160 WEST 78 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY,10024**

Principal: MONICA BERRY

Dates of review: Dec 13-14, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 087 William Sherman is a/an Elementary school with 963 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 16% Hispanic, 68% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 was 96.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty have strategically refined the curricula to align with key standards, the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) shifts, and emphasize rigorous tasks promoting high level thinking across grades and subjects. (1.1)
 - The school has demonstrated their commitment to creating curricula units aligned with the school's magnet theme of community studies, a federally funded grant to diversify the school's population. The teachers and administrators have created organic curriculum units throughout the grades and integrate literacy with science and social studies. The teachers worked over the summer on curriculum planning and they continue to refine the units through their work with the AUSSIE staff developer. The curriculum maps identify key standards and essential questions. In mathematics the teachers reviewed the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to align the curriculum and have enhanced their curriculum incorporating Investigations and increasing problem solving within each unit using real world problems. The emphasis of the CIE shifts including the use of complex texts, increased use of academic vocabulary, writing from sources and citing evidence from text, and deep understanding and application of the math concepts is promoting college and career readiness across grades. As a result students are participating in engaging learning experiences that promote ongoing achievement.
 - After careful analysis and review of the results of last year's Common Core aligned tasks in English language arts (ELA), the school identified the need to increase rigor and create more challenging tasks. As a result each grade created original performance tasks or adapted performance tasks from the resources offered by the Department of Education to align with their units of study in literacy, science and social studies. The school believes that students should experience a level of struggle within each task and teachers' plans include strategies and supports for English Language Learners and students with disabilities to ensure their success. An example of a rigorous culminating task across subjects was in Kindergarten as they were engaged in a unit of 'seed to store' and created an apple market. A class sold apples that they got from a farm, students created recipe books and baked muffins to be sold. All students were involved in the apple market and could explain each aspect of the process whether they were tallying the number of apples sold, counting money, or welcoming and assisting the guests. The students decided that the money raised would support hurricane Sandy victims. There is emphasis on integrating technology usage and the school has an affiliation with Apple allowing them to utilize select apps, i-books, and recordings of stories for additional supports in the classrooms. This analysis of prior learning outcomes and increases in rigor has resulted in students being challenged and engaging in higher level performance tasks.

- The school reflectively utilizes resources and makes organizational decisions to support instructional goals and enhance student work products. (1.3)
 - School leaders make tactical decisions to utilize their resources to provide some students with the “Boost-Up program,” an early grade intervention program, to increase class libraries and ensure that there is greater emphasis on non-fiction reading aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and their units of study, and to increase the use of technology. As a result students are provided with resources to assist them in overcoming learning gaps in first and second grades in order to reach grade level standards. Another strategic decision was to move their immigration unit of study into grade three as the teachers determined that it would better serve student learning if they began with teaching our country and then moved to learning about other countries. This resulted in students demonstrating a greater understanding of the unit. Mobile carts, interactive whiteboards, class sets of iPads as well as an iPad for each teacher were purchased through the magnet grant enabling teachers’ to electronically track and use student data. Through their involvement in the magnet grant, the school wanted to ensure that technology was being utilized beyond publishing so they collaborated with a technology consultant from GoldMansour and Rutherford, a consultant group that specializes in supporting inclusive classrooms. In addition, the school has partnered with organizations such as NY Historical Society, Museum of Natural History, Landmark West, National Dance Institute and Studio in a School to further enrich the curricula. This has led to an increase in students’ vocabulary usage, greater exposure to the arts, and teacher’s ability to identify students’ talents and strengths in order to promote the production of meaningful work products.
 - Strategic decisions are made by the school leaders around the hiring decisions to support the school’s goals. The school hires new teachers that are considered an “expert” in several areas as well as license area. For example, there has been an increased need for special education teachers and this year the school hired a teacher that has a strong background in and has worked expressly with students with Autism so that he is able to provide additional supports and strategies to address the needs of students with learning challenges. In addition, teachers’ assignments are adjusted to address a need on a particular grade level. School leaders hired literacy coaches and support staff who play dual roles; those of working with the teachers as well as with students through response to intervention (RTI), early intervention services, or at-risk special education teacher support services (SETSS) to ensure a focus on closing the achievement gap for identified students. This has resulted in a shared responsibility for students and increased achievements as evidenced by an increase of 15.7% of grade 2 students meeting or exceeding expectations and a decrease of 11% of grade 2 students receiving short-term or intensive intervention services.
- The school has created a safe and inclusive environment where students are supported by the staff and their voices are valued resulting in students’ academic and social-emotional success. (1.4)
 - The school theme “One Family Under the Sun” refers to an inclusive environment where all students are recognized for their talents or

strengths, where the community works together to address the needs of all students and increase student success. Concerns were expressed during the past school year related to bullying at lunchtime. In response, the school developed and conducted a series of in-class lessons for students and workshops for teachers and parents. The school has a peer mentoring program where they are currently training students to work as mediators in the program, which is due to be fully implemented this year. As a result, bullying during lunchtime has reduced, and students state that they can resolve their own problems or receive assistance from peer mediators. Students state feeling empowered through their letter writing, surveys and petitions to make changes within the school. Students have a voice and are involved in school decisions such as their community service projects and end projects such as conducting a mock trial, creating a video, poster or mobile to display their understanding of the ecosystem or a diary entry or interview for the immigration unit. Hence, supports for the ongoing development of social and academic successes assure a positive attitude towards growth and respect for all members of the school community.

