



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Leonard Dunkly

Elementary School 016

**157 Wilson Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Mary Renny

Dates of review: March 4 - 5, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Leonard Dunkly is an elementary school with 291 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 29% Black, 68% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school strategically creates policies and practices that promote a safe and respectful environment resulting in inclusive culture and students' positive personal and academic behaviors. (1.4)
 - Classrooms and hallways, as observed throughout the visit, exude with an exceptionally respectful and inclusive tone. All students, teachers, and parents actively participate in the Leader in Me program that is purposefully implemented across grade levels in support of upholding the trusting and safe environment. Peer mediators, who are trained with strategies from the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, work with students from all grades and are prepared to hold proactive conversations diffusing conflicts. Student and parent interviews revealed that students internalize problem solving strategies such as “think win-win because everyone can win” or “listen before you talk”, and use them as guidance in their decision-making. Additionally, these habits and strategies are embedded in the daily curriculum and lessons conducted during commonly scheduled morning meetings held in individual classrooms, thus providing opportunities for all students to practice effective academic and personal behaviors. The school also encourages students to take an active role by expressing their voice and opinions, or by participating in student-driven activities. For example, the leadership organized resources to provide an after school arts program in response to student suggestions for new ideas. Similarly, students initiate school jobs such as classroom and lunchroom monitors and recently student leaders conducted a school tour for a group of 90 educators from many States, sharing information about programs, initiatives, and class mission statements. As a result, students take full ownership of their personal behaviors and enthusiastically participate in school improvement efforts. Moreover, the school purposefully coordinates social-emotional learning by creating personalized plans of support for individual at-risk students and families, who are serviced by a team of bilingual Spanish specialists, including two psychologists who provide strategic guidance and advisement and support classroom teachers. The principal and the assistant principal also hold regular assemblies and programs offering additional strategies for social and emotional growth and they mentor individual students. Consequently, each student is known well by at least one adult and has multiple opportunities to seek guidance and advisement. In addition, the school has a very low number of safety or behavior infractions as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Report System and this allows for fewer distractions caused by behavior.
- The leadership sets data driven goals and action plans for teaching and learning that are shared with the school community, driving continuous school improvement efforts. (3.1)
 - The principal has a vision for the school where every class will be taught by effective teachers who know students' individual academic, social, and emotional needs. In collaboration with teacher teams and the School Leadership Team, the school leaders clearly defined this year's focus for

school improvement around a short list of goals: increasing student growth in literacy, planning lessons and units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), improving teacher practice, and enhancing student college and career readiness and social and emotional learning through the implementation of the 7 Habits of Happy Kids. The faculty, with assistance from the support network, initially assessed the needs, based on the student performance on standardized tests, the school's Progress Report, previous Quality Review recommendations, and the results of the New York City School Survey. As part of ongoing work toward meeting the goals, teachers and leaders adjust yearly action plans, apparent in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan. Additionally, regularly scheduled observations, on-going student data analysis from unit and benchmark assessments, professional development, and information gleaned from the Leader in Me program, are used to monitor progress. For example, school leaders utilize observation cycles and feedback to specifically focus on helping teachers improve questioning techniques and to guide staff in planning for major clusters and unit plans in math. This ongoing data gathering has resulted in more purposeful planning for student flexible groups for instruction and in improved coherence in the implementation of the English language arts and math curricula. The leadership also communicates school improvement goals and initiatives to parents, teachers, and students via the School Leadership Team, faculty conferences, team meetings, student assemblies, and parent meetings, as well as regularly scheduled workshops. In addition, parents receive interim progress reports informing them about improvements and next academic steps for their children. Moreover, teachers and leaders regularly send newsletters home that include overviews of current learning tasks. Therefore, students, parents, and teachers agree that there is intensified effort and commitment to improve student achievement and home-school connection while student progress monitoring results in increased success in completion of final tasks in literacy and math.

