

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**The Lewis and Clark School**

**Middle- High School X012**

**2555 Tratman Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10461**

**Principal: Dr. Kuvana Jones-Sanders**

**Dates of review: May 6-8, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Adrienne Edelstein**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Lewis and Clark school is a middle/high school with 220 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 43% Black, 55% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 72% of the students enrolled and girls account for 28%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 61.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school offers Common Core-aligned curricula that include a range of learning experiences meeting the needs of its diverse student population and promoting high levels of thinking. (1.1)
  - The school uses the Unique Learning System, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for students with intellectual disabilities and the Common Core. Org, units of study in all subjects for students assigned standardized assessment. Standards-driven rubrics that emphasize rigor are used that are appropriately adapted for students with cognitive disability. Students' work products are reviewed and measured to continuously refine tasks and teaching strategies. The rubrics provide the ability to assess learning across a continuum of cognitive levels for skills that are aligned or connected to grade level CCLS. Units of study are data-driven and thematically designed to the school's chosen key standards, speaking and listening 1 and writing 2, and citywide instructional shifts. They include an essential question as each lesson's focus to guide questions and promote engaging conversations. The impact of this work is evident in an increase in high school credit accumulation for the standardized assessment students, 64% earning one or more credits in January, 2013 compared to 37% in June, 2012. Likewise, for alternate assessment students, in 2012-2013 on the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) exam, 77% scored a level four on both the English Language Arts (ELA) and math as compared to 61% in 2011-2012.
- School leaders provide effective feedback from the strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observation coupled with the provision of high quality professional development to continuously support teacher growth. (4.1)
  - Highly effective systems for conducting teacher observations to evaluate teacher effectiveness focus on the school's chosen competencies within the Danielson framework. The areas of focus are lesson planning and preparation and using questioning and discussion techniques to push student thinking. To support teachers, including those who are new, in improving pedagogy the instructional cabinet, comprised of administration, school coach and lead teacher, developed a suggested lesson plan template that is utilized by 85% of all teachers. School leaders conduct two short observations and one formal observation per semester, each followed by the review of the teacher's corresponding work and data. All data from feedback sessions is uploaded to ARIS Learn to provide transparency of the process enabling teachers to view ratings and next steps established during post observation conversations with administrators. Formal observation documents identify where observers saw teachers applying this feedback to their instructional practices. Learning plans include a self assessment, goal setting developmental actions, measures of progress, resources and supports needed, as well as anticipated student outcomes, are developed by teachers and reviewed with administrators during mid-year conferences. Teacher needs assessment and areas of improvement as surfaced by the observations, determine all professional development. In addition, the

school has model classrooms representing each of the varying disabilities. New, and teachers in need of support, visit these classroom as part of their individual professional growth plan. The focused cycle of observation and supports for teacher development results in a 27% increase in the number of teachers moving from developing to effective in one semester.

- Consistent teacher practices in support of the school's belief related to student learning ensures high levels of student engagement and increased student achievement. (1.2)
  - Verbal encouragement, small group work, peer-to-peer interactions and concrete supports, such as thinking maps were evident in all classroom visits. All teachers apply the philosophy of "I do, we do, and you do" to all learning activities, and provide supports and scaffolds to ensure high levels of student engagement. In addition, professional development opportunities provide training to infuse the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix into teacher's questioning techniques, supporting a key element of the school's chosen research-based framework for teacher effectiveness. For example, in earth science classes visited, students were required to support, from text-based evidence, their responses to why we need to care for our environment. Students, after a lesson on fracking, were required to write an opinion letter to a state senator, supporting their stand on the fracking issue. These consistent practices in all classrooms support all students' learning.
  - To address the varied learning abilities and styles of students within classrooms, technology is routinely used to ensure all students have entry into learning and the means with which to communicate their thinking. For example, a non-verbal student was able to participate in a debate using an augmentative adapted communication (AAC) device which is appropriately programmed for each lesson. In addition, in all classrooms visited, paraprofessionals worked with pre-identified groups of students on individualized learning tasks. As a result of the targeted supports provided to close the achievement gap, 72% of standardized assessment students had a level increase on the Qualitative Reading Inventory-5 (QRI-5) and 78% of the alternate assessment students had gains on the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI).
- Common rubrics and assessments are utilized across the school to provide accurate feedback to both students and teacher and make adjustments to curriculum and instruction. (2.2)

The school uses a variety of assessments aligned to standards in all content areas, for analyzing and monitoring student achievement across grades in an effort to provide actionable feedback, such as next steps to all students. Cohorts of teachers analyze data from SANDI, Unique Learning System, Ed-performance, and QRI-5, enabling them to examine student progress and identify strengths and challenges for lower and higher achieving groups, including English language learners (ELLs). Groups of teachers in the professional learning communities (PLCs) design content specific rubrics that are aligned to the lesson's objective and task expectations, allowing multiple entry points via the inclusion of alternate descriptors from district wide alternate assessment rubrics.

Furthermore, units of study and content area lessons are adjusted by these teams to provide additional support according to students' trends and identified needs. This results in curriculum and instruction that integrates skill and content and is correlated to student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals.

- Students self-assess using student-friendly rubrics and partner with their peers to review their work. Checks for understanding observed during lessons include checklists, thumbs-up and restating learning. In addition, students produce an exit slip which give them meta-cognitive information and provides teachers with instructional next steps. Thus, all written work that is revised many times by students before being published and displayed evidences high levels of student work products in classrooms, bulletin displays and portfolios. These practices ensure a cohesive and consistent approach across all classrooms to evaluate each lesson, check for understanding and make meaningful and purposeful adjustments to instruction to support all students learning. Adjustments can be seen in the increase or decrease of prompting levels for individual students and the revisions made to IEP goals.

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

- Build on existing systems to communicate high expectations to all stakeholders about student learning resulting in all constituents partnering to ensure student progress. (3.4)
  - The school keeps all stakeholders informed of the high expectations for student performance. Daily bulletins make staff aware of upcoming professional development offerings, highlight observed best practices in classrooms, and provide relevant school information. Parents report that they are routinely advised for school events, topics being studied and progress towards meeting IEP goals. A monthly newsletter provides generic articles and class information along with resources for parents and progress reports related to meeting IEP goals are sent home every six weeks and at the end of each unit of study. However, parents are not consistently advised of their children's current ability levels in their core subjects, preventing them from knowing detailed information of current performance and what specific supports to provide for their children at home. This limits parents from engaging in full partnerships with the school related to academic standing to ensure higher levels of academic achievement.
- Refine school wide collection of student data by classroom teachers to generate a complete picture of students' progress towards mastery in all core subjects. (4.2)
  - All teachers are actively engaged in scheduled, structured teacher teams that use a specific protocol to deepen their understanding of content and the CCLS. The teams use the inquiry model to analyze student work and adjust instruction to address student needs. Data on the progress of students is shared with teacher teams which have led to a revision of units of study and tasks. Ongoing data analysis is at the heart of these team meetings. However, although each teacher maintains a data binder

for each student, there is no coherence to the structure of these binders across teachers. Administration has distributed templates for the collection of data but not all teachers have properly used these forms. In several classes pages in the binders were blank or partially completed. This hinders the ability of staff to generate a complete picture of student's strengths, areas in need of improvement and progress towards mastery.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Young Scholars Academy of the Bronx	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			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>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed