

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Elementary School 051**

**Early Childhood School 051**

**87-45 117 Street  
Queens  
NY 11418**

**Principal: Magdaly Saint-Juste**

**Dates of review: February 11-12, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Early Childhood School 051 is an elementary school with 285 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 1. The school population comprises 5 % Black, 44% Hispanic, 11% White, and 38% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Across grades and content areas, teachers meticulously align Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to curricula and effectively integrate them to units of study and provide higher-order learning experiences for all students. (1.1)
  - In all grades, curriculum maps are well aligned to State standards and strongly emphasize writing, a content rich curricular, with key standards identified in literacy, such as non-fiction text, and in math, number sense and operations. The maps include ongoing assessments, relevant resources, such as a wide variety of texts that represent a multitude of genres that are used for instruction during guided reading, and support the development of performance tasks at all grade levels. Curriculum maps serve as a significant guidepost to ensure that units of study and the instructional shifts are deeply embedded, resulting in a tapestry of authentic print rich writing in all content areas across the school. The principal and teachers began working with curricular documents by revising the year- at- a glance *consensus map* that enables them to look at curriculum in a global manner. From the consensus map, the leadership and staff engaged in backward mapping to adjust their existing monthly curriculum maps to sufficiently reflect the expectations of the common core, and ensure that text complexity through read aloud and shared reading is fully addressed. Teachers design their own challenging literacy and math CCLS tasks with adjustments for English language learners to include appropriate visual strategies and vocabulary. Consequently, all teachers know exactly what to plan, and what students are expected to know and do including English language learners, students with disabilities and other subgroups on a daily basis.
- A deep rooted belief that “all children can learn” permeates across all classrooms and staff strategically provide high quality teaching and support, which result in challenging tasks for a group of diverse learners. (1.2)
  - The principal shares that, “in this school, learning is constant. It is an urgent work that we do. We must get them, (students) on the right path, and if it is going to happen, it must happen in the early grades!” Across the school, students are extremely joyful in small learning groups where teachers model lessons through reading activities, and digital cameras. Students in a grade 1 class support each other very well as they collaborate and use manipulatives to create math equations that promote higher-order thinking, and they use rich vocabulary through focused conversation and participation. Teacher data binders, reflect various flexible student grouping configurations based on assessments of reading levels, and skill needs. Teacher effectiveness is addressed through the use of Danielson, a common framework that is improving how teachers instruct students in all aspects of their learning. Classrooms are visually stimulating and students engage in cognitively demanding activities that encourage choice, throughout the day. A grade 1 student lights up as she shares her experiences with a hands-on science experiment about air pressure and air resistance. The school provides many forms of hands-on experiences, such as making paper, that enable students to make real world connections, including visual arts, where students learn about

color, form, texture and design using different kinds of paper to create the city's sky line. Hence, improved levels of student performance are indicated in formative assessment data, such as guided reading conference notes, and content area unit tests.

- In all classrooms, and at every grade level, teachers engage students in higher order thinking skills where they are well prepared to navigate challenging texts, tackle tasks and questions that promote deep discussion. In one instance, kindergarteners and grade 1 students engage in a text-based evidence discussion about George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln. Texts, materials and activities are well matched to the needs of each child based on text-complexity. In a pre-kindergarten class, students work in fun yet challenging learning centers that promote rigor and higher order thinking. The classroom teacher shares the rationale for her individualized approach to address the needs of a student continuing to have difficulty with the alphabet. Learning centers challenge students, and address kinesthetic tactile and oral development. Across the school, the use of teaching tools, such as graphic organizers, strategically provide multiple entry points and high level supports and extensions into the curricular so that a diverse group of learners make progress. Between September 2012 and February 2013, data from the school's reading tracker indicates that 80% of all kindergarten students are making adequate progress, and 85% are making adequate progress in grade 1.
- The purposeful organizational decisions by the principal are strategically aligned to the expectations of the Common Core Learning standards and long-range plans that result in meaningful student work products. (1.3)
  - Teachers enjoy meeting three times per week in grade and inquiry team meetings that deliberately enable them to delve deeply into the analysis of student data and engage in collaborative discussion and planning regarding the expectations of the common core. Their work serves as a model for other schools within the network, who use this school as a model site. The principal uses library funds to ensure that all classrooms have a wide variety of genres in classroom libraries. Creative budgeting ensures the purchase of quality books that students take home and enjoy reading throughout the summer. This ensures that summer instructional loss is decreased and children maintain their love of reading. An expert coach uses time to support teacher development with targeted and frequent training and mentorship opportunities as needed. The principal's goal to strengthen technology in order to improve student engagement and motivation, led her to secure a \$60,000.00 RESO A Grant from a local elected official. Technology-generated programs support English language learners based on a home-school on-line leveled reading program that is very well received by students, teachers, and parents. Parents agree that the school's partnerships, such as Out of School Time, (OST), provides excellent academic assistance for students who attend the program at their sister school, PS56Q. Based on a partnership with Queens College, and St. John's University' Academic Service Learning program, student interns reduce the student to teacher ratio, and provide effective direct assistance to students four days per week, resulting in meaningful student work products in literacy, particularly in phonics, phonemic awareness, and speech. The school does well at improving the academic performance of all students, including English language

learners and students with disabilities, and other subgroups, resulting in the school's State Accountability report indicating that the school consistently remains in "Good Standing" and all student groups make Annual Yearly Progress in English language arts and math.