- The administration supports teacher development and growth with frequent observations and instructional feedback utilizing strategies from the Danielson Framework, leading to improved teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The principal and the assistant principal regularly conduct classroom observations and provide timely feedback with next instructional steps. Building on the last year's professional development, focused on understanding of the Danielson Framework, the school leaders continue supporting teachers in their instructional practices with actionable feedback inclusive of analysis of student work. For example, teachers and leaders always reflect on student data from assessments and plan next steps, such as re-teaching strategies for finding text evidence in literacy lessons, grouping students, and/or providing manipulatives to engage them in comparing and counting numbers in math. Similarly, individual teachers utilize the Framework as a guide for outlining steps for instructional improvement, as evidenced in a review of artifact forms specific to reflecting on teaching. In addition, several teachers said the leadership regularly provides them with opportunities for visiting other classrooms and they have on-going chances to deepen their understanding of the Framework's expectations by participating in school-based and external professional development. Furthermore, teachers said the targeted feedback they receive helps them to improve

questioning techniques and using assessment in instruction. A review of observation reports revealed that feedback to teachers also supports their development with clear expectations that are included in assistance logs that specifically capture next instructional and professional steps such as meeting and observing other teachers or creating individualized behavior plans for targeted students to improve classroom environment. As a result of this transparent system of evaluation, all teachers know the clear expectations and have occasions to apply the specific feedback they receive, thus improving their practice in a self-reflective and collaborative manner.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the implementation and planning of academic tasks across grade levels and content areas to ensure that all students are cognitively engaged in rigorous curriculum. (1.1)
 - A review of curriculum artifacts reveals alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English language arts and math. Furthermore, teachers use the Common Core library, available on the Department of Education website, to plan units of study and tasks in reading and writing. The school's curriculum maps in literacy also feature higher order questions and include strategies for supports and extensions such as working in partnerships. Similarly, teachers follow the Go Math program's guidelines that include essential questions and tasks and supplement it with tasks from the Math Exemplars program. Even though some planning documents include scaffolds for English language learners or students with disabilities, others do not reflect intentional planning for multiple entry points for diverse students, thus limiting their progress and acceleration. Likewise, essential questions are an attempt to plan for higher order questioning to provide student access to rigorous tasks, but, as observed in classroom visits, teachers inconsistently cognitively engage students, hence limiting readiness for college and career.
- Improve instructional practices across classrooms to ensure that all students are consistently provided with multiple opportunities to be engaged in challenging discussions to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
 - School leaders have an expectation that teachers across grade levels group students to meet their learning needs and actively involve them in learning by asking high-level questions and providing entry points for engaging in discussions about tasks and problem solving. Although teachers of classes visited are attempting to implement strategies via the use of differentiated graphic organizers or real-life connections, questioning during lessons is mostly low level and aimed at recalling or retelling. For example, in one class we heard a teacher ask, "Why do you think people would buy items after seeing this advertisement?", while in another, students were asked to recall information from a story read to them. Similarly, embracing a developing school belief around student engagement in group discussions, teachers in most classes are beginning to implement this practice as part of independent student work. However, lessons across the school are still predominantly teacher-centered, thus inconsistently addressing student learning styles and needs, and limiting opportunities for students to access curriculum and

develop higher order thinking. While some flexible groups and partnerships were evident, the embedded extensions and supports for all students were inconsistently implemented, thus limiting student opportunities to engage in debates and discourses about tasks. Consequently, uneven use of high order questioning hinders student access to rigorous tasks and minimizes student opportunities to accelerate their learning and participate in extended and higher-level discussions.

- Increase consistency in the use of checks for understanding and data from common assessments to determine student progress and inform instructional adjustments to meet students' learning needs. (2.2)
 - The school collects student achievement data from standardized and periodic assessments. Teachers also assess students with running records in reading and rubrics in writing and math, in addition to performance tasks embedded in units of study. For example, all classroom teachers track student progress in writing units by assessing ideas, organization, voice, and grammar. The principal also regularly reviews individual and class assessments and provides feedback to teachers regarding planning for next steps. Moreover, grade level teams are beginning to use student work and results of performance tasks to analyze student growth and to identify gaps in meeting the standards. Although teachers analyze the results of formative and summative assessments and make efforts to measure student growth, and group students for learning, there was little evidence they make timely adjustments during class instruction using checks for student understanding throughout the lessons, thus hindering teachers' ability to address and meet student needs. As a result of these inconsistencies, identification of learning needs of relevant groups, including English language learners and high achievers, is minimized, thus limiting opportunities for informed planning around targeted support to advance learning for all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Leonard Dunkly	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