

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Samuel Randall

P.S. 138 Samuel Randall

Elementary 08X138

**2060 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Lorraine Carrol-Dawkins

Dates of review: January 23 - 24, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Samuel Randall School is an elementary school with 964 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 67% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, in collaboration with significant stakeholders, makes effective decisions that are aligned with the school's goals and key standards to improve instruction and student performance. (1.3)

Teachers utilize the enVision math program to plan and implement units of study that provide learning opportunities that address the Citywide Instructional Expectations and the needs of students. In addition, funds are set aside for celebrations of good conduct, perfect attendance and outstanding academic performance and for a dean to help keep students on track with these outcomes. A school wide writing initiative has impacted instruction, as teachers focus on explicit teaching and utilize a common rubric to evaluate student work. As a result, student performance on teacher made unit tests and tasks has improved, as evidenced by their report card grades. In addition, the majority of grades four and five students are at proficiency level, as measured by the most recent New York State math test results.

- Lead teachers are strategically assigned to all instructional initiatives, including class, team, and school leadership interactions. Experienced teachers who have had demonstrated success have been reassigned to work with classes whose students are on the cusp of proficiency. These processes have been pivotal in creating effective communications to ensure that data driven decisions influence instruction to improve student learning. Currently, the school is backward planning, highlighting number sense and operations in Math, and the use of manipulatives for English language learners, students with disabilities and other students who require additional support to improve their performance. As a result, students are receiving targeted intervention services from teachers who collaborate effectively to meet their needs.
- The administration and staff collaborate well to assist each other in implementing structures to insure that all students receive a high level of support in their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - The principal recognizes the need for student activities and involvement in school decision making to enhance and extend their learning. For examples, a basketball team was formed based on student input and morning monitors developed a system to insure that unopened milk is not thrown away but used later to meet students' nutritional needs. A full time dean supports student's by implementing character lessons, being proactive with parents in progressive discipline for students and by tutoring students when they are in the save room. A part time attendance teacher conducts home visits and communicates students and their families to promote regular attendance and students with perfect attendance receive awards such as certificates and pencils. Teachers and other adults know students and their families very well and there are partnerships with community-based organizations that offer enrichment as well as intervention activities linked to students' academic and social

emotional learning needs. As a result, the school has established a very supportive school culture that is positively impacting students' academic and personal development, as evidenced by a reduction in incidents of misconduct, improved attendance and ongoing improvement in students' performance on unit assessments.

- The school utilizes a common teaching framework to set clear expectations for improving instructional practice and has aligned professional development activities with observation data to deepen pedagogical skills. (4.1)
 - The administration supports teachers and consistently uses data from formal and informal observations linked to the Danielson framework, to provide teachers with effective feedback that informs them of the quality of their work and next steps. Administrators focus deeply on identifying and addressing pedagogical trends and elements of instruction (questioning, multiple entry points, explicit teaching) for which teachers throughout the grades require additional support. Specifically, the school is focusing on having all pedagogues scaffold instruction via explicit teaching. Thus the administration prioritizes network support to address identified areas of need, resulting in strong support for teacher growth in the delivery of effective instruction for all students.
 - Based on data gathered from formal and informal observations, professional learning opportunities for teachers are provided at the network and school level. They include demonstration lessons, participation in intervisitations, on and off site network support, and frequent meetings with administrators to support best practices. Supports also include strategies to improve teachers' questioning techniques and knowledge of the Danielson domains. Additionally, teachers who have experienced success in maintaining high levels of student performance are identified as teacher leaders who assist peers, including new teachers and teachers who have been rated as unsatisfactory. These strategies have led to distributive leadership and the implementation of professional development activities focused on strengthening teacher capacity.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance curricula by integrating academic assignments that promote cognitive engagement of all students in tasks that build their higher order thinking skills and ensure their progress in learning. (1.1)
 - Across grades and subjects, curricula inconsistently prioritize academic assignments that require students to utilize higher order thinking skills and rigorous habits. Some lesson plans show tasks that require students to copy notes for the majority of time and engage in activities that are not reflective of their grade level. There are times when tasks reflect that students will participate in text based discussions and activities that activate prior knowledge but across classrooms, tasks are not rigorous enough to accelerate learning for all students. As a result, the school's curricula does not consistently emphasize academic tasks that provide all students, including students with special needs and English language learners, with opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills.

- Curriculum maps show that each grade is involved in at least one assembly performance that is aligned with a core content area task. The math and English language arts curricula are horizontally and vertically aligned to ensure that critical content area strands are taught and reinforced throughout the grades. However, not all instructional activities are designed to meet student needs, particularly students with disabilities and English language learners. There is inconsistency in the evaluation of student work, which affects the planning and the refinement of curriculum units. As a result, the school does not target instruction as strategically as needed to cognitively engage all students in learning.
- Improve pedagogy to ensure that lessons use varied assignments that maximize learning, by challenging students to participate in discussions and complete work products that reflect higher order thinking. (1.2)
 - Teachers articulate behavior patterns, learning styles and the unique strengths and needs of the students in their classes. Yet teachers do not consistently incorporate this information to determine how to scaffold instruction to address the varying needs of students. In addition, some lessons require little critical thinking skills or lack multiple entry points, as evidenced by observations of classroom instruction. As a result, students exhibit uneven levels of engagement in tasks that promote higher order thinking, most notably in English language arts and math as evidenced by student work in folders and on bulletin boards.
 - Although some teachers use the Hess Cognitive Matrix to examine rigor of tasks, classroom discussions and student work do not demonstrate engagement of students in complex tasks. Across the school, there was little evidence of classroom discussion and questioning that extend critical thinking and problem solving skills. Further, notebooks are not utilized consistently across grades to document learning and thinking, and student portfolios vary in quality, with some containing only three to four samples of student work. Hence, not all students are performing to their potential, as evidenced by quantitative and qualitative assessment data.
- Develop a cohesive assessment system that enables all teachers to know their students' needs, and strengths, on an ongoing basis, to support targeted instruction across all grades and content areas. (2.2)
 - Teacher grade teams meet regularly to analyze EnVision performance assessment data and other performance indicators for their students. Teachers use these results to adjust curriculum and provide targeted instruction to meet students' needs. However, common assessments are not evident across content areas and grades and the data gathered does not paint a clear picture of the progress of individual students in meeting learning goals. As a result, adjustments to curriculum and instruction are not informed by data that accurately captures student's progress.
 - Teachers throughout the school meet on grade level teams to review assorted data, including summative assessment data. However, teachers do not consistently use these results to promote ongoing self-assessment by students or teach essential content area strands or concepts. Further, without regular checks for understanding or mastery of a skill taught, teachers do not realize the specific impact of their teaching

strategies and instructional resources on student achievement. As a result, there is inconsistency and ineffectiveness in modifying instructional strategies to address the academic needs of all students.

DRAFT

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Samuel Randall School	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