

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**The Michael J. Petrides School  
Elementary through High School**

**R080  
715 Ocean Terrace  
Staten Island  
NY 10301**

**Principal: Joanne Buckheit**

**Dates of review: May 7-8, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton**

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

### **Information about the school**

The Michael J. Petrides School is an elementary, middle and high school with 1,260 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 19% Black, 18% Hispanic, 55% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 – 2012 in the kindergarten through grade 8 division was 95.6%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011-2012 in the high school division was 90.0%

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Professional collaboration is a high priority and faculty benefit from varied opportunities to share and develop strengths as individuals and members of the teaching community. (4.2)
  - The school has a variety of teacher teams across content and grade levels with all teachers a part of a team. As a result of feedback from faculty and in reviewing data, an elementary school vertical team was established this school year with at least one teacher from every elementary grade represented. This vertical team focuses on the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English language arts, math and social studies. This team looks at the skills, strategies and topics taught in a particular grade and makes revisions to curricula to ensure that topics or units are not repeated from year to year. The information generated is reported back to grade teams as they work on the development and implementation of CCLS units of study. This team reviews units of study and uses a specific protocol to look at student strengths, areas for improvement and instructional implications. During the team meeting attended, this team studied a complex text assignment for grade 4 students. They studied student work, and reflected on the structure of the task administered and its implications, made revisions on the spot, and charted the information to use at subsequent meetings. The school also formed a middle school Danielson framework study group. Middle school teachers are currently looking at lesson design and use the rubric from Danielson around designing coherent instruction to inform their thinking. Teachers study a member's lesson plan and give feedback to each other as well as calibrate their ratings providing low inference evidence to support the rating. The team studied an eighth grade social studies lesson plan during the visit with teachers having established protocols and conversations resulting in constructive feedback assisting teachers in future lesson plan development. All teacher teams have a dedicated team leader who reports to and attends core instructional team meetings in which team progress is shared. Leaders learn about the practice of other teams and bring back the information to their own team. This work has resulted in the improvement of teacher practice as indicated on teacher observation reports and in the development of teacher leadership, building capacity for the school community.
- The principal makes deliberate organizational decisions and uses resources to support the school's instructional goals and address the learning needs of staff and students to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
  - The principal strategically allocates school funding to successfully meet its instructional goals. As a part of a grant from the Staten Island Foundation, the school entered into partnerships with other local schools to share professional development offerings from national specialists in particular content areas. The school takes full advantage of the professional development in English language arts and social studies offered by their network. Teachers are expected to incorporate their

learning lessons and supervisors look for implementation as a part of the feedback process. In looking at data from high school students around credit accumulation and listening to student feedback, course additions are made to meet student needs and interests. For example, a course in forensics for students needing support before taking Regents level courses was added this year. There is a dedicated computer lab for students who struggle to accumulate credits. They are given the opportunity to take on line courses as a way of meeting their learning needs and gaining credits. Advanced Placement and College Now courses are offered to all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, providing all students with access to higher learning. Elementary students also are provided with enrichment offerings as higher achieving students in grades 4 and 5 work with high school math teachers weekly. Licensed art and music teachers work with students at all levels. The school looks at long range planning to prepare students for college and career starting from kindergarten. Graduates, many of whom attended the school from kindergarten through grade 12, complete a survey on what the school could have done better to prepare them. As a result, the school revises course offerings and reflects on the CCLS units of study, specifically around the incorporation of behaviors enabling students to grapple with complex text and to justify their thinking in problem solving. College students return to school to meet with students and families at kindergarten orientation and speak about college and career and the skills and preparation needed for success beginning with the first school experience. This work results in improvements in teacher practice around core content areas as well as in students experiencing rigorous and engaging course offerings and supports to meet graduation requirements.

- Curriculum is purposefully aligned to key standards and the instructional shifts, offering a range of rigorous learning opportunities that promote high levels of student learning. (1.1)
  - Students are provided with support around close reading of complex text across all content areas as well as in writing essays using informational text and writing arguments. They are encouraged to utilize evidence from text to support their writing with lessons focused on this skill from kindergarten through grade 12. Students across the school have developed habits around grappling with complex text and writing stronger paragraphs and essays reflecting textual evidence. Pre- and post-assessments are a part of the CCLS aligned units of study and reflect the focus of these key standards and inform teachers whether students are meeting them. This shift along with the shifts around the infusion of non-fiction text and acquiring academic language are reflected in both curricula maps and classroom visits with revisions made based on assessment data. Curricula in math has been revamped to reflect units that focus more deeply on particular topics and with students solving problems with real world applications. The instructional shifts in math incorporated into curricula include students solving problems independently and students having discussions with one another around their work, modeling their strategies with multiple solutions supported. The school is also eager to have students meet the demands of college and career. Graduates were surveyed around what the school could do better in preparing students for the world of college and career. High school teachers focus carefully on ensuring that curricula enables

students to be ready to tackle college level work and to enter college without having to take remedial courses. They study the expectations around the City University of New York (CUNY) entrance testing and incorporate the skills and strategies necessary for college work into curricula. Additional science and math courses, specifically engineering, were added as elective course offerings. All students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, may take Advanced Placement and College Now courses from a wide array of offerings including writing, world history, American government, biology, statistics, and calculus. This work has resulted in students being prepared for the rigors of college and career.

- The school aligns common assessments to curriculum and uses rubrics to provide feedback to students, determining student progress toward goals and making adjustments to curricula. (2.2)
  - Within each CCLS aligned unit of study, pre- and post-assessments assess strengths as well as gaps in learning. Results in English language arts and math are tracked vertically to monitor student progress by grade as well as to determine the implications for future work. Formative assessments have been developed for all units of study and the results are used to make adjustments to lessons and units. The school's grading policy was revised this year to focus around the CCLS units of study in the core subject areas. Reporting on student progress has shifted with updated elementary school report cards reflecting the CCLS and the expectations for each unit of study. Progress reports are sent home between the report card cycles. Middle and high school students and families use Pupil Path, an internet based system with course expectations listed and frequently updated assessment results. In addition, teachers study the results from Acuity math assessments in grades 3-8, Acuity English language arts testing in high school and the Teacher College Reading and Writing Assessments, administered four times per year, in Kindergarten through grade 8. Information from these assessments yields data about areas of need such as comprehension of complex text which informs future lessons and units. Teachers check for understanding through the use of exit slips across disciplines. Results are used to group students or to adjust grouping of students. Some teachers use student interactive response systems which provide immediate assessment and adjustment to current and future lessons. Students consistently receive feedback from rubrics and speak of their next steps. Students also self-assess their writing using student friendly checklists and conduct peer assessments. For example, students in the advanced placement writing and American government classrooms are divided into cohorts of four students, each with a student leader, to facilitate peer feedback practices around essay writing. Students reported that this system is very helpful as students provide comments and insights on ways they can improve their work. A student also stated this structure is similar to systems used at the college level saying, "I feel very prepared for the college world having had this experience." This work has resulted in teachers addressing specific student needs, revisions to curricula and student ownership of their work.

- The school has established effective systems for observing and monitoring teacher practice with a clear focus on improving pedagogy and student performance. (4.1)
  - At the start of the year, all teachers completed a self-assessment around their practice and set professional learning goals addressing the teaching competencies which have been a major focus for the school: coherent instruction, using questioning and discussion techniques and using assessment in instruction. Progress toward meeting these goals is followed up throughout the school year through written and oral feedback around the short cycles of observations. Supervisors calibrate with one another, conduct observational rounds together on a weekly basis and meet to discuss their findings in order to norm their practice. School leaders created a professional development plan, customized for each teacher based on this data and use trends from observations to update and adjust as necessary. The school is in year three of conducting Instructional Rounds. Teachers participate in structured inter visitations of classrooms with specific expectations around what to view and use protocols around the sharing of evidence and feedback. The “look fors” have evolved over the three years with revisions made over time to improve the process. Teachers reported that this system of inter-visitiation, feedback and professional development has helped them greatly as they look at their practice and break down barriers. After benchmarking teachers in the competency around questioning and discussion, 58% of teachers have improved at least one level on the Danielson rubric to date. Administrators and teachers also study student data connecting student work outcomes to the effectiveness of teacher practice. Student work resulting from each CCLS unit of study and the percentage of students meeting the standards is carefully reviewed by supervisors and teacher teams. Implications are recorded and referenced at subsequent team and individual meetings. For example, results from a math CCLS unit of study in grade 5 from last year were compared to the results from the same unit taught this year. There was a 20% gain in the overall scores of students at Level 3 or 4. In teaching a 9<sup>th</sup> grade CCLS unit in English language arts, there was an increase of 33% in the scores of students at Levels 3 and 4 compared to last year. All of this work has resulted in improved teacher practices and increased student outcomes.

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

- Build on the articulated set of beliefs on how students learn best to ensure that all students are afforded instructional strategies to support their learning and classroom activities that maximize student engagement. (1.2)
  - High school lessons are consistently engaging with student interaction at the heart of the work. Students work and have discussions in groups or pairs with teachers purposefully grouping students using data from assessments and classroom work. This work is typically enhanced and enriched by students utilizing various forms of technology including interactive boards, computers, and ipads. Teachers facilitate lessons on the whole, however, in some elementary and middle school level classrooms, teachers dominated in a few of the lessons viewed. Students worked together across most classrooms visited but, in a few

cases, teachers provided the same assignment for all students without providing multiple entry points for students who needed them. As a result, some students are not afforded opportunities to participate in rich discussion around their work and to be met at their entry points.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

| School name: Michael J. Petrides / R 080  | UD                    | D        | P                 | WD        |                   |           |                       |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Instructional Core</b>   |                       |          |                   |           |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>  | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 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?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 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?          |                       |          | <b>X</b>          |           |                   |           |                       |
| 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?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| <b>School Culture</b>   |                       |          |                   |           |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i>   | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Systems for Improvement</b>  |                       |          |                   |           |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school ...</i>   | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 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?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 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?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 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? |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 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?  |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| 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?   |                       |          |                   | <b>X</b>  |                   |           |                       |
| <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> |