

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Eubie Blake School**

**K025**

**787 Lafayette Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Anita Coley**

**Dates of review: January 6, February 4, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Eubie Blake is an elementary school with 284 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 74% Black, 25% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has aligned the curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts, in order to promote rigorous instruction and academic achievement for all students. (1.1)
  - This year the school implemented the city-wide curriculum ReadyGen for English language arts (ELA) and Go Math for math, which are aligned to the CCLS and instructional shifts. The school identified essential questions, discussion techniques, deepening the writing and using text based evidence to support a position as key standards in ELA. These areas of focus were evident within the curriculum in several classrooms. For example, there was integration of text based evidence in an ELA class, where the objective was to have students read the story 'The Silkie Girl' and answer interpretive questions using specific details from the story. The students collaborated with peers to discuss questions such as, "Why won't Donallan give the Silky Girl back her skin even when she begs him for it?" They used evidence from the text to support their claims. In a math class, students worked in groups to subtract decimals by using base 10 blocks to illustrate the concept and shared their thinking and procedures in completing the task with the class. After the teacher in a science class engaged in a whole class demonstration to show types of energy, the students were given selected objects and asked to identify and explain "why" in writing, using science vocabulary which objects represent "kinetic energy" and which represent "potential energy". These varied activities promote thinking, discussion and academic language usage to deepen the learning. To further support curricula implementation at high levels, the principal hired consultants from the National Urban Alliance (NUA) to work with teachers on the effective use of "thinking maps" to organize information and ideas for higher order thinking with an emphasis on students' cultures to motivate the learners. In addition, the school integrates ELA in art and music for application and enrichment of the learning through the arts. These experiences, which are embedded across the curriculum, are generating greater student participation across content areas, which include students with disabilities and English language learners and challenge all students with more rigorous and engaging activities to enrich their learning and accelerate achievement.
- The principal has made organizational and budgetary decisions in efforts to support school-wide instructional goals and increase levels of student achievement. (1.3)
  - The school expressed that one of its priority goals is to increase student performance in ELA and math. To that end, the school has reduced class size in grade four to lower the teacher to student ratio for increased learning. Cluster teachers continue to use a push-in model to work with struggling students daily to reduce the teacher to student ratio in all classrooms to provide academic intervention supports (AIS). The school purchased additional laptops and iPads so that every student has access to a computer and an iPad and there are in selected classes to present lessons and promote student engagement. This has led to an increase in

student motivation and use of technology as a teaching and research tool to accelerate learning. To customize teaching based on students' assessed needs and promote student progress in ELA and math, the school budgeted funds to maintain the 'Success Maker Program' that provides individual student data reports and personalizes instruction on-line. Additionally, in efforts to increase teacher collaboration, the school has allocated time for teachers to meet weekly by grade level to refine curriculum maps, analyze assessments and student work, as well as plan instruction and share best practices. For example, in one team meeting teachers discussed the difficulty one student was having writing an introduction for an essay and agreed on strategies to help the student that included using story starters. Teachers also discussed the challenges that several students were having with the use of figurative language in their writing and agreed to use exemplars and models to teach the lessons. Furthermore, teachers conduct informal collegial visits and provide feedback to each other. These interactions have led teachers to express that they feel supported in their professional growth and some have increased their repertoire of instructional skills and improved their planning of higher order tasks, resulting in increased student achievement in literacy and math on benchmark assessments compared to test outcomes in the beginning of the year.

- Teachers use assessments and ongoing checks for understanding that provide data to identify student learning needs, adjust instruction and support improved student mastery. (2.2)
  - In response to lower scores over the previous year on the State English language arts and math tests and the school's most recent Progress Report, school leaders and teachers developed and implemented a testing calendar to capture student outcomes from summative and formative assessments on spreadsheets, in order to measure student progress and improve and adjust instruction. Teachers gather data in binders from a range of academic measures that include baseline assessments to track measures of student learning (MOSL), unit tests in English language arts and math, rubrics aligned to the CCLS, benchmark assessments and teacher designed tests. This information is submitted to the principal and assistant principal monthly for analysis and review to identify students' academic needs and plan next steps for intervention with the teacher. In addition, teachers work with individual and groups of students to assess levels of mastery of lesson objectives and provide guidance and feedback for continued learning. Through flexible groupings, teachers make instructional modifications based on the outcomes revealed in student assessments. In one ELA classroom teachers and paraprofessionals joined students in various groups and offered assistance on finding clues from the text, 'The Boy who Drew Birds', to answer detail and comprehension questions. The teacher also checked for learning through student discussions and a class share out. Furthermore, rubrics are used by teachers to analyze students' work products and determine levels of students' understanding, in order to inform their planning and re-teaching. In addition, students use rubrics to self-assess their performance on assigned tasks to determine their achievement levels, thus promoting ownership for learning. Consequently, this has led to students being able to articulate their goals and teachers able to adjust instruction to maximize learning for all students.