- Students state that there is someone that they feel knows them well and they can talk with, but they usually try to work it out with their friends first. Structures are in place through the pupil personnel team (PPT) made up of administration, the social worker, guidance counselor, literacy coach, physical therapist and occupational therapist. PPT meetings address student's academic as well as social emotional needs, where strategic plans are created and tracked for progress. The physical therapist collaborates with the physical education teacher and the occupational therapist pushes into classes to work with identified students on their handwriting. The Parent Coordinator works closely with parents in addressing any concerns from home that might impact the students at school. Teachers have good communication with the parents and ensure that they are aware of and can support their child's learning needs at home. For example, daily conversations take place at arrival or dismissal, and regular emails or letters offer parents ongoing information related to academics or behaviors. Parents are always welcome to come into the school to meet with the parent coordinator. In addition, all attendance concerns are addressed through daily phone calls and notes home. As a result the school has an excellent attendance record that has improved from 96% last year to 97% this year.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teacher pedagogy consistently includes discussion, questioning techniques and scaffolds so that all students are engaged in higher levels of thinking and produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms, teachers typically instruct using the workshop model with whole group mini-lessons followed by students having an opportunity to work independently, potentially by completing a task, problem solving, or reading a complex text. In several classes teachers requested that some students remain on the rug after the mini-lesson. In one class students were reading a complex text together and then were to read another text independently and complete a graphic organizer. Selected students in this class remained with the teacher to work through the text as a shared reading experience to assure understanding. In another class

the teacher was reviewing a science experiment of comparing how two seeds grew differently and asked a series of low-level questions. Students were then asked to return to their seats to complete a form in their science notebooks. These students were engaged and interested in the learning experience, and knew they were to generate responses in completing a written task independently. However, during this science lesson, little class discussion occurred, and the teacher's questions were basic recall of information. Little supports were provided for struggling students or students with disabilities, leading to some students' inability to complete the task. In some classes where teachers worked with small groups, regardless of ability or groupings, tasks offered were not differentiated to meet students at their entry points. Therefore, not all students were provided with the ability to demonstrate their learning, exhibit their thinking or develop their skills in becoming independent learners.

- Develop assessment practices to reflect ongoing checks for understanding as well as the use of rubrics to make adjustments to instruction and provide feedback so that all students learning needs are met. (2.2)
 - The school assesses all students through the use of the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment and through end of unit performance assessments and publications in writing. However, there is inconsistent use of rubrics as a means of assessment across the classrooms hindering students' ability to understand what is necessary to increase their performance on given assignments. Some classes used rubrics for the first time, and in others, students were unable to articulate how the use of rubrics could guide them in completing their task. Conversely, in yet another class, students were able to articulate an understanding of the score provided on a task based on the criteria provided within a rubric. This inconsistent use and understanding of assessment and grading practices prevents all teachers from providing actionable feedback to students on their work, and students from knowing what they need to do to achieve higher outcomes.
 - Teachers' primary form of assessment and checks for understanding is through one-on-one conferences as evidenced by conference notes memorialized using their iPad. When asking students how they know they are doing a good job or doing the task correctly, they responded that the teacher will come around and check. Others responded that the teacher tells them and they receive a check or a smiley face. Since teachers are unable to circulate to all of the students on a regular basis, they are limited in their ability to fully determine the effectiveness of instruction or make adjustments to future lessons, thus limiting them from consistently meeting the learning needs of all students.
- Ensure that school leaders are effectively using the research based framework to support professional growth and reflection through frequent observations and feedback that clearly identifies next steps. (4.1)
 - Administrators are using the Danielson framework to observe teachers with a focus on questioning and are utilizing Kim Marshall's system for oral feedback and memorializing these conversations using an excel document. Having been part of the teacher effectiveness pilot during last

school year, a lack of trust developed between the administration and teachers, limiting the administration's ability to fully develop a formalized system for observations. Teachers state they are familiar with the Danielson framework and are aware of the school's focus on questioning and discussion techniques for the current school year. Teachers added that administrators are more frequently in classrooms, but there is a lack of regularity in the feedback they receive. Administration also reviews student work products and data and makes suggestions to improve student performance.. Through information gathered from these informal conversations and observations, the administration discusses teachers' professional goals, strengths and challenges. While teachers state they set their own goals and are self-driven, the inconsistency of feedback not yet effectively supporting teacher development, thus limiting professional growth and impeding higher levels of progress and performance for students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The William Sherman 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