



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Conselyea School**

**Elementary School 132  
320 Manhattan Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11206**

**Principal: Beth Lubeck**

**Dates of review: March 18-19, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Conselyea School is an elementary school with 790 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 46% Hispanic, 35% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers create curricula that are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) resulting in rigorous academic tasks for all students, preparing them for college and careers. (1.1)
  - The leadership and teachers have collaboratively developed robust English language arts and math curricula ensuring the full alignment with the CCLS and strategic integration of instructional shifts. The Math in Focus program, known as Singapore math, for example, is supplemented with rigorous problem solving tasks from the Math Exemplars program, and incorporates units of study from additional CCLS aligned resources. Teacher teams also organically develop the literacy curriculum with authentic units, to support comprehension of texts like *The Whipping Boy* and persuasive writing in grade 3, is based on thoughtfully selected class novels for text complexity, and by using supplementary resources, such as, the McGraw Hill Treasures program in lower grades. Instructional shifts, purposefully embedded in curricula and units, emphasize balance of literary and informational text, writing from sources to form opinions, building academic and content vocabulary, or fluency and conceptual understanding in math. A review of curriculum artifacts revealed that individual teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders ensure planning coherence across grades and subjects. For example, all teachers deliberately plan academic and content language by including in their lessons “wondrous words”, a school term commonly used across grade levels, and specific to developing new and challenging vocabulary. Similarly, all unit and lesson plans contain high-order questions, “I can” statements, and multiple differentiation strategies planned for identified groups of students, including English language learners, special education students and high achievers, thus providing all learners with access to rigorous curricula. English language arts units, for example, consistently include three differentiated tasks and strategy lessons with graphic organizers, leveled text, and tiered open-ended questions, based on the Depth of Knowledge levels, for students to respond to a common text and engage in a group discussion about challenging tasks. Furthermore, all teachers, from kindergarten to grade 5, plan lessons and tasks that are connected to real life experiences, and integrating school themes along with literacy and math skills. During the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, for example, all students explored the concept of estimation by collecting data from neighborhood places, as seen on bulletin board displays. Similarly, students regularly conduct research and write opinion essays from different sources on topics such as effects of global warming or donating to charities to fight poverty, that deepen their thinking, hence preparing them for the demands of the standards and future college and careers. Subsequently, all students across the grades, including English language learners and special education students, are able to access rigorous and engaging curricula, thus demonstrating improved reading comprehension and math understanding in their discussions and written responses to tasks by citing more text based evidence and showing multiple ways of problem solving.

- The school deliberately uses ongoing common assessments and provides meaningful actionable feedback to students and teachers leading to effective instructional adjustments so that all students demonstrate increased mastery. (2.2)
  - All teachers across classrooms use standards-based rubrics to assess personal narratives and informational writing, as well as, multi-step math tasks embedded in units of study. Moreover, all teachers align daily assessments of reading comprehension to currently read texts. The school has also created a grading policy that is reflective of all assessments and has adjusted a periodic progress report for parents, indicating student growth toward grade level benchmarks with specific feedback for improvement. In addition, teachers introduce rubrics at the beginning of units to set expectations and then strategically use these rubrics to provide regular and actionable feedback to students that is cohesive and specific. For example, all teachers give feedback throughout the drafting process by providing strategies for citing evidence in informational writing or stronger voice in personal narratives. As a result of this thoughtful and deliberate approach, all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, show growth and are given an opportunity to master their writing on and beyond grade level as evident in writing galleries across the school where each student's work is presented with drafts, teacher feedback and final published pieces. Furthermore, the school's consistency in the use of assessments and feedback has led to student success demonstrated in completion of math problem solving tasks across grade levels. Additionally, all teachers purposefully use results from reading running records, item skills analysis, conferring and end of unit assessments to track student progress towards grade level goals and to adjust their daily lessons and instruction to strategically group students for learning as observed in all classrooms we visited. As a result, all students across the grades are on the trajectory to achieve grade level benchmarks, as evidenced in class growth charts for reading running records. School leaders and teachers also create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across subjects and grades, reflected in the constant monitoring system, embedded in units of study, and measuring student achievement. Consequently, the upper grade students are outperforming their district and network peers in math and English language arts as evident on the latest citywide benchmark assessments where, for example, 57% of third grade students showed growth in English language arts as compared to 43% citywide. Similarly, 37 out of 40 identified lowest third students in grade four made progress on the school-based periodic assessment in literacy, thus demonstrating increased mastery toward grade level goals.
  
- The principal makes strategic decisions to use resources in alignment with school goals that result in strengthened instructional capacity, professional collaboration and improved student work across the school. (1.3)
  - The administration purposefully utilizes the school budget and a vast number of community-based partnerships and residencies to ensure all students have access to extracurricular and enrichment programs such as theater, music, visual arts, yoga and dance. Additionally, across the grades all students are intentionally scheduled for Spanish, project-based, and community service enrichment classes. Therefore, all

students have opportunities to extend their learning by studying the arts, a foreign language, and participating in school-wide programs, centered on character education and community giveback initiatives, such as helping a school impacted by Hurricane Sandy last year. The principal also strategically utilizes two achievement coaches who are scheduled to work alongside the teachers to provide ongoing support for data driven instruction. Moreover, they research Common Core aligned programs and units, to be informed about ordering curricular materials, and facilitate school-wide planning and integration of instructional shifts, resulting in school-wide plans to include expository and opinion writing across grade levels. These organizational decisions and instructional initiatives, supported by strategic partnerships, are effectively extending learning opportunities that connect to the school's vision of creating a community of life-long learners and have resulted in increased academic rigor evident in meaningful student responses to tasks that integrate instructional shifts in literacy and math.

