

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**The Coney Island School**

**Elementary School 100**

**2951 WEST 3<sup>rd</sup> STREET  
BROOKLYN  
NY, 11224**

**Principal: Katherine A. Moloney**

**Dates of review: Jan 7 - 8, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Coney Island School is an elementary school with 707 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 7% Hispanic, 83% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School culture is collaborative and supportive of student social emotional needs resulting in a safe environment conducive to high levels of learning. (1.4)
  - The school's theory of action regarding culture focuses on ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice and that students receive academic and social-emotional supports. Teachers collaborate with parents and guidance counselors to ensure that students have ideal conditions for learning. This includes articulation of explicit expectations, structures for safety and systems of communication to inform the school of any personal information that may impact learning. Student voice is valued with a student government regularly communicating with school leaders on matters from curriculum, to service initiatives, and safety within and outside the school. Currently, student leaders are focusing on environment and have formed a "green team" that educates the community on recycling and monitors the practice throughout the school. Students articulate that this initiative is developing a sense of pride and respect among the students in maintaining a physical environment of which they are proud. As a result, the number of disciplinary incidents has declined, students feel connected to the community, and they are accountable for ensuring that the school is clean and safe and conducive to the highest levels of learning.
  - School leaders have expectations that students develop into responsible, citizens that demonstrate effective academic and personal behaviors. Faculty regularly engage in professional development to understand how to build the necessary attributes to reach behavioral goals that includes using specific strategies to build student accountability. For example, teachers plan to give students multiple opportunities to demonstrate success supporting the building of persistence. Students have opportunities to self-reflect on their learning, demonstrate perseverance by engaging in tasks that require productive struggle and build leadership skills through participation in student government, Arts programs, and the "green team" or through community service. The school provides families with ongoing training in understanding the Common Core Learning Standards, paths for college and career readiness and methods of supporting student learning at home. Parents have the opportunity to meet monthly at "breakfast with the principal" where they are able to bring up any topics of concern or for discussion. Parents feel that teachers and school leaders are committed to building a partnership and they are actively engaged in understanding the needs of the school and of their children. As a result, there is a positive relationship between the school and families, resulting in students building skills necessary to be successful in reaching their academic and personal goals.
- Teachers use assessments to analyze student outcomes leading to clear understanding of the needs of students to meet their academic goals. (2.2)
  - Teachers use standardized test results, pre- and post-unit assessments, as well as formative, summative, and on-demand assessments to understand student learning. Rubrics align to Common Core tasks and allow teachers to measure student learning relative to the standards thus

informing planning and methods of differentiation and scaffolding. An articulated grading policy sets forth expectations for the use of rubrics and clearly communicates the meaning of number grades as they align to the standards. Report card grades are reflective of summative scores and provide parents with an honest evaluation their children's level of performance in relation to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. Within each lesson, there are planned checks for student understanding that allow for real time flexible grouping for differentiated learning that aligns with student skill level and content understanding. For each task and writing assignment, students engage in peer- and self-reflection activities to assess their own learning as well as to provide teachers data to make effective adjustments to meet student-learning needs. The data collected is purposeful and allows for purposeful planning that aligns instruction to the needs of students and groups of students. As a result, students are demonstrating progress toward their goals with a majority of students moving at least two levels in reading since the beginning of the school year.