- School leaders convey high expectations to the school community through communications that supports learning to ensure success and higher achievement for all students. (3.4)
  - After an analysis of the latest NYC School Survey results that indicated a need for greater communication among school leaders and staff, the principal increased opportunities for greater teacher input regarding instruction, using the expectations of the Danielson Framework to guide the conversations. The school has also provided staff access to training sessions on the CCLS that includes workshops at the school level and at outside venues. Additionally, school leaders hold monthly meetings with teachers to discuss the school designed 'Classroom Data and Analysis Reports' and develop plans of support for students not making sufficient progress. As a result, teachers express that there is greater clarity of instructional expectations and feel supported and accountable for maintaining the high expectations of the school in their professional learning to support student achievement.
  - In efforts to increase levels of communication with families, the school publishes a monthly calendar and newsletter to inform parents and the school community of upcoming events and latest school news. The school also conducts monthly workshops for parents that include topics on the expectations of the CCLS with strategies on how they can help their children meet the demands of the new curricula. These include encouraging their children to read more informational and non-fiction text at home and visiting the library often. In addition to sending home monthly reports on their children's work in school, teachers and guidance personnel engage in one to one conversations with parents and make phone calls home to elicit support from families in meeting the academic and social and emotional needs of students for continued growth. This has led to students expressing awareness of learning and behavioral mandates and parents stating that they are kept informed of academic expectations and their children's progress and achievement.

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

- Develop greater consistency in instructional tasks that generate thinking and learning at high levels and address the differentiated instructional needs of all students. (1.2)
  - In addition to using the Danielson Framework and lessons incorporating the CCLS in core subject areas across the school, student tasks reflected the school's belief that children learn best through hands on experiences and student centered learning at high levels. Teachers also accommodated student needs through grouping and assigning resource personnel, such as paraprofessionals, to work with students with disabilities. However, these practices were not consistent throughout the school. In some classrooms, lessons were conducted whole group for a large portion of the time while in others discussions were teacher centered where questions asked required only a one word answer. For example, in one class the teacher asked, "What type of community do you live in?" A student responded, "Urban." This lessens opportunities

for students, including student subgroups, to engage in thoughtful conversations and meaningful interactions. Additionally, in some classrooms, student work samples displayed on bulletin boards, notebooks and in work folders which consisted mostly of worksheet exercises, did not demonstrate thinking at high levels in all subject areas and did not address differentiated needs of all students, as evidenced in most work products that reflected the same assignment for all students. The absence of teaching strategies that consistently address the differentiated needs of all learners at their instructional levels limits opportunities to promote higher order thinking and adversely affects the understanding and skill development needed to show progress and academic growth for all students as evidenced in student discussions and work samples.

- Enhance systems in place to include all content areas and across all grade levels to evaluate and adjust practices and ensure student achievement. (5.1)
  - The principal and assistant principal collect student work and writing samples periodically and meet with teachers regularly to review classroom data, discuss student progress and next steps. The school analyzes assessment results in unit tests in literacy and math, running records in reading and formative assessments aligned to the CCLS to determine progress at the classroom and school levels. In addition, school leaders conduct observations and walkthroughs to monitor the quality of instructional practices, alignment of the CCLS and use of the Danielson Framework across the school and provide verbal and written feedback for improvement. Teachers visit each other's classrooms and offer feedback to their colleagues on observed practices and areas for improvement. School leaders meet with teachers one to one to discuss identified areas for growth and prepare professional development plans of assistance. Furthermore, the assistant principal participates at teacher team meetings as an active member to support the teams' work. Information gathered from these conversations and inquiries is analyzed to plan next steps and make the needed adjustments to improve practices. However, while systems and structures for data analysis and evaluation of school-wide instructional protocols are in place for ELA and math, they are not yet fully developed for social studies in some of the grade levels. Consequently, this decreases opportunities to adjust curricula, resources and practices to maximize efficiency and ensure student achievement in all content areas and across all grade levels.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Eubie Blake 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 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				
<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 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				
<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 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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>