

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island

K-8 02M217

**645 MAIN STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10044**

Principal: MANDANA BECKMAN

**Dates of review: April 11-12, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Mariano Guzmán
Associate Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island is a K-8 school with 416 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 26% Black, 22% Hispanic, 27% White, and 25% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leader focuses all organizational and instructional decisions on the achievement of student success for all students. (1.3)
 - The school has hired a fulltime coach, who is a member of the school's Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). Her focus on increased opportunities for continued teacher growth in mathematics instruction aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) have demonstrably impacted classroom practice throughout the school. The development of a Math Team comprised of a teacher from every grade level K-8 has led to the development of a math expectations document as well as a math fluency document. These documents underpin the horizontal and vertical planning of mathematics instruction throughout the school and have led to the use of a number talk structure where students are totally engaged in their own mathematical sense making process, allowing children to learn how to figure things out rather than responding by what they are supposed to say. This constructivist approach underscores a major aspect of college readiness for the school and has been particularly valuable in helping students with inference while allowing teachers to assess their depth of understanding. In English Language Arts (ELA) similar work has been executed by an AUSSIE consultant who, in close consultation with the ILT and teachers, has helped align the ELA curriculum to CCLS. This work has extended to Science and Social Studies as well with a marked impact in the middle school, where content area specialists have participated in the Teaching Better Writing Workshop as a way of furthering their skills in literacy development. The infusion of literacy skill development throughout the school can be noted in every classroom where frameworks, rubrics and best practices are both displayed and incorporated into lessons. Classroom resources are increasingly aligned to the integrated curriculum providing students with ample supports to increase their reading skills in non-fiction. As a result, student writing demonstrates improvement from the September baseline sample as assessed using a common rubric.
 - In addition to bi-week grade team meetings, staff elected to use every Thursday morning from 7:52am.-8:30am as an opportunity for professional development that promotes school-wide vertical alignment. This time provides the ILT with an invaluable opportunity to introduce big ideas, discuss revisions in curriculum and introduce school-wide policy changes. For example, based on feedback from previous year's Quality Review, the school has revised its grading policy to align with formative assessment data. A revised, CCLS aligned report card and the use of Engrade, an online grading system, provides students and families with a more accurate picture of where student progress is at intervals throughout the year. An outcome of the vertical planning is that Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is now imbedded in classroom practice throughout the school. Additionally, the school math coach has trained staff in the use of Atlas Protocol when teams review student work. All teams have adopted this approach which has led to a coherent review of student work across teams. As the school expands its Gifted and Talented program, it has ensured that planning happens across grades to ensure full horizontal planning occurs with the opportunity for teams to review student work across a range of academic skills. This forward thinking allows teachers to accelerate students at their pace. The Pupil Personnel Team as well as a member of the ILT joins these meetings regularly to ensure the continued school focus on meeting student specific needs. As a result of this work, students benefit from lessons and tasks that are closely studied for alignment to the curriculum as well as rigor.

- The school designs its curricula to be engaging and rigorous incorporating State standards and City expectations, targeting the various learners in the school. (1.1)
 - The school has adapted English language arts (ELA) and math tasks from the CCLS to ensure that students produce rigorous work products throughout the grades. Following a thorough analysis of student data results including a review of NYStart and ARIS, school leadership determined that to align to CIE, it must focus on extended responses—an area of weakness for many of its students. By employing UDL the school has made a big shift from narrative writing to a focus on opinion and informational writing. This work includes professional development for selected staff with an AUSSIE consultant. The content from this Teaching Better Writing workshop is turn keyed across the grade and vertically across the school. New teachers are assigned inter-visitations and middle school science and social studies teachers have received professional development at content area lab-sites with a focus on incorporating literacy skills in the content area. This purposeful focus on CIE has led teachers to develop literacy tasks that include science and social studies content which emphasize real world applications such as writing persuasive essays on whether genetically modified food will end world hunger and malnutrition or destroy the environment and pose unknown health risks. Emphasis on the needs of English language learners and special needs students is evident throughout the curricula. Classroom lessons through questioning demand that students use academic vocabulary when responding, which results in elevated levels of student work as evidenced in classes and posted student projects. Data from performance tasks, Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments, and Acuity are used to determine if students are on track and progressing. Performance task data indicates that students are strengthening their writing across all areas.

