



Quality Review Report 2013-2014

P.S. 109

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**1001 East 45th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Dwight Chase

Dates of review: April 28-29, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Glenwood Academy of Science and Technology is an elementary-middle school with 540 students from pre-k through grade 8. The school population comprises 82% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, and 1% multiracial students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012-2013 was 93.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's curricula and academic tasks support the instructional shifts, are coherent across grades and content areas, with opportunities for all students to engage in rigorous learning experiences that increase levels of achievement. (1.1)
 - In English language arts (ELA), the school uses K-5 Ready Gen in kindergarten through grade 5, as well as leveled readers from the *Treasures* program and other leveled texts to support the themes of the units along with Scholastic Code-X in grades 6-8, complemented by the Holt McDougal Literature program. In math, the school uses *Go Math!* in kindergarten through grade 5 and CMP3, in addition to resources from EngageNY, in grades 6-8. The school's approach to building academic vocabulary and text-complexity is coherent and linked across grades and subjects. In addition, school leaders have provided teachers the opportunity to select key anchor standards, which are supported with rationales that are embedded in curriculum maps across the grades. Among the key standards selected are reading closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it, citing textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from text on which to focus. The school also includes grade specific key standards in each of their curriculum maps. For example, the grade 6 English language arts (ELA) curriculum map includes the Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) RL.6.2, which requires identifying a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details. Each map includes student goals, or "I Can" statements, such as, "I can use details from the text to determine the theme or message of the story," essential questions, enduring understandings, as well as reading and writing plans that delineate what students will be able to do by the end of each unit. The maps also include assessments, supporting texts, academic vocabulary, ideas for anchor charts, modifications and scaffolds, supplementary essays, memoirs, and digital resources, such as videos. As a result, the school is promoting rigorous habits to engage all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), in developing their cognitive thinking skills across all grades and content areas.
- The principal's decisions pertaining to budget, partnerships, and programming support collaborative planning that results in progress toward meeting the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - All teachers receive one extra preparation period designed for common planning, in addition to their contractual preparation periods. The principal also provides a minimum of two mutual periods for teachers across grades to meet and collaborate on curriculum and rubric design, examine student work, and concentrate their efforts on improving students' academic achievement across subject areas. The school purchased *MyOn*, an interactive digital library that includes audio features to model fluency, as well as sentence highlighting and an embedded dictionary, so that students can have access to digital literacy through methods that suit their particular styles of learning. Using embedded Lexile® reading assessments, teachers are able to determine the time students spend reading, the number of books read, reading growth

trajectories, and measure and forecast reading growth. The school also uses Engrade, a platform that enables teachers to post their grades, assignments, and files for students on line, as well as message parents, students, and other teachers. Furthermore, this year the school formed ELA, math, and social studies vertical teams, comprised of teachers across grades and subjects, to ensure coherence as they concentrate on the role of questioning in discussion and explore ideas such as flexible grouping and providing actionable feedback to positively impact student learning outcomes. As a result of scheduling more time for team collaboration, teachers are able to design tasks that support students in citing textual evidence in writing and defending their stance, and their ability to comprehend more complex texts, as evidenced by increased success on rubric levels earned on student writing products. In addition, the school has established numerous partnerships, including *Arts For All*, in which professional artists work with students in the early grades to build self-confidence, self-expression, teamwork, resilience, and creativity. The school also partners with the Shubert Theatre, which has integrated the arts into the school through performances and interactive lessons in the classrooms. In addition, the school received \$20,000 from Councilman Jumaane Williams to further arts education. Through their partnership with the Social Security Administration, the school also obtained more than 150 computers that are now being used to integrate technology in the curriculum across classrooms. These affiliations provide all students, including ELLs and students with IEPs, the opportunity to increase their learning by partaking in extensions of their scholastic program, particularly in the arts.

- The school's positive behavioral support system contributes to a positive environment that promotes learning to enhance students' academic and personal growth. (1.4)
 - The school recently adopted Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), a systemic approach to proactive school-wide behavior, based on a Response to Intervention (RtI) model. By infusing PBIS across the school, school leaders and faculty establish clear expectations for behavior that are taught, modeled, and reinforced across classrooms to support an environment of respect and safety that promotes students' academic and social growth. Practices such as helping students develop work habits and organizational skills and self-regulation are equipping students with coping skills, self-control, and confidence to work through challenges and support the successful navigation of college and careers. The school's implementation of PBIS complements the school's mission to support a safe and respectful environment, which is grounded in five core values-**P**oliteness, **R**esponsibility, **I**ndependence, **D**iligence, and **E**mpathy, and the acronym PRIDE, which is prominently displayed around the school, is used to represent each of these values. Various assemblies are scheduled throughout the year to acknowledge students for positive behavior, academic efforts, and demonstration of attributes of PRIDE. The school's affiliation with *No Place for Hate*, sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League, is designed to enhance a culture of respect in the school community. In addition, they partner with the Morningside Center for Restorative Practices, where lead personnel, including the principal, dean, and select teachers, encourage and practice group communication, relationship-building, empathy, and democratic decision-making. The school's partnerships, along with the recent addition of technology-enhanced programs, have increased staff capacity to further students' academic performance, improve safety, and establish a positive school culture. As a result, students report that they are motivated to

participate in their learning and demonstrate habits and skills that support academic readiness, as well as social-emotional qualities, such as persistence and resilience, which support opportunities for all students to succeed in college and beyond. Even more compelling is that, according to the Violent and Disruptive Incident Reporting (VADIR) system, the school has significantly reduced the number of incidents, which is reflected in their rating on the VADIR index, and indicative of an improved climate that has led to increased student outcomes, as evidenced in the school's 2012-2013 Progress Report, on which they earned a B, with 69% and 65% on the median adjusted growth percentiles for ELA and math, respectively.