- All teachers are deliberately scheduled to work daily in grade level teams to collegially develop and plan units, lessons, and academic tasks as reflected in the school's weekly program. Grade level teachers also share their professional responsibilities in planning individual units of study and refining rigorous tasks, thus aligning their work with the school's instructional goals. Additionally, there are vertical teams of teachers of Gifted and Talented classes, lead teachers from across the grades, and common time is scheduled for cluster and enrichment teachers, as well as English as a second language and special education teachers to plan with grade level teams. These teams also meet to specifically analyze student work and assessment results and to strategically plan next instructional steps for groups of students in all grade levels. Furthermore, teachers focus their time on sharing strategies for developing open-ended questions and using assessments in instruction. Consequently, all teachers have planned and structured opportunities to work on the improvement of academic tasks and advancing professional capacity as evidenced in increased student progress, especially in reading, as evidenced in the improved results of reading running records indicating growth of one or more reading levels.
- School leaders effectively communicate and embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, successfully partnering with teachers and families to support progress of all students. (3.4)
  - The leadership models and promotes high expectations for professionalism and instruction by planning together with teacher teams, ensuring strategic school-based and external professional development in understanding of the Danielson Framework. Additionally, school leaders provide all teachers with timely and actionable feedback from regularly scheduled classroom observations to note teacher progress. The principal also collects student achievement data and work, and gives feedback in the form of next steps, thus partnering with teachers in creating a culture of mutual accountability for student success. Moreover, the administration ensures all teachers have multiple opportunities to visit each other's classrooms or host professional development to share and improve their instructional practices, especially in the area of student engagement in rigorous questioning and discussions. Subsequently, the

school emanates with the culture of professional collaboration reflected in increased student engagement in independent discussions about tasks.

- The school teams up with families in a dialogue about academic and behavioral expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness by providing regular feedback in forms of periodic progress reports with next steps, monthly class newsletters, curriculum orientations and by devising, with parental input, individual student academic action plans. Parents agree that this year's expectations are more challenging and that the school helps each individual child to meet them by sharing strategies for problem solving, reading complex text, independent discussions and questioning. As a result, all families have many opportunities and resources to learn about ways to help students at home. Additionally, community service projects and abundant relationships with community and family members, who visit classes, provide students with continuous exposure to the demands and expectations of future professions in the context of current units of study. For example, an architect is invited to speak about this career to a class that studies the landmarks of the New York City. Consequently, the school successfully partners with families to support all students in their work to meet high expectations and toward college and career readiness.
- Commitment to the vision of continuous school improvement, supported by the entire school community, has resulted in leveraging changes that lead to enhancements in teaching and learning. (3.1)
  - The school's instructional focus on collaborative learning through the strategic use of intentional flexible grouping to facilitate student-centered learning summarizes the theory of action for continuous improvement of academic and social and emotional learning. School leaders, in collaboration with teachers, analyzed student achievement data and clearly defined a short list of goals for the academic success of identified students, building capacity for effective teaching, and ensuring the full alignment with the CCLS. As part of the strategic work and ongoing efforts to meet these goals, the school develops and considerably adjusts action plans by systematically monitoring student progress through the use of performance-based assessments, end-of-unit assessments, and reading and writing rubrics, indicating growth of identified students. The school leaders purposefully utilize observation cycles and teacher professional goals as interim checkpoints to inform and thoughtfully adjust professional development planning, continuously providing feedback and support, especially in asking higher order questions and using assessments for instruction. They also closely monitor the academic performance of identified groups of students through individual learning plans to close the achievement gap. Moreover, the leadership revised action plans by incorporating additional professional resources to further build teacher and student capacity in higher-order questioning and discussions, and to meet the needs of all learners through the collaborative learning. Teachers and leaders scheduled inter-school visitations to learn and implement a reciprocal teaching approach to better leverage classroom changes by giving students broader opportunities to participate in group discussions. Therefore, teachers across classrooms improved their practice in the use of flexible groups and engaging student in learning, while academic and social and emotional progress monitoring has resulted in increased

success in achieving grade level benchmarks across subjects by all students, including special education students, English language learners and high achievers.

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

- Advance instructional practices so that students in all classrooms have multiple opportunities to be actively engaged in higher order thinking and meaningful participation. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms teachers scaffold instruction and consistently provide multiple entry points to facilitate student participation through flexible grouping, word walls, manipulatives, graphic organizers, and real-life activities. Additionally, as observed during classroom visits, students ask teachers or peers clarifying questions. In most classes we visited, students worked in groups and had opportunities to solve problems on their own or with peers. Similarly, in the majority of classes students could access folders with extension activities to choose from when they finish working. Although teachers consistently engage students in learning by grouping them and providing prompts for discussions, the use of strategic scaffolds and extensions varies across classrooms. In one class, for example, a teacher encouraged students to generate ideas for predictions about a novel they read and provided students with different levels of question stems. In another class, a teacher asked the students to make connections to their informational reading and define challenges people face. Teachers' attempt to raise the level of participation in discussions is sometimes limited to answering a group question or problem, thus limiting opportunities for all learners to extend inquisitive thinking beyond teacher directed questions or problems.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Conselyea School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>			
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?				<b>X</b>			
<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?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?				<b>X</b>			
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
<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>