

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Dr. Jacqueline Peek-Davis School

Elementary School 012

**430 Howard Avenue
Brooklyn
NY11233**

Principal: Nyree Dixon

Dates of review: February 12 - 13, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Buffie Simmons

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Dr. Jacqueline Peek-Davis School is an elementary school with 211 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 78% Black, 20% Hispanic and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

What the school does well

- The school cultivates a safe and respectful school environment that supports learning, encourages communication, and fosters personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school's motto, "Together We Aspire, Together We Achieve," emphasizes the belief of being a community of learners that celebrates diversity and individuality by focusing on one student at a time. Parents, students, and staff describe the school as a safe and enjoyable place to work and learn. Students said that they feel safe in and out of classrooms, and can talk to teachers, administrators, support staff, and safety agents about their problems. Efforts to support students' attendance and academic growth include guidance and support staff calling homes to assess extenuating circumstances before absence patterns become excessive, and arranging supports that include home visits and counseling for the student and family members. Moreover, parents stated that they believe the school genuinely cares for their children's well-being and learning needs. As a result, parents and staff agree that there is increased community buy-in and interest to support school wide initiatives designed to improve student learning and achievement. In addition, regular weekly meetings are conducted to address the needs of the schools' transient student population, hence allowing the staff to develop outreach strategies to ensure that families are supported and that students attend school. Furthermore, the school's guidance team and a partnership with a professional development organization provide teacher training on classroom strategies to effectively address students' social-emotional needs. As a result, teachers are prepared to facilitate conversations with students about how to handle conflicts and make effective decisions. Parents also communicated that the school maintains an open door policy for families who may wish to discuss any issues or concerns regarding their children's academic and personal growth. In addition, parents shared that the school offers many forums for their participation including workshops, conferences, and events that families can share with their children, thereby cultivating efforts in creating a school's culture that embraces the academic and personal growth of students and adults.
- The school's goals, both instructional and organizational, are tracked and communicated to all constituencies to increase students' learning. (3.1)
 - The principal has clearly defined four areas of focus for school improvement: increase the utilization of technology, building teacher capacity individually and in teams, improving student achievement, and improving teacher effectiveness across the school. These goals are represented in various action plans and are communicated to teachers, parents, and students via several venues including the school's leadership team, faculty conferences, team meetings, assemblies, and parent association meetings. Furthermore, school leadership is also working with teachers and families to track how students are working towards their learning goals, and follow up with families to make school wide decisions regarding next steps for supporting students' academic growth. Furthermore, the school leadership team (SLT) engages in discussions and analysis of student achievement data, and develop and track school wide goals which are housed in the school's Comprehensive Educational

Plan (CEP). For instance, pre and post assessment data is used to monitor the school's interim goals and create checkpoints to ensure attainment of goals. Consequently, the school further developed action plans to address data findings showing how students in the bottom-third have academic gaps in critical thinking and vocabulary development. Similarly, the School-based Support Team (SBST), teachers, and the parent coordinator examine individual circumstances to determine student needs and, with teachers and parents, develop success plans that incorporate counseling and life skills. Collaboration to support school's improvement efforts is evidenced in how the school community organizes to create academic interventions and analyze student data to develop action plans, thereby ensuring progress towards the school's goals. To ensure that communication is maintained regarding school improvement plans and progress, the school leadership sends weekly emails to all staff, thus fostering a shared sense of awareness and action toward successfully meeting goals throughout the school community.