What the school needs to improve

- Further enhance teaching practices to ensure that teachers consistently and strategically provide multiple entry points for all students and consistently engage students in appropriately challenging tasks and discussions. (1.2)
 - Visits to classrooms reflect the varying use of scaffolds to suitably challenge and push the thinking of special needs students and English language learners. In some classes, students were placed in data based groups, as they were encouraged to respond to high level questions that stimulated their thinking as they completed tasks aligned to learning objectives. For example, in one early childhood class, in which the lesson objective was to understand details in the text to help readers understand the central message, the teacher grouped her students in data based groups using *A Fine, Fine School*, by Sharon Creech, as a mentor text. One group used a graphic organizer in the form of a three-column chart to identify the characters, setting, and events from the story. Another group used a Venn diagram to help students organize their thoughts as they compared the school in the story to their school. In a third group, the teacher engaged her students in close reading of the text, *The Earth Dragon Awakes*, by Laurence Yep. The students cited text evidence in response to questions about the ways characters in the story respond to challenges encountered. Similarly, in a sixth grade self-contained math class, the teacher used the previous day's exit slips to group her students, immersing them in various activities using the formula of a triangle and parallelogram to calculate the area of given shapes. One group was provided the formulas and calculators to solve problems while another group worked closely with the paraprofessional as the students measured three shapes, and students in a third group worked independently to calculate the area of compound shapes and create their own compound shapes. However, although school leaders have made student-to-student discussion one of their instructional foci, and teachers are embarking on reciprocal teaching methods and engaging students in collaborative discussions, in the vast majority of classrooms, the practice of asking high order questions and consistently providing multiple entry points to address student needs to ensure high levels of student participation and access to rigorous content is not yet fully implemented across the school. As a result of the variations in teaching strategies, the degree to which students consistently engage in high-quality discussions, take ownership in lessons, and gain academic momentum in order to meet the demands of the CCLS, is limited.

- Establish a consistent common approach to the gathering, analysis and use of data across grades, and individual student levels, in order to examine patterns and trends that provide supports to positively impact students' learning. (2.2)
 - School leaders collect running records data on a monthly basis and teachers record their students' independent reading levels, as well as note increases from previous assessments, include year-to-date changes, and highlight the school's relevant subgroups. In classrooms visited, some teachers keep ongoing records to check for student understanding and document student progress using checklists and conference notes, and set benchmarks for student performance at the individual and subgroup level. However, this practice is uneven across the school. Further, data gathered from formative and summative assessments are not analyzed and trends across the school and grades are not shared, thus, impeding teachers' abilities to refine their instructional strategies to appropriately meet the varied needs of their students. Additionally, on some bulletin board displays inside classrooms and in hallways, student work products include rubric scores and descriptive feedback that include examples for how students can implement "next steps." For example, on a performance task dealing with *The Great Migration*, students were encouraged to write a story about a family migrating from the rural South to a city in the North, one teacher wrote, "Your writing is well organized and provides relevant facts. Work on adding a deeper explanation to support your facts. For example, you could explain your character's experience with prejudice." In addition, there was evidence of self-assessment on student work where students rated themselves using the rubrics for the task and identified their own next steps. However, this practice is not consistent across classrooms, as feedback to students is often general, or includes comments, such as "Put your full name on class assignments," thus, not providing students with specific next steps and strategies to achieve grade level proficiency. Furthermore, the practice of using the inquiry process as a high leverage strategy to help illuminate the specific learning needs of students who are outside the school's sphere of success, provide appropriate interventions, and shift the school culture to support continual, evidence-based improvement of student learning, including an awareness of their successive steps, is not yet systemic across the school. Hence, teachers are not consistently reflecting on their teaching processes, relating them to student outcomes, and making refinements suggested by the outcome data in order to support students' academic growth.

- Refine the system for evaluating teacher practice to ensure consistency of effective feedback and targeted support to provide leverage for professional growth and reflection that results in elevated school-wide instructional practices. (4.1)
 - The practice of supervisors providing actionable feedback, offering high-quality supports, or effective feedback related to teachers' particular strengths and weaknesses to improve their instructional practice, is inconsistent among supervisors. For example, in one observation report, the supervisor provided specific comments, such as, "The goal of checking for understanding is to use formative assessment information to drive your next instructional steps. One way to accomplish this is to have a chart that allows you to record the most salient and useful pieces that come out of the turn and talk". Additionally, "Learning Opportunity 130 provides a wonderful introduction to Using Assessment in Instruction." In another

observation report, the supervisor wrote, “Going forward, please make sure that there is always a Learning Objective posted along with the student heading.” Thus, the power of feedback to transform teacher practice and designing targeted support for teachers to improve competencies in identified domains on the Danielson Framework for Teaching is uneven across supervisors, which hampers opportunities to elevate pedagogical growth. Moreover, school leaders have not yet availed themselves of the tools available in the ADVANCE observation monitoring system, such as detailed summary reports of Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) and the score tracker, to streamline the teacher evaluation process and move beyond compliance to leverage observation data to provide personalized, contextual, and embedded professional development. In addition, although the school has a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) Teacher Center, there is limited evidence to indicate that teachers are engaged in high quality, in-depth professional learning to enhance their pedagogical skills and support the deepening of their content knowledge gathered from external professional development opportunities, as well as through internal team collaborations. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to further elevate teacher performance, enhance teachers’ knowledge of pedagogical shifts, and reduce gaps in student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: The Glenwood Academy of Science and Technology | 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 |