

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School of The Arts and  
Technology**

**Elementary 03M166**

**132 WEST 89 STREET  
MANHATTAN  
NY, 10024**

**Principal: Debra Mastriano**

**Dates of review: May 22-23, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul**

### Information about the school

P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School of The Arts and Technology is a/an Elementary school with 606 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 24% Hispanic, 53% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has developed strategically aligned units of study with key standards and the citywide instructional expectations to ensure that all students are cognitively engaged in rigorous curricula and challenging tasks. (1.1)
  - Throughout the school year, teachers have been working collaboratively to develop curricula units in English language arts integrated with science and/or social studies and in mathematics. Emphasis was placed on the shifts such as informative and opinion writing, finding and citing evidence in a text through close reading, and developing fluency and conceptual understanding in mathematics. The teachers in grades three through five merged the resources from Teachers College units of study, Expeditionary Learning, and the Engage NY website to develop the units. Teachers in Kindergarten through grade 2 adapted units from Core Knowledge, Teachers College units of study and Engage NY to develop their curricula. In mathematics the school created modules with daily math journal tasks through Exemplars, Singapore Math and Everyday Math. The units promote the skills and behaviors such as self-regulation, persistence, and meeting the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) needed to ensure that students are college and career ready. For example, the fifth grade created a six-week unit on American Sports which was adapted from Engage NY. The culminating task required students to write an opinion piece about Jackie Robinson as well as a persuasive letter about a new book on the life and legacy of Jackie Robinson. All students were expected to complete this task and during the team meeting teachers discussed next steps and adjustments to the unit to ensure success for all students. As a result of these coherent units across grades, all students are being challenged and meeting the expectations of the CCLS as evidenced by student work products.
- Teachers' instructional practices provide learners with multiple opportunities into the curricula so that all students can demonstrate high level of thinking and meaningful work products. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, there is a common belief system that students learn best through the workshop model where there is a gradual release of responsibility beginning with the teacher instructing the whole class through a mini-lesson and followed by students working independently or in small groups for practice as they demonstrate mastery. Teachers are using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels to guide their questioning and providing opportunities for accountability talk. Teachers use varied instructional supports and strategies such as charts, graphic organizers, small group instruction, and partnerships so that all students can have access to the curricula. In a fifth grade classroom, students cite evidence from a text, *Promises to Keep*, to write an essay on author's opinion. Some students use a graphic organizer in preparation for this task. Teachers then purposefully select small groups of students according to conference notes and writing assessment to provide targeted instruction while other students worked independently thus ensuring success for all students. In another classroom the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher pushed-in to the fourth grade math class to work with the students focusing on the mathematical vocabulary and developing their speaking skills when discussing steps to solve the problem and whether it is a reasonable solution. As a result of these teaching practices and targeted strategies students are engaged in challenging tasks leading to increased achievement for all students.

- The administration utilizes the budget to support the school's prioritized goals to ensure high level instruction and engagement in challenging tasks. (1.3)
  - The administration aligns the resources with the school goals to increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness and to build strong school culture through community involvement and collaborations. All resources are used to achieve these goals with the support and funding from the Parent Association. The combined budget supports the hiring of a consultant for literacy and math for curriculum development and professional development. A full time librarian is funded as well as a part time science enrichment teacher. All kindergarten and grade one classes have a full-time teaching assistant to provide small group instruction. Upper grades share teaching assistants for additional support. The school has many partnerships to provide enrichment to all the students such as Music group, Shakespeare Festival, Horticulture Society, Vital theatre, and New York Historical Society. The purposeful collaborations with these organizations lead to students receiving enrichment and participating in learning experiences beyond the classroom. Additionally to support the school' goals, the principal utilizes the RESO A grant to purchase smart boards and Chrome books in all classes on grades three to five to increase technology in the classrooms. As a result of the strategic use of funds, students are engaged in rigorous instruction and producing meaningful work products.
  - The teachers meet weekly by grade teams as well in vertical teams for curriculum planning, developing tasks and looking at student work. The principal has prioritized this time in teachers schedule in response to the huge undertaking of the CCLS expectations. Teachers state that designing the curriculum has been challenging but there has been a positive impact on their instruction and on student outcomes. The teachers state that this increased planning time has better prepared them to understand the CCLS and the grade expectations. The teachers turn-key the strategies and best practices that were shared to colleagues on their grade. As a result of the structured meeting time, there is increased collaboration leading to high-levels of engagement and stimulating tasks.
- Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices measure student progress through the use of rubrics, conferences, and common assessments to adjust instruction and lead to increased achievement. (2.2)
  - Teachers regularly assess and analyze students' progress through Teachers College benchmark assessments, reading tracker, and pre- and post-performance tasks for every unit. In grades three through five the Acuity assessment is also used to assess student learning. Students are aware of their reading level and receive a bookmark aligned with their level indicating the skills needed to advance to the next step. Student work is assessed using a common grade specific rubric and the students receive feedback to enable them to understand the expectations to receive a level 3 or 4. One student explained through feedback and conferences with the teacher, he knows that he needs to write stronger conclusions. In a second grade class the teacher modeled how to use the rubric to support students in writing the informational paragraph about Irish immigrants. In mathematics, all students complete a journal task and fifth grade students reported that through peer assessment as well as teachers checking their work, they are able to learn from their mistakes. As a result of actionable feedback, students work towards achieving mastery level.
  - Teachers make adjustments to their curriculum and instruction as a result of the formal and informal data including conference notes, student work and assessment collected at the end of each unit. The data specialist supports the teachers in uploading this information into *Google docs* and reviewing the class and grade performance levels to identify trends and patterns. In

