



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

75K053

**544 7th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Heather Leykam

Dates of review: February 10-12, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.053K is a/an elementary-high school with 410 students from K through grade 12. The school population comprises 47% Black, 35% Hispanic, 12% White, 5% Asian students, and 1% unspecified. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 72% of the students enrolled and girls account for 28%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 84.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrates the instructional shifts meeting the needs of its diverse population and facilitating student engagement. (1.1)
 - Many resources are used to support the instructional goals. Dedicating time and support for reviewing curriculum, the school purchased Unique Learning System for English language arts (ELA) and Equals mathematics program to support students with developing math knowledge and skills. Teachers were provided with professional development enabling them to implement these programs. The school strategically incorporates the instructional shifts across grades, by requiring students to cite evidence from texts, and in the use of a balance of informational and literary texts in ELA. In mathematics the shift from focusing on fluency, to providing a deeper understanding of concepts and its application to real world problems was evident in classrooms visited. For example, students who work at the school's snack store were challenged to purchase items at the supermarket and then present a fifteen percent mark-up for profit. In addition, the Learning Environment Survey indicated that both students and parents wanted expanded vocational experiences. "Overcoming Obstacles Life Skills", a curriculum focused on goal setting in career exploration is implemented, thus addressing college and career readiness skills for all students.
 - Throughout all classrooms visited, rigor was embedded into daily routines and emphasis was noted in making content relevant to real life situations. At one of the worksites, students were asked to design a job posting that describes what work values, duties, tasks, tools and technology are needed to be employed for that specific job. Students created a business plan and crafted resumes. At the main-site, I observed classes presenting their "culminating projects" to demonstrate what they have learned in their unit of study for that six week cycle. For example, one of the classes who had been studying community workers turned their classroom into a post office. At table one- I was shown how to/where to write a message, table two-how to address the postcard and table 3-figure out the amount of postage needed. The school has achieved measurable results in closing the achievement gap and promoting college and career readiness by increasing student placement into District 75 transition centers and adult support services. As a result of this focus, 100% of graduates this year will have earned placements compared to 97% last year.
- Across classrooms and diverse populations, students benefit from teacher pedagogy that emphasizes strategic differentiation with multiple entry points ensuring high levels of student engagement and growth. (1.2)
 - The school community believes students learn best when lessons are relevant, well prepared, standards-based and students are appropriately challenged. The school continues to deepen the work begun in 2011-2012 on the implementation of the Danielson Framework to promote

quality teaching. Teachers emphasize this belief in their teacher team meetings by customizing the curriculum to address this focus. During classroom visits, I observed teachers using the same lesson plan template that stresses: reflective planning to previous teaching, essential questions and instructional strategies. In the lesson plans, there is consistent practice to create differentiated tasks for their CCLS units of study to challenge students' thinking. In addition, teacher teams also address Universal Design for Learning (UDL) concepts to guide lesson planning. It is the belief of the school that all students have the ability to achieve when they receive instruction in small groups based on the next learning steps and make connections to real world applications. Across the vast majority of classroom these beliefs were evident. For example; in one classroom I observed a group of students struggling with a math concept, coming to consensus, and then explaining their rationale for solving the math problem in a particular way. Ultimately, this group helped lead the class in a mathematical discussion. These practices, supported by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, help ensure a through-line of teaching philosophies and school-wide beliefs.

