

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The Charles W. Leng School

31R054

**1060 Willowbrook Road
Staten Island
NY 10314**

Principal: Karen LaRosa

Dates of review: April 11-12, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Erminia Claudio

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

31R054 is an elementary school with 906 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 24% Hispanic, 34% White, and 35% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula purposefully aligned to key standards and are refined to support the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) shifts, offer a range of learning opportunities that promote student thinking. (1.1)
 - Students benefit from a cohesive math curriculum that spirals across grades and emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving skills that is aligned to the rigor of the Common Core Math Standards (CCMS). The school created a strategies tool kit for each unit of study in math for every grade to help students solve real world word problems. Both students and teachers rely on the tool kit during math lessons and independent work time to support differentiated students' needs. Exemplars are used in grades K-5 challenging students to use their skills and concepts learned to answer extended responses and explain their reasoning. Students also benefit from an extra period of math that is taught by a math cluster teacher that reinforces the shifts that are needed to support the CCMS. To support the shifts in literacy, the school has prioritized reading, writing and discussion that are grounded in text based evidence. Curriculum maps were updated to include *Close Read* and *Annotated Text* strategies to support students comprehending challenging text. Most noteworthy is the richness of student writing across all subject areas. Teacher comments and next steps are evident in students' published pieces. Consequently, units of study in literacy and math reflect the shifts needed to support the rigor of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as evidenced by student work products in the classrooms on bulletin boards, and student discussion.
- The school utilizes common assessments, rubrics and grading policies to determine progress towards goals and provide students teachers with actionable feedback to support academic achievement. (2.2)
 - The school uses a variety of academic progress measures, such as pre and post unit assessments, running records, acuity and state data to check for student growth and sets benchmarks for individual and cohorts of students. These assessments are aligned to school wide goals of fully aligning curriculum to the CCSS in literacy and math, writing across content areas, using data to plan for all students, and improving teacher effectiveness. Across grades and subject areas pre and post assessments are used to monitor student progress, adjust instruction and plan for flexible grouping. Teachers monitor students' understanding of lessons and concepts through individual student conference, classroom observation, oral and written response, student work samples, and classroom discussions. Students self assess their work and use rubrics to guide their understanding of individual tasks. All students interviewed knew the grading policy and could state how they could move from one level to another using a rubric. In reading and math, students work with their teacher to set goals. For example, one student shared that he needed to slow down, stop and recap what he read before completing a reading passage. Another student said that she needed to read more nonfiction so that she would be better prepared for the state testing. This

data is shared with the assistant principal and at grade team meetings so that trends can be identified and professional development support can be provided to teachers. Students use the math exemplar rubric to assess their own work. As a result, the school's data analysis indicates that 85% of students including students with disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELL) have made progress from the pre to the post assessment on the citywide instructional task in English language arts (ELA) and math. K-2 ELL students have made notable gains by moving an average of two reading levels from the Winter to the Spring administration of running records.

- The principal uses her budget and resources to provide students with meaningful learning experiences aligned to the rigor of the Common Core State Standards to improve student achievement. (1.3)
 - The principal has used her budget to sustain an assistant principal that has expertise in math. As a result of this decision the school has a strong math curriculum that is consistent and cohesive across grades. This systemic change is evident in student work products and in the level of conversation in which students are explaining their thinking across classrooms and grades. For example, in math classes visited, students discussed possible strategies for solving word problems, were able to explain their step-by-step plan for solving a problem, and articulate if it was an effective plan or not. The assistant principal facilitates professional development opportunities based on need and new content matter. She works collaboratively with teacher teams to align mathematical shifts to units of study with emphasis on challenging students' mathematical thinking to prepare them for critical problem solving. She has also been instrumental in guiding teachers in creating math tool kits to support all learners at various stages of learning. A decision to create a developmentally appropriate critical thinking math lab supports the work the school is doing around problem solving strategies. Students have the opportunity to visit the math lab and work with the teacher specialist on rigorous Exemplars to reinforce critical thinking skills necessary to solve word problems with specific strategies that require them to document their thinking. An English for second language learners (ESL) teacher works with a targeted group of English as second language learners (ELL's) across grades 3-5 to support academic vocabulary and reinforce skills and concepts necessary to meet the demands of the CCLS in ELA and math. This group of ESL students has also shown an increase of at least two reading levels from the winter administration spring administration of running records. The principal also created an ESL inquiry team to support ELL learners. This has proven to be successful; teachers across grades use the strategies that come out of this team to support their ELL students. A part time early childhood coach has been instrumental in supporting kindergarten teachers in implementing Teachers College units of study. As a result, the level of student writing and stamina has improved over last year's cohort of students as evidenced by Teachers College Writing Continuum. A full time theatre arts teacher reinforces the rigor of the CCLS by exposing students to text complexity through original plays. For example, a 4th grade Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class read and discussed Shakespeare's *King Lear*. Students were asked to choose the play's central theme, and using evidence from the text, analyze the importance of the theme. As a result of the strategic use of resources,

