

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**The Hammond School**

**28Q082**

**88-02 144<sup>th</sup> Street  
Jamaica, N.Y. 11435**

**Principal: Dr. Angela Boykin**

**Dates of review: January 9-10, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D**

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

### **Information about the school**

The Hammond School is an elementary school with 657 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 56% Hispanic, 2% White, and 32% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.1%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The visionary principal, and resourceful administrative team, utilizes an extensive array of strategies to promote high expectations across the entire school community, resulting in student advancement. (3.4)
  - Parents expressed great satisfaction with the communication between school and home. They know the school's mission and vision, which is posted in the front lobby and distributed at every Parent Association (PA) meetings. The principal also gives workshops at PA meetings to reinforce her expectations, the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). She gives suggestions on how to help improve their children's literacy at home. To support this work the principal purchased the Capstone Interactive Library, an online multimodal literacy program that allows parents to help reinforce the principal's expectations of having students reading 30 minutes each day after school. To assess this work, the school includes survey information on students from four subgroups when monitoring student academic growth: high achievers, struggling students, English language learners and students with disabilities, and the school consistently communicates with parents about student progress and learning outcomes. Parents of these students attend workshops and log onto the virtual libraries as evidenced by the school's parent survey. Parents are dedicated to learning these strategies, as evidenced by the 60% parent participation rate at workshops. As a result, there is a consistent message to families about academic expectations and their role in assisting their children to advance.
  - The principal funds substitute teachers that free teachers to meet with administration and specialists for professional development grade meetings twice a month for a double period. Part of the meeting is devoted to looking at unit plans and student work to see if it is aligned with the CCLS, the CIE, as well as the school goals and expectations, which are crafted with school-wide input to make sure they are aligned. Grade teachers also look at trends to see what is or are not working and then create strategies to implement in their classrooms. For example, instructional shifts in literacy require close reading of complex text with text-dependent questions. To meet this goal, grade 5 teachers chose an article, *Nelson Mandela: Prisoner to President*, which aligned to their reading theme of "Dare to be Brave" and crafted high level questions. In conjunction with teachers, students create their own learning goals and review and revise them every eight weeks. Students and teachers create rubrics together to establish high expectations for all, including students with disabilities, English language learners and high achievers. Students routinely reflect on their work individually, with peers and with their teachers. Teacher teams meet weekly to review student work and, based on data collected, make necessary adjustments to the curriculum to ensure that students are on track to achieve their goals. As a result, there is a shared commitment to the school's high expectations and targeted goals around improving student outcomes.

- Expectations for delivering the standards-based curriculum are clear and supported well by unit maps and instructional calendars that include progress-monitoring checkpoints that support learning. (1.1)
  - Administration and staff analyzed units from the prior school year and found that some required revision to align with the CCLS. Teachers are currently designing units that incorporate Danielson’s Framework as well as strategies from the Universal Design for Learning and Richard Elmore’s Instructional Core, focusing on reading and writing informational texts in grades K-2 and reading and writing as well as analyzing opinion and information for grades 3-5. Teachers plan their “Year at a Glance” in teams where they map out their curriculum expectations aligned with the CIE. This results in focused instructional planning that supports student mastery and ensures that the entire community is aware of what is being taught and how it connects to the CCLS.
  - Based on the 2011 Progress Report where the school received 1 out of 16 Closing the Achievement Gap (CAG) points as well as data from the state standardized test, the principal established an Inquiry Team comprised of one teacher from grades 1-5, instructional coaches and the special education liaison. The team’s focus this year is mathematics instruction for English language learners. The team looks at the curriculum to see how the standards of the new mathematics program matches the CCLS and reviews student work to evaluate the rigor of tasks. They are also designing various strategies for the English language learners to have greater access to course content. One example presented was scaffolded instruction that helps teachers to provide English language learners with various entry points during a lesson. At the team meeting, teachers shared how utilizing this process makes them more intentional that students are meeting the standards. Now in its second year, this team work is one of many reasons the school’s CAG points on their more recent Progress Report rose to 3 out of 16 points, reflecting accelerated student progress towards reaching learning goals.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
  - Teachers have 3-5 common planning periods per week in addition to another professional period. Kindergarten teachers have a half-hour every afternoon to meet. In addition, the principal pays for substitute teachers to cover classroom teachers for two days every other week for professional development. Kindergarten teachers meet once a month for the entire day in order for them have time for ongoing professional development and planning since the kindergarten Annex is located in a building one mile away from the school. This time is dedicated to providing professional development focused on the needs of teachers as indicated from classroom observations. Additionally, teachers analyze student work utilizing Webb’s Depth of Knowledge Matrix and to ensure that specific CCLS are being addressed. Coaches provide feedback using the ORID Protocol to increase rigor and improve teacher pedagogy. In addition, intervisitations occur so that kindergarten teachers may observe student learning in later grades. Professional development was provided on the CCLS instructional shifts and in literacy with the focus on text complexity and text based answers in writing from the source. An

example of a task that demonstrates the impact of this work was seen in a fifth grade classroom where the students completed a close reading of a complex text, "*Tea Time*" and then explained the events that contributed to the cause of the Revolutionary war. Using textual evidence and tiered tasks, all students were engaged in meaningful dialogue about this topic and successfully completed the assignment.