the fourth grade upon analyzing the Fall Acuity assessment results in ELA, it was identified that the students had difficulty understanding and interpreting folktales. As a result, teachers created a four-week unit to address that gap. The students in the gifted and talented classes are learning the same grade curriculum however teachers are making adjustments to ensure that students' learning is being accelerated. In math, revisions were made to modules to provide appropriate extensions to tasks to push the students towards exceeding current grade expectations and preparing them for the next level. This careful analysis of data and assessments enables teachers to make timely and meaningful adjustments that meet students' needs and support their academic progress.

## What the school needs to improve

- Refine the observation process to provide feedback to teachers which captures next steps that are aligned with professional development to elevate instructional practices. (4.1)
  - School leaders are regularly observing teachers with a focus on six areas from the teaching framework. Teachers receive feedback aligned to designing coherent instruction, establishing a culture for learning, managing student behavior, using questioning and discussion techniques, engaging students in learning, and using assessment in instruction. Teachers state they are aware of the expectations and components that need to be evident in their planning and instruction. Administration develops a plan of support for teachers who receive unsatisfactory ratings from observations. Although new teachers are observed more frequently than the experienced teachers, the administration has not yet developed a strategic process for determining the cycles of observation and providing meaningful next steps. All teachers participate in professional development through faculty conferences and grade conferences. Additional learning opportunities are offered to teachers depending on availability and their effectiveness rating. Teachers may receive a model lesson by consultants or may be selected to attend an off-site network meeting to enhance their pedagogy based on need, interest level or ability to turn-key the information. For example, a new teacher received support from the math consultant and the assistant principal through modeling and coaching to increase the rigor in the classroom. Teachers identified two areas to work on as their professional goals however these were untimely and were not fully utilized to facilitate professional development. Therefore not all teachers are participating in well-aligned workshops to further promote their growth. As a result, the absence of a strategic system for aligning professional development to information gathered from observations of practice and teachers' goals restrict opportunities for some teachers to elevate their practice.
- Strengthen the inquiry based collaborations and increase opportunities for teacher leadership resulting in coherence and increased achievement for all students. (4.2)
  - Teachers participate in grade level and subject area collaborations and utilize the ATLAS protocol (Authentic Teaching, Learning and Assessment for All Students) to review student work. Analysis of data from writing-on-demand and math task journals is used to identify trends and determine next steps. The math vertical teams meet weekly however the English language arts (ELA) vertical team meets every other week inhibiting greater school-wide coherence in literacy. Teachers were selected by the administration to be the grade representatives in the vertical teams. Both vertical teams are supported by consultants. Teachers are responsible for presenting information learned from off-site workshops building their leadership. In September, the administration facilitated the grade meetings but as the teachers became more fluent in the protocol and understood the

inquiry process, teachers were given more responsibility in leading and setting the agenda. These roles are not formally assigned and sometimes limit teacher leadership. Teachers state that being responsible for sharing and bringing back information to their colleagues does provide them with opportunities for leadership and their voice is heard. However, it doesn't necessarily have a direct impact on key decisions. As a result, limited leadership opportunities are hindering school-wide coherence and increased student achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S. 166 The Richard Rodgers School of The Arts and Technology	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			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 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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed