

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

The School of Science and Applied Learning

Elementary School 300

**2050 PROSPECT AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10457**

Principal: Venessa Singleton

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School of Science and Applied Learning is an elementary school with 621 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 39% Black, 60% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 92.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes organizational and programmatic decisions that support instructional goals and drive efforts to accelerate student learning. (1.3)
 - The school fosters numerous partnerships that engage all constituencies in learning the curricula and student growth so that all students are afforded opportunities to engage in meaningful work. For example in partnership with Read Alliance, grade 1 students at risk of falling behind in grade level standards have high school tutors who work with them to assist in developing early reading skills. The Sports and Academics Program supports morning and afternoon programs for grades 3 through 5 Black and Latino males and students with special needs by engaging students in both academics and sports. The school has also sustained a partnership with The Good Sheppard Program, which provides outside referral services for housing, grief counseling, and counseling for parents. The two school social workers and guidance counselor provide support for parents through professional workshops and for students through the Children's Assistance Program (CAP). Morning and Saturday programs provide instructional services for students achieving below standards. Additionally, the Saturday Academy provides language instruction for English language learners, and an afternoon academy is designed to enhance the learning for students at or above grade level. The support team indicates that these programs are improving student's social-emotional growth. Thus, attendance is on the rise, incidents are decreasing, and incremental academic progress is evident in students' work folders.
 - Leadership meets periodically with its network and school community to review the school's status and make funding decisions that meet its needs. Recently, the network supported the school in hiring a data consultant to meet with faculty and strengthen teacher skills on the use of students' data results to assist in making appropriate instructional adjustments by examining trends across grades and classrooms. To support this need, leadership programs teacher teams to meet twice per week to plan in support of the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Furthermore, using summative and formative assessments from the previous school year, teachers' programs are reflective of the school's needs. Academic intervention teachers are now assigned to the early grades to provide early intervention and intensive instruction to students, thus providing in a preventative service to close learning gaps. Consequently, focused reassignment of teachers, has resulted in positive student achievement as noted in assessment binders and conference notes, showing evidence of growth by students.
- Across the school, a positive and inclusive culture promotes safety and respect, resulting in a nurturing environment conducive to meeting the needs of all students. (1.4)
 - Leadership and faculty value their community constituency and encourage family involvement via the school's Parent Teacher

Association (PTA), and in numerous school wide groups that families have joined. Additionally, the school sustains Learning Leaders who serve as volunteers in classrooms to support student learning, and community based organizations support school events. An, "open door" policy allows families opportunities and a common location to come and learn, resulting in their supportive partnership with the school. A parent book club encourages the importance of literacy and parents express how it strengthens their literacy skills helping them to better support their children. Moreover, families state that a parent support club has evolved from the book club as conversations about individual and collective needs were shared. Families convey that having a place where they can meet, support one another, and work collaboratively with the parent coordinator, is very much appreciated. Teachers and parents support student learning through continuous communication. For example, across all classroom communities, evidence of student expectations are posted, and reflected in student behavior as seen during classroom visits. Parents indicate that there is a reciprocal relationship between the school and its families that comprises telephone calls, email and one-to-one meetings where they plan and support students together. This ongoing collaboration fosters supportive relationships with families and all stakeholders resulting in safe and orderly classroom environments.

- The guidance counselor and teachers provide support for all students via conflict resolution lessons and activities encouraging positive academic habits and personal behaviors. The physical education teacher supports the Man-Up Global Program designed to teach social skills with a focus on boys in grades 3 through 5. The Sisters Inspiring Sisters to Achieve Higher (SISTAH) program, hosted by the guidance counselor, services girls in grades 4 and 5 through conflict resolution school programs so that students experiencing atypical behavior have opportunities to channel their efforts in positive ways and build respectful relationships. A student who became the vice-president of the SISTAH program explains how she auditioned to be a part of SISTAH, stating, "You have to pick what you are strong in, and write about it! The guidance counselor and assistant principal read the essays and make selections." When asked to describe her role as vice president, she says her main task is to encourage girls to work harder and be respectful. These programs contribute to a decrease in incidents and increase in student attendance and is resulting in gradual academic progress as noted in student portfolios.
- The school shares and encourages a set of school-level goals that is gaining the support of faculty and the school community, thus increasing opportunities for positive student outcomes (3.1)
 - The school's goals are leading the process of unfolding a corporate approach to data-analyses in order to meet instructional goals as delineated in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). An external data consultant is supporting teachers in examining and tracking student data outcomes, and creating student goals that result in effective and appropriate instructional adjustments. To further support instructional goals and challenge all students in kindergarten through grade 5 the school is in the process of supporting teachers on how to use unit results as data that informs instructional plans in English language arts and math. The school leader has brought together a team consisting of a network data specialist, an Australian United States Services in Education

(A.U.S.S.I.E) Editure consultant, and the data consultant, to assist the staff in delving deeper into analyzing data results. During our meetings, teachers expressed positive support toward this initiative stating that they are assisted in the design of rubrics, and that discourse between all stake-holders including students is encouraged, resulting in greater efforts toward building teacher capacity in data analysis, and student learning.