- The hiring process begins with a principal interview followed by an interview with the Hiring Committee, made up by staff members selected by the United Federation of Teachers chapter leader. Ultimately, the principal has the final say based on her interview and the recommendations of the committee. Students are placed in programs or small group and interventions based on formative and summative assessments. For example, three new Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes were created this year. One of the school's goals is to increase reading comprehension in grades 3-5 for students with disabilities. In order to meet these goals, a Highly Effective teacher, based on the state Teacher Effectiveness report was reassigned to work with multiple grades in the ICT classrooms in the area of literacy. A select group of teachers participate in monthly network meetings where they observe best practices in participating schools and turnkey strategies to colleagues. These hiring conditions, teacher assignments and student grouping systems are conducive to both teacher and student success.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instruction, thereby creating targeted pedagogical support for better student performance (4.1)
  - Administration cycle teacher observations so that all teachers are seen by both administrators. The tiered observation cycle involves a first round where teachers are informally observed twice. Administration has post observational conferences with all teachers and the observation report is then signed and placed in the teacher's file. The second round utilizes formal observations that include the pre- and post-observation conference. So far teachers have been observed in two competencies of Danielson's Framework for Teaching: Designing Coherent Instruction and Questioning. Administration has designed an observation template that allows them to provide effective and timely feedback aligned to the Framework. As an example, the principal mentioned during an observation of a grade 4 teacher it was noted that she need to address the working of her learning outcome so that the students understood the expectations. The teacher was given next steps in the observation which included support by the coaches in this area. Consequently, administrators are able to make precise and timely teacher performance evaluations and provide specific feedback that informs the quality of the work and include next steps for professional improvement.
  - Based on data from teacher observations, administration have tiered teachers similar to the Response to Intervention tiers. Tier 1 teachers receive one-to-one coaching from coaches who document sessions. Tier 2 teachers are those administration have identified that need to receive more frequent cycles of observations with specific feedback to support improved teacher pedagogy. Tier 3 teachers are the high-performing teachers who are being groomed for teacher leadership positions. These teachers participate in Children's First Network professional development

opportunities outside of the school building are members of the Inquiry Committee/Grade Leader Team and serve as the school's Lead Teachers. Even though teachers are not aware of the terminology of the Tiers, they are aware of the amount of support they are receiving and why. Having this information increases the collaboration and positive relationship between the teacher and the individual providing the support. This process allows for a differentiated approach for assessing and supporting teachers at various levels, thereby creating effective and targeted pedagogical support for better student performance.

## What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, students are challenged and questioning extends thinking to maximize student learning. (1.2)
  - Based on recommendations of the 2011-2012 Developing Quality Review where teacher teams were advised to “build on their collaborative inquiry applying effective research-based instructional strategies,” the principal purchased two professional books, *From Standards to Rubrics in Steps* and *Teacher Student-Centered Mathematics K-2*. These books were used as a reference for planning rigorous lessons and teachers were required to implement strategies mentioned in their classrooms. However, rigorous lessons were not evident in classrooms observed. Therefore it is unclear whether or not those current strategies are setting a path towards mastery of skill and content for all groups of students.
  - All staff members were given Webb's *Depth of Knowledge Guide* during the first faculty conference, supplemented by several professional development sessions on higher level thinking and questioning. Teachers are required to scaffold questions to include the lower-level students and then use higher-level questions. However, in classes observed, higher-level questions were not evident. Therefore, there is limited evidence that teachers are deepening the level of instruction to provide appropriate challenge, which limits opportunities for all students to engage in effective higher-order thinking and extend learning experiences.
- Provide consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals for academic improvement. (2.2)
  - Even though teachers, as part of their planning, create tasks and assessments that are aligned to the CCLS and rubrics, these tasks and rubrics vary from class-to-class and are not consistent nor are they always very clear. This lack of coherence in rubrics prevents teachers from receiving meaningful feedback on their own practice that could allow for students to be more fully engaged in the learning process.
  - While teacher teams have sufficient data to identify students' strengths and needs, teacher feedback on student work varies. Some teachers either do not provide positive feedback, some do not provide next steps and some provided no feedback at all. Similarly, student self-reflection was inconsistent; some classes were proficient in this practice and some showed no evidence of students reflecting on their own work. This lack of

coherence in assessment practices inhibits teachers from improving learning outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Hammond School	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>