- Classroom instruction/lesson planning include differentiated activities and numerous entry points through leveled texts, manipulatives, graphic organizers, visual aids and assistive technology to strategically scaffold content that facilitates learning for all students. In addition, professional development opportunities during cohort meetings infuse Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix and Danielson's Framework for Teaching with a focus on teacher questioning techniques. Teachers gather student data to reflect on their instructional practices and have a clear picture enabling them to plan next steps to improve students' learning outcomes. Teacher teams brainstorm and define multiple ways to appropriately challenge students so that all learners have equal access to the curriculum. In a science class, students conducted a debate on then question, "Should grocery stores be forced to use local produce?" Some students worked in small groups using graphic organizers to capture their thoughts while another group demonstrated the routine of "turn and share" showing their ability to ask thought provoking questions. One student asked his partner "What would happen if we ran out of locally grown fruits and vegetables, what would we do?" A third group utilized the Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECs) to ensure all members of the class could participate in the intended learning outcome. As a result of the targeted supports provided that bolster student needs and achievement for students who participate in New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) testing show student growth. Scores were raised from 55% to 57% in level 3 and 40% to 46% in level 4 comparing scores from Spring, 2013 to benchmark scores during Fall, 2013.
- Informed, effective and strategic use of resources, partnerships and organizational decisions, ensure instructional initiatives to maximize learning for all students. (1.3)
 - Through strategic budgeting and programming, the principal added three school based coaches for their elementary, middle school and high school. These coaches support classroom teachers in the understanding and implementation of "next steps" identified during observations, resulting in effective instruction. In addition, the school established a job developer/transition coordinator position. Student run businesses are

embedded into their curriculum, the result being a direct impact on student growth as measured by Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) scores from September 2013 – present (138-257). The school engages in a variety of partnerships and grants that provide activities for both teachers and students to complement special content area offerings throughout the school year. For example; Everyday Arts in special Education (EASE), Getting Ready to Learn (GRTL, a school-wide daily yoga program) and Little Kids rock (music performances in the middle school). These programs promote student achievement through high levels of student engagement as well as the nurturing of interests and talents.

- All resources are aligned to the school's instructional goals and key priorities are to increase student learning, both academically and behaviorally, and prepare them for independence outside the school environment. The focus of the school is to improve literacy and math proficiency and the acquisition of relevant and functional based skills. The strategic use of programming allows for teacher team meetings twice weekly to share best practices, review students work and analyze data to drive instruction. Staff time is structured so that teachers have time for inter-visitations focusing on the delivery of instruction (workshop model) and questioning skills. Teacher schedules have also been structured to support in-class coaching; teachers can meet with school and District coaches in the areas of literacy, mathematics and positive behavior supports to review feedback and make instructional adjustments. This has resulted in consistency in pedagogical practices, as evident in the different classes visited. The school has cohesively established a protocol that is consistently utilized during teacher team meetings to focus on and plan culminating demonstrations. This structure results in individualized instruction that engages students in challenging academic tasks that allow for multiple means of representation of learning which are aligned to the school's instructional goals. This is evidenced by 100% class participation in end of unit culminating demonstration across all sites as well as benchmark assessments.
- The use of assessments and rubrics across the school inform instructional decisions and provide meaningful feedback to ensure students take ownership of their next learning steps. (2.2)
 - The principal believes that assessment data is an effective approach to drive instruction and improve student learning. The school uses a range of assessments such as SANDI, Scantron at the beginning and end of each school year. Students complete a Level 1 vocational assessment listing their interests and career goals. These results enable teachers to strategically adjust instructional plans, such as vocational activities presented, as evidenced in teachers' lesson plans. The school's pre-and post-assessments are disaggregated and analyzed by the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) to adapt curricula to address individual learning needs in order to support mastery. Following each unit of study, benchmark assessments are administered to capture student progress for targeted skills. Teachers and students reference students' individualized learning goal throughout the instructional period as demonstrated during classroom visits. Goal specific feedback is provided through the use of a common rubric of student performance. Post-it notes are evidenced on

student writing, in portfolios and on student work posted on bulletin boards.

- Students consistently self-assess on rubrics and checklists that were constructed by teacher teams, aligned to their curricula, are student friendly including icons and pictures in order to orient students on the expected learning outcome. Throughout lessons teachers monitor student understanding in a variety of methods including teacher questioning, electronic student response devices, exit slips, class discussions, peer assessment and conferencing. Across classrooms, teachers provide time for students to self-monitor and assess their own learning, resulting in increased student ownership. Teacher teams continually monitor reading levels and achievement on common assessments to track student growth and make effective adjustments to plans. For example: the teams implemented a template for backward design in English language arts to ensure appropriate time on lessons and scaffolding sections of the rubric in response the data. The end of unit benchmarking and unified student rubric has resulted in increased student rigor as evidenced in student portfolios.
- School leaders observe teachers using the Danielson Framework to ensure all teachers receive ongoing feedback and clear expectations promoting professional growth toward goals and pedagogical expertise. (4.1)
 - Through participation in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP), the school continues to deepen the work begun in 2011-2012 on implementing the Danielson Framework for Teaching to promote quality teaching. The observation form addresses the four domains of teaching, each defining a distinct aspect of the domain. The school's main focus is on questioning and discussion strategies and using assessments to inform instructional practices. School leaders have developed a rigorous schedule to observe teachers on a frequent basis and provide timely, effective feedback that is aligned to teachers' professional goals. The teachers' pedagogy is evaluated in depth that clearly identifies both areas of strength and challenges. Specific suggestions for improvement, professional development opportunities, both internally and externally plus immediate next steps are given to the teachers. For example, in one observation it was noted "The pacing of the lesson did not provide all students with intellectually engaging activities. During the beginning of the lesson, you utilized the SMARTboard for students to clarify base ten works. You had individual students come to the board while the other students remained unchallenged. Perhaps the other students could have used unit blocks at their desk and then compare their answers to the student at the board". In the follow-up observation the principal noted, "The lesson has a clearly defined structure and the pacing of the lesson is appropriate, providing students the time needed to be intellectually engaged". Additionally, team teaching, inter-visitations and mentoring, support the new and struggling teacher. Data from the observation is recorded ADVANCE, the teacher observation tracking system and shows the progress of teachers in meeting their professional goals. Student work produced during the lesson is referred to in written observation reports and referenced in notes by school leaders. Student achievement data is also considered as it directly relates to improved teacher practice. The impact of this work to date has been the increased coherence, collaboration and rigor in curricula and instruction. This is evidenced by

mid-year statistics from mid-year conversations memorialized in ADVANCE. Based on teacher goals, teacher surveys and administrative feedback, the components of focus are Questioning and Discussion Techniques (3b) and Engaging Students in Learning (3c). Data from 2012-2013 revealed in component (3b), 23% of teachers were Developing, 67% were Effective and 4% were Highly Effective. According to the Advanced Dashboard, teachers growth is demonstrated by 12% are Developing (a decrease of 11%), 69% are Effective (an increase of 2%) and 12% are Highly Effective (an increase of 8%). In addition, for component (3c), during 2012-2013, 18% were Developing, 75% were Effective and 4% were Highly effective. Presently, 12% of teachers are Developing (a decrease of 6%) 77% are Effective (an increase of 2% and 8% are Highly Effective (an increase of 4%). These measures of teacher improvements support teachers' professional goals to improve student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the consistent practice of communicating with families to ensure all parents are provided with supports linked to present and post-secondary outcomes to support their children at home with the CCLS demands. (3.4)
 - The principal consistently articulates high expectations at faculty conferences, collaborative team meetings and individual meetings. Professional development for staff continually raises the bar for the level of work expected from adults and students at the school. Faculty receives support in building pedagogic skill around the use of technology and questioning/discussion techniques in the classroom. Parents stated there is good communication in terms of their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings, school events and celebrations through the use of newsletters, behavior point sheets, report cards and phone calls for successes as well as concerns. However, despite the support staff, such as related service providers offering parent workshops covering an assortment of topics, parents reported they would like a wider variety of workshops to understand what the Common Core Learning Standards and College and Career Readiness looks like for their children. In addition, parents also stated they would like schedules to accommodate working parents. This limits some parents from engaging in full partnerships with the school to support their child's readiness for the next level of academic and social growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.053K	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