- The school's set of beliefs about how students learn best informs teacher pedagogy which results in student growth and meaningful student work products. (1.2)
 - Lessons are planned with grade level expectations in mind thereby providing opportunities for students to engage with tasks and resources that are developmentally appropriate. Lessons are designed for all students at their entry points across grades and classrooms for advanced, on level and intervention groups that provide ample scaffolds to improve their learning. For example, during a 4th grade lesson, designed to follow specific grade level Common Core standards, students were asked to analyze results from a Geometry Acuity test taken before the unit commenced and solve problems involving angles and angle measures to show their growth and present knowledge within the current geometry unit. Students who needed additional support received their own acuity booklets back with the work having already been done and graded. They were grouped in mixed-ability partnerships for help and guidance. The most struggling students were in a small group and worked with the teacher to do one problem with her guidance before joining a group where they could work on a second problem. All students completed exit slips with what they've learned and what differences they observed from their original work. Each teacher is provided with a checklist of instructional strategies for ESL students, developed by Lewis-Moreno 2002. ELLs and special education specialists have also developed a checklist of instructional modifications for LEP and students with disabilities that each teacher is required to retain in their grade book/lesson plan as documentation of differentiation for respective students. During a sixth grade lesson on reading informational text, the teacher employed Reciprocal Reading strategies with rubrics for each role: predictor, questioners, summarizer, clarifier and discussion director. Following a Do Now and a mini-lesson employing Smartboard technology to illustrate Reciprocal Protocol, students were divided into five groups where they read assigned texts of varying lengths and complexity depending on their specific level. Students with disabilities were grouped together and worked directly with the teacher who frequently checked for comprehension—they each had clarifying bookmarks to guide their

understanding of their Reciprocal Reading role. ELL students had access to translation dictionaries. These techniques were widespread throughout the school with teachers providing students with necessary prompts during questioning to ensure they are using academic vocabulary relevant to the lesson. Student work samples consistently reflect levels of engagement aligned to their academic levels. In addition, students and parents across grades report that work assignments are meaningful and allow all children to move toward their next learning level.

- Teachers collaborate in teams to effectively create common grade assessments that are aligned to the curriculum to meet the needs of students (2.2)
 - Student data information is maintained by all teachers and formative measures including performance task and Acuity results are entered in Engrade and are available to parents, students and the ILT. In weekly teacher planning meetings, teachers review student work products employing Atlas Protocol and use this information to ensure that the curriculum and the detailed units of study address gaps in student learning. Students who lag behind are provided with Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. In classrooms, it is not unusual to see students with a Ring of Words or a Word Wall folder that they can take home to continue their learning and mastery of new words. Many students have a baggie that they take home with fiction and non-fiction books at their level, to ensure continued progress with independent reading. In other instances, students have graphic organizers that have been designed to address their challenge. As a result, the most recent predictive assessment demonstrates a reduction of students in the lowest tier.
 - The school has implemented effective systems for collecting and analyzing supplemental data through the use of tracking sheets, rubrics, conferring notes, running records, end of unit mastery tests and periodic assessments including Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarks. Administration and teachers carefully review student performance and progress to explore patterns and trends especially for particular subgroups that may need additional support. This work has resulted in a 2% decline in the number of students with IEPs, an 83% citywide ranking in Math success for students receiving SETTS and a 71% city-wide ranking in ELA success for the Lowest Third Citywide.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that clear and differentiated goals at all levels across the school include interim checkpoints in order to monitor progress towards achievement of the goals. (3.1)
 - Based on a review of the previous year's summative data, school leaders have created an overarching instructional goal with a focus on student performance on extended responses that aligns with CIE's focus on career and college readiness. Although this goal is shared with the community at large and there is support for new teachers and content area specialists specific to the teaching of writing, the school has yet to develop a cohesive strategy for school improvement. For example, school leadership has not triangulated its review of formative assessment data with classroom observations in specifically identifying and targeting ongoing professional development. This developing approach to strategic professional support for the improvement of teacher practice in meeting the school's goal keeps the

school from maximizing its potential to meet this goal and advance all of its student population to levels of proficiency and beyond.

- Strengthen teacher observation and feedback process so that all teachers receive differentiated information on areas of strength and practices needing further development in order to build effective pedagogy. (4.1)
 - The school participated in the Danielson pilot study and has adopted the research-based rubric to articulate expectations for teacher practice. School leaders offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through informal and formal observations and analysis of student work products using this instructional lens. Written and verbal feedback is provided to teachers that is specific to the lesson and has at times included modeling of lessons by the assistant principal. However, school leaders have not identified trends and patterns across the school's pedagogic practices which were apparent during classroom visits. For example, teacher talk in several classrooms dominated the lesson and often the length of a mini-lesson seemed excessive. These examples represent trends or patterns across classrooms that have not been addressed and stand in the way of effective pedagogical practice across all classrooms. The lack of targeted professional development to address these concerns hinders leadership's ability to clearly articulate expectations for all teachers and support teacher development vertically with a sense of purpose.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island	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