- Consistent attention is given to formative assessments, including checks for understanding that enables teachers to effectively identify student mastery of learning, adjust curriculum and support student achievement. (2.2)
  - Across the school, teachers use and develop transparent grading policies, assessments and rubrics that are fully aligned to the school's instructional goals and prioritized standards in all content areas. School-wide reading and math assessments are administered three times a year. Analysis of student data results lead to immediate adjustments to instruction, such as increasing visuals, singing and movement for English language learners and students with disabilities. In addition to phonic skills, assessments also evaluate student performance in grammar and usage which supports the school's significant focus on writing in all grades. Conference notes, running records, and model writing notebooks, determine student performance and progress. Teachers' effective use of assessments led to adjustments made to the school's math program where teachers ensure that the program is deeply aligned with the common core standards. As a result, teachers share their ability to go deeper into the development of math lessons and between September and February indicate that most students in all classes are making adequate math progress. Teachers employ many forms of self-assessments using various measuring tools, such as individual rubrics, exit slips, and checklists, while other students write or verbally share their lesson experiences by asking and/or answering questions. Accordingly, students know and can articulate their learning goals, and what they need to accomplish their goals along with next steps. In a student group meeting, a kindergarten student with disabilities shared that during the beginning of the school year, she wrote her letters backwards. Another student stated that he needs help with his handwriting, so he receives support from his teacher, and his dad, who purchased him a handwriting book so that he can practice at home. Students state that teacher conferences and rubric comments on their work help them improve their performance. Hence, students know their specific learning needs, next steps, and teachers make effective adjustments, such as support materials, to ensure academic success.
- The leadership utilizes a common framework that is well supported by staff to offer effective feedback, next steps, and professional development that results in continuous high quality improvement in teacher practice. (4.1)
  - The school uses the Danielson framework to support teacher effectiveness across the school. This school year, the leadership and staff calibrated three of Danielson's components, related to questioning and discussion, designing coherent instruction and using assessments in instruction. Teachers engage in formal, informal and cycles of short frequent observations that lead to immediate feedback. Effective feedback and next steps are shared through letters, verbal conversations, and email correspondence. Letters to staff are shared in ARIS and include details regarding the principal's observations, and identify what

staff needs to be mindful of during the upcoming week. Teachers incorporate their learning in their work on teacher teams, and identify strategies that support student learning. Teachers make positive comments regarding the support that they receive from the leadership, and one another. There is a clear trajectory of support that is initiated with the teacher's completion of the Danielson framework teacher reflection and goal worksheet, and is followed up with a highly detailed trail of ongoing support that culminates into improved student performance. All teachers engage in reflective conversations with the leadership, which is then followed up with targeted support by the principal, coach or representative from the Children First Network team. Consequently, there is a strong culture of learning, and adults acknowledge the relationship between teacher practice and student achievement.

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

- Refine systems to purposefully evaluate the quality of school culture and teams to include ways to improve parent involvement with a focus on adjustments to support the expectations of the CCLS. (5.1)
  - The principal and staff meet weekly to purposefully evaluate and discuss school decisions, such as how to ensure that parents become more knowledgeable about the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Staff meets during instructional cabinet meetings, and team meetings, to coordinate ongoing support for students and their families. There are continuous conversations at school level meetings to discuss parental involvement, and the parent coordinator provides excellent, ongoing trainings for parents that occur during various times of the day throughout the school year. Teachers continually share pertinent information regarding student performance with parents, and parents are encouraged to be involved in the educational process. However, the effectiveness of the workshops as it specifically relates to how the school shares information about the expectations of the common core standards with families has not been fully addressed thus, hindering its ability to make additional adjustments and further student growth.
  - Teacher teams are highly collaborative and engage in consistent analysis of student data, review of student work, and identify successful strategies, such as modeling and questioning techniques to promote student learning. Teams share their work in ARIS and with other colleagues during faculty meetings. Recently, teachers engage in a very well designed lesson study initiative. Teachers observe each other's practice, and provide meaningful feedback based on their observations. Another teacher on the team uses the suggestions, to then implement the same lesson with the team's recommended adjustments for improvement. The leadership and teachers are excited about this work; however, evaluation of the effectiveness of the team's work has not yet yielded student impact so performance at this time is unclear.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Elementary School 051	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>