- School leaders and faculty have high expectations and communicate effectively with parents so that there are multiple opportunities for families to be active partners toward improving student outcomes. (3.4)
  - At the beginning of the school year, school leaders articulate the school goals and communicate expectations for instruction and professionalism for the school year that aligns to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teacher teams both grade wide and vertically across grades, provide opportunities for collaboration on developing curricula that support the expectations of instruction, specifically planning for cognitively challenging questioning that lead to high-level discussions. Continual monitoring of units of study ensures alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. The principal constantly reinforces the expectations with staff through emails, weekly notices and conversations. This results in a common understanding and shared belief in expectations for professionalism, instructional practice, communication, an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust and accountability between faculty and administrators.
  - School leaders and teachers effectively communicate high academic expectations and a path to college and career readiness with all students and families. The school goals are on display in each classroom with teachers engaging in on-going discussion with students so they understand and can articulate expected outcomes at age appropriate levels. Each grade embeds the academic and personal behaviors relevant to career and college readiness including perseverance, organization, reflection, and determination, into each unit of study. For example, students in the early childhood grades are responsible for keeping their materials and supplies organized so they are accessible when needed. The skills of organization scaffold up along the grades so that students are building more independence in accountability in being responsible not only organizing their materials but for ensuring that they have the tools necessary to complete assigned tasks. Families collaborate with the school and have access to regular workshops to understand the Common Core Learning Standards, college and career readiness skills, and specific strategies to engage learners with special needs, leading to a true partnership between the school and families.

- School leaders support pedagogy through evaluation of instruction that aligns to the Framework for Teaching and overarching school goals resulting in teacher practice that positively affects student learning. (4.1)
  - School leaders are extremely explicit in their expectations for pedagogic practice. Teachers plan lessons using the workshop model of instruction providing students with multiple opportunities to be deeply engaged in high-level discussion and cognitively challenging tasks that demonstrate higher order thinking. Frequent cycles of observation measure teacher practice along the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Administrators provide effective feedback that detail next steps for improving pedagogic practice. School leaders continually analyze data from observation cycles and student assessments to understand teacher skill and impact on student learning. Professional development opportunities align to data and result in improving teacher practice. The culture of the school is one of professional learning where supervisors and teachers articulate feeling extremely supported by the principal and recognize that they are accountable for building their practice to meet the expected instructional shifts that align to the Common Core Learning Standards. Consequently, observation data, as seen in written reports and evidenced in classroom visits, indicates higher levels of competency among teachers to plan instruction that provides students with opportunities to engage in discussion that promotes critical thinking. Teachers use high level questioning to provide cognitive challenge and tasks that give student opportunities to demonstrate learning, thereby moving the school toward reaching its overarching goals.

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

- Deepen curricula across all subject areas ensuring instructional coherence and articulated scaffolds for all students ensuring that all students have access to opportunities for rigorous learning. (1.1)
  - Curricula consists of teacher created units of study that align to the Common Core Learning Standards with differentiated tasks that allows groups of students including English language learners and students with disabilities opportunities to demonstrate content strand mastery. Curricula development and planning units of study are a large part of the work of teacher teams across the grades. Through data analysis and deconstruction of student work product, teachers refine curriculum maps making changes so that students have access to content and skill development. Although teachers use data to differentiate academic tasks to promote engagement and provide groups of students with cognitive challenge, the curricula is too broad in that it does not specifically address the needs of all student groups, specifically those students that are highest and lowest achieving. Therefore, curricula is limited in how it scaffolds appropriate entry points for all students in a strategic and explicit manner resulting in an inability to ensure that individual students consistently have access to activities that provide cognitive challenge.

- Further elevate classroom practice school wide to ensure that all students have access to high levels of engagement and cognitively challenging tasks to develop higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
  - School leaders and faculty share a common belief that students learn best when instruction follows a workshop model with whole group involvement, followed by opportunities for students to engage in high level tasks, together or independently, with multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of the standards. Expectations are for students to have meaningful discussions that represent high levels of cognition and demonstrate critical thinking skills. This supports the philosophy that high-level questions, scaffolds, and differentiation, foster student learning and allow all students, including students with special needs and English language learners access to the curriculum. Teaching in some classrooms represents expectations with several serving as models of practice. However, the level of instruction needed to reach the school's overarching goals is not apparent in the vast majority of classes resulting in missed opportunities for all students and student groups to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and activities that promote higher order thinking allowing for their demonstrating mastery.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Coney Island School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			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>   Underdeveloped	<b>D</b>   Developing	<b>P</b>   Proficient	<b>WD</b>   Well Developed	

