

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Florence Nightingale**

**01M110**

**285 Delancey Street  
Manhattan  
NY10002**

**Principal: Karen Feuer**

**Dates of review: Feb 27 - 28, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 110 Florence Nightingale is an elementary school with 440 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 13.0% Black, 44.0% Hispanic, 28.0% White, and 13.0% Asian students. The student body includes 7.0% English language learners and 14.0% special education students. Boys account for 50.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders make exceptionally strategic organizational decisions that advance instructional goals and thereby elevate levels of student achievement. (1.3)
  - In recent years, teachers and parents have raised concerns that the school's learning environment needed improvement. School leaders initiated candid conversations with stakeholders about these concerns and possible next steps. This year, the school invested significant resources-time, money and coaches for school-wide training-in implementing the Responsive Classroom approach to address in positive ways, what had previously been class disruptions or negative tone. The changes in student-to-student and student-to-adult interactions are widely noted, as teachers' use of chimes results in smooth transitions and daily morning meetings promote closer community ties. This more positive school culture has improved time on task for students and reduced incidents of misbehaviors, with only three disciplinary incidents occurring to date, compared with 21 at this point last school year. Thus, this organizational decision has improved school culture and students' personal and academic development in meaningful ways, as observed in student work and conduct.
  - To accelerate the academic progress of students with disabilities, who comprise 14% of the total student population, school leaders altered teacher assignments and schedules to match instructional expertise with student needs. For example, students in a new self-contained special education class receive targeted instruction in key subject areas for half their day and inclusive programming with general education students for the other half day. Additionally, the school implemented a Getting Ready to Learn program of sensory-motor-yoga activities for a number of struggling students, to optimize their attention, focus, and self-regulation for learning. This attention to the specific learning needs of students with disabilities required greater creativity with student program groupings but early indicators show that teacher collaboration is effective in creating more constructive and rigorous learning settings and experiences that accelerate progress for all students.
- Teachers revise curricula wisely, to align with Common Core standards in order to engage students in academic tasks that prepare them for learning success in middle school and beyond. (1.1)
  - Teacher teams explore and pursue instructional shifts that align with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), such as a balance of literary and informational texts in reading and deeper content study in math. Based on analyses of student work, teachers supplement the Every Day Math program with at least two Context for Learning units so that students use multiple strategies to practice more problem solving and math investigations. The biggest area of curricular change has been in writing, where teachers have mapped out varied performance based assessments, such as flash drafts for extended writing and argument-based expository pieces, with common rubrics.

As a result, staff point to stronger and more meaningful student writing products, where students demonstrate improved capacity to make and support claims through sophisticated writing. Teachers plan well for different kinds of learning styles by invoking Universal Design principles. This attention to the needs of different learners, including the two major subgroups of students with disabilities and those in the Gifted and Talented program, has led to an instructional focus on cognitively demanding tasks that push students to high levels of engagement and thinking.

- Using a research based teaching framework, school leaders prioritize the observation of classroom teaching with constructive feedback and meaningful professional development that strengthen teacher pedagogy. (4.1)
  - On the 2011 School Survey, nearly 60% of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the frequency and usefulness of observational feedback they received from administrators. This became a key priority for improvement by school leaders so they formulated an ambitious plan to make and support explicit expectations for pedagogic practice. Teachers now set individual professional growth plans that align with the Danielson framework for teaching and are reviewed in data meetings three times during the year. Frequent cycles of 6-8 observations per year measure teacher progress towards pedagogic goals. Teachers receive constructive and targeted feedback that details next steps for improving instructional practice. Moreover, school leaders support new teachers well by modeling lessons and arranging inter-visitations and mentoring. As a result, teachers demonstrate improved proficiency in their work and a high degree of professional discourse. In contrast to earlier surveys, 90% of teachers in 2012 expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of administrator feedback on their lessons, and involvement by school leaders in improving the quality of instruction school-wide. Furthermore, school leaders have developed very effective systems for hiring, supporting, and evaluating teachers, such that even the most difficult performance decisions reflect sufficient interventions over time, as evidenced by observation reports and other teacher performance data.
- Teachers set a high bar for professional collaboration and effective distributed leadership that results in deep investment in school improvement. (4.2)
  - With a total staff of 33 teachers, the school utilizes six as Instructional Leads who facilitate meetings by grade, department and/or discipline, twice weekly, for teacher teams to update curricula in alignment with selected CCLS, design performance tasks, and norm their understanding and evaluation of student work and data. In some cases, the teams are supported by outside consultants, such as a math coach who works with the Instructional Lead teachers on elevating the rigor of math tasks and lessons. Additionally, school leaders provide ample meeting time through extended half-day schedules, strategic use of common prep times, and training on protocols for facilitation and problem solving. As a result, strong professional learning communities have taken root, with increased levels of distributed leadership, improved communication about what is happening across grades, and increased teacher participation in decision making that impacts students' success.

## What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen current teaching practices to ensure consistent use of effective questioning and routines that extend students' higher order thinking skills, to promote rigor and ownership of learning. (1.2)
  - Teachers increasingly align curricula and instructional expectations with CCLS, and share the belief that students learn best by building upon their inherent strengths and interests. Thus, teachers provide differentiated supports for all learners and vary approaches for students' different learning styles. For instance, a 2nd grade teacher structured a Book Club lesson by “fish-bowling” the "Fancy Readers" group so that other students would observe (or "spy on" as the teacher encouraged) their high level of accountable talk. While lessons like this and many others have good routines in place for small group work and discussions, in some classes there is an over-reliance on the teacher to mediate the discussion and push students' thinking. Teachers' questions lead to too many examples of "yes" or "no" type student responses or teachers essentially answering their own questions. In some classes, teachers' questions are thoughtfully open-ended, which then facilitates responses, yet there is still little expectation for students to deepen their thinking, by questioning each other or building on comments made by others. As a result, some discussions remain teacher-directed, which then hinders students from demonstrating higher order thinking.
- Refine the use of common assessments to support key standards in math, science and social studies so that teachers make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs. (2.2)
  - Teachers utilize conferring notes, formative assessments, end-of-unit tests and other data to form groups, provide interventions, and adjust lessons across subjects. While this productive linking of assessments and instruction occurs routinely, it is not uniformly pushing students to greater content or skill mastery in math, science and social studies. For instance, the rubrics used in these subject areas are not as detailed as those in English Language Arts which then limits their usefulness to teachers in clarifying next steps for improved academic achievement. Moreover, students describe some of their science performance-based assessments as "not challenging enough" nor sufficiently hands-on. Consequently, there are some missed opportunities to attend to students' skill gaps and students demonstrate modest levels of progress in math, science and social studies.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 110, Florence Nightingale	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
<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?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			<b>X</b>				
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<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>