

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**The Eagle School**

**Elementary School 140**

**916 Eagle Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Paul Cannon**

**Dates of review: December 11-12, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Eagle School is an elementary school with 658 students from Pre K through grade 5. The school population comprises 36% Black, 61% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% other students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- There is a caring, positive culture characterized by mutual trust and respect where a collegial administration and faculty effectively support learning and success. (1.4)
  - The school has an orderly environment and functions very smoothly on a daily basis as evidenced by a reduction in Online Occurrence Report (OORS) data (18 incidents during September-November 2012 as compared to 11 for the same time period in 2012). Common Core parent workshops, a monthly movie night, and an adult physical activities program that focuses on a healthy lifestyle, have resulted in high levels of family participation in school initiatives. Students express that they can rely on their teachers and principal to address issues and concerns that interfere with their education. Consequently, all constituents are able to concentrate on students' learning needs, resulting in improved academic achievement, as evidenced by student work products and results of teacher made assessments.
  - In addition to the school's single gender class options, the school has implemented a fifth grade departmentalized structure to provide a more personal learning environment for students. These initiatives provide more intimate learning communities. Attendance is monitored daily and the school consistently contacts families to ensure that all is well. Students are recognized at assemblies for good attendance and state that "school experiences are rewarding and students are behaving better". Hence, student performance on academic tasks has improved, as evidenced by high quality student work in students' folders and few incidents of misconduct reported in classes.
- School leaders make strategic curricula and instructional decisions that are aligned to the schools goals and objectives to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
  - Despite budgetary limitations, the principal has effectively scheduled multiple opportunities for teachers to meet in order to support increased exposure in evaluating student work to determine effective instructional strategies. The examination of baseline assessments and student tasks in English language arts and math provide the nexus for feedback and next steps at team meetings. These practices have led to some improvement in student performance on academic tasks, as evidenced by display boards which highlight student work and report card grades.
  - Teachers are strategically included in all instructional initiatives, including class, grade and administrative interactions and collaborations that support school goals. They have developed units of study in English language arts and math, with specific emphasis on closing the achievement gap for sub-groups such as English language learners and students with disabilities (SWDs) and personalizing instruction for all learners to improve their performance. A fifth grade departmentalized structure empowers teachers to focus all instructional efforts in their

content area of expertise. As a result of these models and strategies, students are strongly supported in learning similar content area strands via several different approaches, from teams of teachers who share responsibility for their learning and help them to improve their academic performance, as evidenced by their work in portfolios.

- The school is utilizing the Danielson rubric to improve instructional practices and has aligned its professional development with observation data to support teacher growth. (4.1)
  - The principal has prioritized deepening the practice of differentiated instruction, via the use of Thinking Maps to improve student engagement and work products. This initiative has been supported through targeted professional development and collaboration. A calibrating and norming process is utilized by the administration to gauge teacher effectiveness as per the Danielson rubric, with a current focus on planning and preparation of lessons. Teachers then receive feedback, including strengths, weaknesses and next steps, via a written reflection sheet, leading to a meaningful dialogue to improve instructional practices. As a result, there is a deepening of teacher mastery in providing targeted meaningful instruction for all students, as evidenced by lesson plans and high quality student work products.
  - The school and network offer a continuum of professional learning opportunities (interclass visitations and in class coaching) for teachers. Supports are tiered to address the specific needs of educators, based on identified pedagogical trends across formal and informal observations, to improve classroom practice. Teacher assignments support their strengths and have enabled teachers to share their content knowledge and deepen pedagogical skills. As a result, teacher practice has improved, as evidenced by observation reports and student work.

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

- Refine curricula to incorporate rigorous academic tasks that promote cognitive engagement and immerse all students in higher order thinking that accelerates their mastery of skills over time. (1.1)
  - Although the school's curricula are rich in content, teachers of students in the lower grades are not incorporating rigorous tasks on a consistent basis. Unit plans reviewed do not consistently reflect tasks designed to regularly involve students in text based discussions that promote higher order thinking and there is inconsistent evidence of rigorous tasks in ELA and Math across grades. There is a push to get second graders to write fluently. However, portfolios did not reflect this priority. Curriculum planning prioritizes decoding in English language arts and number sense and operations in math but the school is in the process of developing strategies to re-teach basic skills. As a result, all students do not benefit from curricula designed to provide the cognitive engagement that they need to improve their performance.
- Promote consistency in instruction so that lessons reflect purposeful groupings, academic tasks that accommodate different learning styles, and questioning that maximizes higher order student thinking and learning. (1.2)

- Teachers use flexible grouping based on skill-specific areas of need which are determined from formative assessments. Within these groups, teachers guide students in utilizing various thinking map strategies in completing tasks. However students have difficulty applying basic skills and skill based grouping is not effective in addressing all students' needs. In addition, teacher questioning skills require students to utilize minimal higher order thinking skills. Hence, opportunities to benchmark and provide tiered interventions are uneven and all students are not engaged in discussions that promote high levels of thinking and participation.
- Recognition and concerns regarding slipping performance particularly among more proficient readers, led teachers to prioritize student engagement by continually introducing and utilizing thinking maps as an avenue to provide students with multiple entry points to lessons. During lessons teachers also engage in strategic revisions of instruction to adjust pacing in order to provide students with extra support in completing assigned tasks. However, evidence of higher order thinking skills in work products is inconsistent, especially in the lower grades and for students with disabilities. As a result, teachers are not targeting instruction strategically and all students are not receiving effective instruction, as evidenced by data from formative and summative assessments.
- Develop coherence of instructional practices based on assessment data across content areas and grades to ensure that all students make progress in learning. (2.2)
  - Teacher team's analysis of student work revealed that across grades, children lack decoding skills which affect their vocabulary development. Data from common math assessments indicate that students are deficient in number sense and operations. The school is developing a structure to analyze assessment and instructional strategies in the lower grades to improve student skills in these content area strands. The school is also in the process of developing a cohesive curriculum that is aligned to the common core standards, utilizing rubrics to meet the academic challenges of students and encourage self-assessment. Further, although grading policies are in place, they are not closely aligned to key standards and there are inconsistent checks for understanding. As a result, teachers do not make effective adjustments to curriculum and instruction, resulting in limited opportunities for students to improve their learning.

## Par Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The Eagle School	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>				