- The administration and staff assess instructional practice, give feedback, and facilitate professional development using the Danielson Framework to increase instructional practice and professional growth. (4.1)
 - The school administration use lesson plans, assessment data, and student work products to provide teachers with targeted feedback and next steps. For example, at the beginning of the school year, teachers' lesson plans were vague and incomplete. After two cycles of observations and subsequent coaching, teachers' plans started to include essential questions, suggested methods of demonstration, formative assessments, and focused student grouping. Furthermore, observation data also demonstrated that teachers needed further support in the areas of questioning techniques and student engagement. Therefore, the administrations and lead teachers attended professional development sessions to develop the school's capacity in addressing these instructional needs. For instance, training in ADVANCE, the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE), Quality Review (QR), CCLS, Depth of Knowledge (DOK), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and Response to Intervention (RTI) was attended by the leadership team to develop targeted professional development sessions for the entire school community, thus increasing individual teachers' instructional capacity. Consequently, the school's process for using observation data, peer observation, and targeted professional development has resulted in increased opportunities for teachers' to hone in their instructional practice.
 - The school leadership, for the past two years, engaged in the pilot program using a Teacher Effectiveness Plan based on the Danielson Framework. Similarly to prior years, where teachers' observation data was logged in ARIS and tracked by assistant principal and principal bi-weekly basis to further design the school's professional development, the administration use ADVANCE to monitor teachers' instructional progress and identify areas for improvement, thus ensuring that individual teacher's needs are met. The administration also provides teachers with additional professional development on how to use low inference data to evaluate their own teaching performance to strengthen teachers' instructional expertise. For example, after an observation and meeting with the administration, an early childhood teacher identified a need to create effective centers, work in small groups, and strengthen their capacity in the core curriculum. The principal and assistant principal modeled lessons while explaining what effective teaching looks and sounds like. As a result, the administration has developed structures to provide teachers opportunities to develop their instructional practice and support their professional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend curricula across all grades and subject areas ensuring that all students engage in rigorous instruction, thus promoting higher order thinking and college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - Teachers and school administrators used data to focus the school's curricula on reading comprehension, reading informational text, and citing evidence from text to increase students' academic vocabulary. For example, in math, the school conducts gap analyses of current resources against content standards to ensure that curricula across grades align to the CCLS and instructional shifts, specifically for the numbers and operations strand. However, math tasks require students to repeat computation for many similar problems, thus engaging students in low levels of thinking. Samples of writing assignments indicate that students are expected to write their opinions about how a classroom citizen should act, and tell why it is important to act that way. Moreover, although there is evidence in the curricula that reveals how teachers are expected to implement strategies to provide multiple entry points, but most lessons reviewed show activities and materials for the whole class, thereby limiting progress and acceleration of learning for diverse learners. While most curricular maps and pacing calendars reflect alignment to the CCLS and key standards, tasks do not consistently challenge all students including higher achieving students who are not afforded the opportunity to engage in rigorous activities and extensions. Therefore, all students are not consistently engaged in learning tasks to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Strengthen school wide instructional practices that engage all students in discussions and high levels of thinking to increase students' achievement. (1.2)
 - Teacher practice is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching and a coherent set of beliefs of student learning. Evidence of a set of beliefs about how students learn best is reflected in the introduction of lessons by making connections to how the content is relevant to students' lives. In early childhood and literacy classes, teachers used partner talk strategies to engage student in participation. Process charts and scaffolds for learning are posted in some classrooms to support learning. However, students were not often able to articulate what the objective of the lesson was or the importance of the content. Furthermore, actual lesson delivery in some classrooms was primarily teacher directed, thus limiting students' opportunity to engage in high levels of thinking and discussion. The school's instructional focuses is questioning and discussion techniques, based on the Danielson Framework, to raise the level of rigor and thinking for all students. However, across classrooms questions were mostly low level and lessons did not always address students' learning styles and needs. In the upper grades, most lessons focused on procedural fluency and computation leading to minimal student discussion and used of content vocabulary. However, most classrooms activities did not afford students with the opportunity to discuss the learning tasks and content, thus limiting opportunities for students to engage in high order thinking and participation.
- Ensure school wide assessment practices that consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and actionable feedback to improve students' outcome. (2.2)

- The school uses many assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell running records, DIBELS, and a leveled literacy intervention system to evaluate students' performance, inform decisions for academic interventions, and monitor students' progress. Although teachers individually and in teams meet to analyze summative, periodic, and classroom level student data, they are not able to pinpoint and clearly articulate specific needs of sub-groups by grade, individual class, or content. In some classrooms visited teachers used ongoing checks understanding in the form of roving check-ins and whole class shares to gauge student progress toward the lesson goals. In other classrooms, however, teachers did not make lesson adjustments to scaffold work for students with academic needs or for challenging students' thinking. Also, student work, in students' portfolios, was inconsistently graded, hence not giving students actionable feedback to improve their academic performance. Furthermore, the use of rubrics and checklists for peer and self-assessments during lessons, as well as other ongoing comprehension checks by teachers, are inconsistently used across classrooms. Evidenced of teachers' feedback include performance and strengths. However, feedback did not include next steps to build students' academic proficiency. In addition, this information does not lead to focused decisions about implementation or monitoring of specific instructional strategies to improve student learning based on identified skills gap. Consequently, the use of questioning, conferring approaches, and student self-assessment opportunities is inconsistent across classrooms, thus limiting opportunities for teachers to make effective adjustments to meet diverse students' learning needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Dr. Jacqueline Peek-Davis 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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?		X		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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	