

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Corporal Allen F. Kivlehan School**

**Elementary school R006**

**555 Page Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10307**

**Principal: Cynthia DiFolco**

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

**Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 006 is an elementary school with 780 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 10% Hispanic, 84% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 22% 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 95.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Curricula, purposefully aligned to key standards and to the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) shifts, offer a range of rigorous learning opportunities that promote high levels of student thinking. (1.1)
  - Teacher teams work vertically utilizing the math Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and have developed and taught units of study from various resources reflecting longer and deeper study of particular topics and incorporating real world application in problem solving, exploration and dialogue. Students across all classrooms are regularly expected to explore through the use of manipulatives and to construct viable arguments around their thinking in pairs, groups or whole class with students questioning their thinking and strategies. Teachers utilize the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project units of study where students have the opportunity to read and write extensively on content area units with opportunities for informational and argumentative writing using evidence from texts. Students with individualized education plans work on the same units of study as general education students. In focusing on listening and speaking standards, protocols around students working in groups and in think-pair-shares are well in place, engaging students in lively discussion and sharing across classrooms. There are consistent expectations across the school that all student needs are met. Scaffolds, the use of technology and strategic grouping based on data, enable students to delve deeply into lessons and units planned by teacher teams with the expectations of the CCLS and the specific needs of students in mind. As a result, students in all classes are exposed to the same units of study as evidenced by student work products on bulletin boards and in discussions that are student centered.
- School leaders make effective decisions in aligning resources with the instructional goals of the school in order to provide students with meaningful learning experiences. (1.3)
  - This non-Title I school has strategically used its resources to support its instructional goals around student exposure to CCLS-aligned units of study in English language arts and math, as well as a focus on teacher effectiveness as outlined in the CIE for this school year and beyond, so that all students will have the tools necessary for success on CCLS-aligned state assessments. The school decided to return to the Teachers College Reading and Writing project, fully participating in calendar days for teachers and administrators as well as having a dedicated staff developer work with teachers and paraprofessionals. The school purchased Atlas Rubicon, with a grant from the Staten Island Grant Foundation, for curricular mapping. This enables all teaching staff to have on-line access to curricula so that teachers may make revisions and colleagues may see the revisions and comment as it continues to be monitored and revised vertically to meet the demands of the CCLS. Professional development also takes place with Dr. Marie Alcock, a nationally renowned curriculum development specialist, who works with teachers to ensure that all curricula is CCLS-aligned and all students have multiple entry points to curricular tasks. Using the resources

of the Children First Network, teachers also receive training from Metamorphosis in order to allow students to have more opportunities to dialogue and model arguments in math. Professional development opportunities for teachers are planned strategically and each teacher, based on her professional needs, is given an individual menu of offerings to participate in during the course of the year. All of this professional development has resulted in improved teacher performance, as evidenced by teacher feedback around questioning and discussion, and in student work products focused on the expectations of the CCLS as displayed in classrooms and on bulletin boards.

- In reviewing the data from the 2011-2012 Progress Report and keeping the school's instructional goals in mind, the principal felt a sense of urgency in ensuring that the right teachers were matched with the right grade level of students. The principal shifted the assignments of several teachers to better meet the needs of particular groups of students, including self-contained special education classrooms, and the departmentalization of grade 5 with a focus on content specialists working with students in English language arts, social studies, science and math. This shift in assignments has led to teachers working together in more cohesive teams as they plan units and look at student work and all students experiencing more rigorous lessons and units planned with Depth of Knowledge levels in mind, including students with disabilities as viewed in classrooms. As a result, students produce formative and summative tasks around informational texts such as first graders producing informational books on monarch butterflies and fifth graders writing essays using text around author's purpose, grounding their writing with evidence from texts that are appropriately complex as well as research based argumentative essays aligned to the CCLS.
- Observation and feedback protocols, aligned to the instructional needs of the school, provide teachers with next steps and clear expectations that enhance school-wide practice and lead to improved student performance. (4.1)
- School leaders ground their work with teachers around the expectations of the Danielson framework and support them through feedback, next steps and professional development tailored to their particular needs. This year, teacher peers have joined school leaders on making focused visits to classrooms around both what teachers and students are doing. Teachers reported that colleagues provide feedback to one another in a respectful manner, encouraging additional teachers to participate in this initiative. Teachers set professional goals, in conjunction with school leaders, which include action plans focused around the three competencies that are part of the CIE for 2012-13. After visiting classrooms school leaders give oral and written feedback and next steps aligned with the previously-identified teachers' goals. They also conduct mid-year meetings with teachers to ensure that they are on track toward meeting their goals. In addition, school leaders monitor student portfolios and teacher data binders and give feedback to teachers around this work. Additional supports have been provided for teachers new to their grade as well as those who need additional support in their performance. School leaders revise professional development opportunities for teachers based on these systems. This work has led to improvements in teacher practice, specifically around additional opportunities for student generated questioning and discussion, as evidenced by teacher feedback.

- Teaching practices across the school reflect a coherent set of beliefs about student learning, consistently providing strategies to meet the varied needs of students, and engaging them in appropriately challenging tasks. (1.2)
  - Among the philosophies of learning in the school spoken about by school leaders is that students learn best when they are engaged and that teachers should never give up on students, especially by meeting students at their appropriate entry points so that they can ultimately be successful. They believe that teachers must ensure that students show true understanding and are able to work independently. In visiting classrooms, it is evident that teachers support students at their entry points into curricula in a variety of ways. The school has focused, thorough professional development, on the use of appropriate use of charts in classrooms as supports for all students. Students consistently spoke to how they use charts in English language arts and math to support their learning. Teachers provide students with rigorous fiction and content area texts, and the expectation across the school is that students use evidence from texts in student discussion, such as turn and talk and literature circles, as well as in written work. Teachers vary their scaffolding and questioning so that students who need additional support can be successful in smaller increments leading up to the work they do to meet the standards. Students work in flexible groups, formed by looking at data, a majority of the time with opportunities to share questions and their thinking with one another. For example, in a fifth grade English language arts classroom students were independently facilitating literature discussions, and conducting research for group presentations using laptops and the teacher was working with a small group of students around a text. Paraprofessionals work closely with teachers and receive professional development in how to effectively conduct guided reading lessons and facilitate small group work to support students at their entry levels as seen in self-contained classrooms. In a fourth grade math classroom, the teacher provided students with varying opportunities for exploration, problem solving and dialogue where they demonstrated their thinking, and modeled their strategies and arguments with each other. Frequent assessing of students takes place through conferencing, also a major focus this school year, as well as through the use of exit slips with teachers using the results to provide appropriate entry points for lessons for all students, including students with disabilities and higher performing students. This work has led to students, across all areas, being able to produce CCLS-aligned work that meets and exceeds the standards and being to speak deeply about their work products and thinking in math and English language arts.

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

- Refine the use of assessment tools to determine student progress across sub-groups so that the results can be used to adjust curriculum and instruction. (2.2)
  - The school has done a great deal of work around incorporating the use of the Teachers College continuum in assessing student reading and writing products with the feedback made understandable so that students are able to know their accomplishments and next steps. Checklists and rubrics in

math and other content areas also provide students with knowledge of their strengths and actionable feedback on their work. Students also are given the opportunity to reflect in writing on their own work. Teachers check for understanding through the use of conferencing, writing and exit slips and they regularly revise grouping and instructional decisions accordingly to meet identified student needs. Reading levels are assessed four times yearly in fiction and non-fiction using the Teachers College Reading and Writing assessment system. In addition, the grading system on classroom work and performance has been revised to reflect the expectations of the CCLS and this information has been incorporated into the report card system so that grading and language is consistent for students and families. Teachers gather information on student achievement and can speak to increases in performance on various assessment tools. However, there does not appear to be a granular focus on student sub-groups and trends around their performance specifically. Consequently, without the use of looking at data of common assessments through this lens, specific groups of students are missing focused support around their particular needs.

- Further professional development, family outreach and student learning experiences to clearly support student adoption of academic and personal behaviors that will enable students to be college and career ready. (1.4)
  - The school is a safe place with students known very well by faculty and supported socially and emotionally by the teaching staff, school leaders, a guidance counselor and a social worker. Students frequently spoke of their affection for their teachers and of the academic and emotional support they receive. There is a focus on building student character in several areas through initiatives such as the Book of the Month, student awareness of the expectations around the discipline code, and a monthly school spirit award with a rubric listing the expectations so that students know how to strive toward this achievement. Students also have a voice in the school through a student council, whose representatives meet with the principal to convey their thoughts. Suggestion boxes are in classrooms and student suggestions are viewed at meetings around school improvement and school initiatives like Penny Harvest and the school nutrition committee. With that said, there is not a clear connection that the work being done in developing positive behaviors in students is fully connected to the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors that are a part of the CIE as well as coordinating the necessary professional development for faculty and family outreach. As a consequence, there are missed opportunities for strategically connecting the experiences that the school already provides academically and socially with the behaviors needed for college and career readiness.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: Corporal Allen F. Kivlehan / R006  | 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> |