talent, and time, students are offered opportunities to excel both academically and aesthetically, as evidenced in student work products and student discussion.

- Teachers participate in structured professional collaborations and use this to strengthen instruction and raise learning outcomes. (4.2)
 - All teachers participate on at least one teacher team focused on inquiry based collaboration and a grade team that plans units of study inclusive of pre and post assessments to support the instructional shifts in ELA and math. School leaders and teachers realizing the need to effectively look at student work to support teaching and learning decided to use the Collaborative Assessment Conference Protocol. Teachers voiced that using this protocol has been an effective way to look at student work, make necessary adjustments to the curricula and plan individual student conferences. For example, a teacher inquiry team looked at a target group of 3rd grade students' pre and post assessment writing in which students were asked to read a nonfiction article, come up with an opinion and reference text to support their opinion. Prior to the post assessment, teachers used the protocol to gather observations, question the work and speculate on what the student was working on and what might be some of the problems preventing the student from successfully completing the task. Teachers noticed that the students had difficulty organizing their thoughts and using text based evidence to support their opinions. They discussed different strategies that students could use such as annotating the text, highlighting important details to support their opinion and using graphic organizers. The inquiry team shared their observations and next steps with their 3rd grade colleagues who then created a graphic organizer and adjusted their lessons to support the given strategies. Consequently, the inquiry team in reviewing the post assessments of the targeted 3rd grade students found that all the students' writing had improved.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to deepen questioning to support multiple entry points so all learners have opportunities to engage in rigorous activities and demonstrate high level thinking. (1.2)
 - The school has put a great emphasis on aligning curricula to the rigor of the Common Core State Standards. Teacher teams look collaboratively at student work to evaluate instruction and adjust plans, and have developed a common understanding and practices around targeting instruction to meet most of the needs of individual and groups of students. However, the level of teacher questioning in some classrooms and subjects did not give students the opportunity to engage in responses that support high level thinking. For example in some classes students were asked questions that were based on direct recall from a text, but follow-up questioning did not give students an opportunity to expand on their thinking; thus limiting opportunities for some students to think and respond critically during discussions.

- Further provide outreach to families and students on social -emotional strategies in order to promote the development of appropriate personal behaviors and social interactions. (1.4)
 - Parents voiced that the school provides effective opportunities for academic and social learning to take place in a safe school environment. For example, the school offers a Family Night, cultural events and student assemblies. The School Nurse conducts workshops on various topics such as developing good eating habits for their children to prevent obesity. Students shared that they have opportunities to participate in an awareness campaign of their choice around, "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month". However, parents also shared that while the school provides them with outreach to support academic learning, strategies for supporting social development, such as peer mediation and conflict resolution, has not been as rigorous. Thus, the lack of ongoing external outreach to families and internal supports for students, limits opportunities for both the school and parents to support the development of appropriate social and personal behaviors for all students.
 - All students are well known within the school and feel that they can get academic help when they need it. However, during the student interviews, some students voiced that they sometimes they don't know how to handle personal issues with other students. While the guidance counselor is available they don't always seek out advice. As a result, some students do not always receive in school support on dealing with social conflicts, thus limiting their ability to develop personal behaviors to support their learning needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Charles W. Leng School 31R054	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