

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Ann M. Short**

**Elementary School 146**

**421 East 106<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Dr. Mona Silfen**

**Dates of review: October 25- 26, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Anna M. Short is an elementary school with 474 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 45% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. 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

- The principal makes informed and strategic organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in student learning. (1.3)
  - In alignment with the school's instructional goals, the principal has carefully matched internal coaches and contracted consultants with classroom teachers to provide a balance of demonstration lessons of weekly collaborative planning sessions with individual teachers and teams. The principal's strong belief in inclusion underpins the school's organizational structure and creative use of resources. In this way, the bulk of school funding is channeled towards high quality, directed services to students that result in consistent progress in reading levels as evidenced in reading assessment benchmark data. Additionally, the school has made a great investment in enhancing the use of technology. Every classroom is equipped with a SMART board, laptops, and students in kindergarten were observed using iPods. As a result, students benefit from the consistent use of technology tools that include use of laptops to take notes, summarize and paraphrase information from a web source, supporting the school's goals around student achievement and language development.
  - Teacher assignments and school groupings are strategic as seen in the collaborative team teaching classes (CTT) on each grade. Two teachers co-teach the class, thereby reducing the total student-teacher load. Consequently, students receive one-on-one intervention or enrichment in a superb learning environment. Staff is grouped in a variety of collaborative teams that meet 2-3 times per week. Student work is analyzed using a writing rubric and current writing units are modified based on findings so that all student populations are challenged and engaged. As a result of these strategic decisions, time on task is optimized for the entire school community who share responsibility for cohorts of students, which is resulting in improved student outcomes as evident on the Writing Proficiency Class Profile.
- The school provides a safe nurturing environment that fosters high expectations with well coordinated supports to impact positively on students' personal and academic development. (1.4)
  - Staff, students and parents collectively agree that the school's strong and safe climate where students' social emotional and academic needs are readily addressed supports the high percentage of student attendance. The school excels at knowing each child well and capitalizes on staff expertise in employing behavior management techniques and social-emotional strategies from the Ramapo Project to support the emotional growth of students and adults. Additionally, network staff provides well-delivered professional development for staff in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which promotes school-based prevention systems thus ensuring that they are better prepared to provide requisite support to students.

Additionally, NY Coalition for Healthier School Foods and Veggiecation work with students to increase awareness of health and nutrition issues, consequently impacting on students' success.

- Students are interested and engaged in their learning; alongside their classmates, they engage in inquiry-based projects and feel supported by the adults in each classroom. Students report a strong sense of pride as a result of their yearlong service learning projects, such as collecting pennies for their "Penny Harvest", School Community Service such as Box Top for Education fundraiser and school toy drive and can drive. These practices impact students' academic and social-emotional growth positively.
- The implementation of coherent pedagogical practices informed by a common teaching framework, aligned to the curriculum gives students the opportunity to demonstrate high levels of engagement in lessons. (1.2)
  - Teachers across the school agree that students learn best when provided ample time to process new information, use academic vocabulary and communicate with their peers to clarify their thinking as they assume a stance in their learning. Teachers often encourage students to use a conversation style to maintain a classroom discussion by either agreeing or questioning each other's thinking. Evidenced-based accountable talk is built into the lessons. Student work and conversation, particularly in social studies and literacy, are rigorous in terms of the demand for accuracy and evidence. Teachers' questions are crafted to propel cognitive engagement and critical thinking skills. For example, in one class, students considered the question by focusing on why Barack Obama is an influential person in history. In another classroom, students debated whether or not Obama should be re-elected, citing examples from the text to support their response. This work demonstrates students' high level conversation and the ability to produce arguments in writing that are cogent, well researched and supported by sufficient text based evidence.
- The school aligns curriculum to key Common Core Learning Standards and adapts the curriculum to offer a wide range of rigorous learning experiences that facilitates students' ownership of learning. (1.1)
  - The school's instructional team has carefully studied the citywide expectations for introducing the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and subsequently infused projects involving non-fiction informational reading and writing, into several interdisciplinary themes. An example of this is the case study on the native cultures of "Latin America". This planning is evident in curriculum maps for grades 3 through 5. As a result, teachers are positioned to expose all students, including students with disabilities and second language learners, to a robust curriculum that teaches critical thinking skills and concrete content knowledge through meaningful units of study.
  - Throughout the school year, teacher teams meet weekly to analyze the degree of challenge of performance tasks prior to a unit of study, develop projects and other common assessments, and consider alignment with the curricula as implemented. Based on the outcomes of authentic

student work, teachers adjust their planning, practices, resources, interventions, and assessments, thus ensuring that the resulting instruction engages all students, including those with individualized education plans.

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

- Streamline the way assessment data is collected and analyzed so that a cohesive school-wide grading policy can be developed to provide meaningful information regarding student achievement. (2.2)
  - Teachers across grades use a variety of data streams, including conference notes, unit tests, informal observational assessments and a school-wide writing rubric, to gauge individual student progress or mastery of content and skills. However, in some grades, teachers do not utilize the writing rubric data effectively in identifying the overall student trends within their respective classrooms. Consequently, without administrative support, not all teacher teams are equally adept in identifying grade-wide trends to address immediate needs. In addition not all teachers share a common assessment method to then consistently assign grades to student work. As a result, the current grading policy does not fully support students and families in authentically understanding performance trends.
  
- Strengthen the practice of regularly providing all teachers with specific and actionable feedback that fosters their professional growth and development. (4.1)
  - Although school leaders support teacher development, including new teachers, the school is at the beginning stages of implementing frequent cycles of classroom observation using a research-based rubric. Specific written or verbal feedback focused on improving student learning was inconsistent. This hinders the school's ability to fairly and accurately assess teacher's practice and provide professional development to support each teacher's growth.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Ann Short	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>							
<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>