- The administration and school leadership are initiating data-driven enhancements to the school goals so all constituencies understand the needs and purpose of the goals. In collaboration with the data consultant, teachers are now developing lesson plans that include established student goals based on a needs assessment that informs curricula adjustments and individual action plans for all learners. Additionally, leadership uses the Professional Growth Opportunities (PGO) plan based on a teacher reflection survey that is being used to inform teacher growth, design teacher goals, and plan professional development around specific strengths and needs, thus improving teacher practice across the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the school's coherence to make systemic decisions around alignment and integration of key standards into curricula so that all learners engage in challenging academic tasks and higher-order skills. (1.1)
 - Teachers across grades examine curricula and are developing curriculum maps with alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). Lessons are emerging that create authentic learning experiences to prompt students into deep thinking. Units of study aligned to key standards highlight literacy, speaking, and writing standards, and embed content area texts to engage all students in interdisciplinary learning. Units of study also outline a rationale, essential questions, objectives, assessments, and performance tasks that are planned for each theme. Teachers are beginning to build upon and share their work via a school Drop-box, allowing teachers to view and contribute to writing curricula. Even though the school is making efforts to address its learners, plans only allude to subgroups, but do not yet include multiple points of access with specific scaffolds or extensions that deepen student thinking and reasoning, thus limiting student engagement in challenging academic tasks and hindering opportunities to close the achievement gap for all learners including relevant subgroups.
- Improve school-wide pedagogy to include effective teaching practices and multiple access points in the curricula that promotes higher-order thinking in student work for all students. (1.2)
 - Leadership and faculty believe that, "It takes a whole village to raise a child!" The school notes that students learn best when they are nurtured and feel supported. The school has adopted the Danielson framework, which is guiding the design of coherent curriculum. All classrooms are equipped with SMART boards so that teachers may integrate technology and afford students multiple access points in all lessons. Furthermore, teachers are initiating the use of tiered instruction and Response to

Intervention (RTI) strategies in an attempt to meet student needs and increase student achievement. However, lessons are broad and do not yet provide multiple points of access for English language learners, students with disabilities, and other relevant subgroups. Even with resources such as SMART boards, during classroom visitations some teachers used the many features this technical resource has to elevate the rigor of learning, while other teachers use the SMART board in a basic manner as a whiteboard. Questions asked were generally low-level and instructional delivery did not prompt students into higher-order discussions, resulting in limited student achievement as evidenced in the school's iReady ELA formative assessment in grades 3 through 5 showing that of 301 students assessed only 62 students or 20% are at grade level.

- Strengthen teacher capacity in the use of common assessments across grades to determine student progress and afford consistent student feedback that results in effective instructional adjustments and meets the needs of all learners. (2.2)
 - The school has a plethora of data provided for teachers to encourage instructional changes that promote higher-order thinking and student achievement. I-Math, Fountas & Pinnell, Writing tracker, ACUIITY data, teacher-designed rubrics, and student reflections, are assessments utilized to monitor student progress. The school has initiated the use of common assessments to support meaningful discourse around student strengths and needs. However, during teacher team meetings, teachers examining student work struggled with the use of rubrics and feedback to students. In addition, comments noted on student work in some classrooms were specific, while in other classrooms teacher comments were generic, and repeatedly used on all student work samples. Some students speaking of their work were able to articulate their understanding of teacher feedback, while other students indicated that they were uncertain of the meaning of teacher comments and did not know their next steps. Teachers grapple with data analyses and triangulation of student data results to understand the school-wide trajectory. Additionally, in spite of the abundant data available to teachers, analyses and use of the data is inconsistent across classrooms and grades. Thus, there is limited meaningful and actionable feedback to individual student needs, and student achievement is hindered, as evidenced in the mid-year writing assessment documented on the writing tracker depicting only 17% of the students from grades 1 through 5 at grade level.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: The School of Science and Applied Learning	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