



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

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**The Danny Kaye School**

**Elementary School 149**

**70 Sutter Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Yvette Donald**

**Dates of review: October 29- 30, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Joyce Stallings-Harte**

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

### **Information about the school**

P.S. 149 is an elementary school with 610 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 68% Black, 29% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 11% 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 91%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a clearly articulated school improvement plan that stems from data-driven goals, which are tracked and adjusted as needed to promote student growth and achievement. (3.1)
  - The principal has established focused, data-driven improvement plans that aim to accelerate and elevate student progress and achievement, which is apparent in the planning documents and diagnostic structures. For example, the school's Comprehensive Education Plan has a goal that 50% of students in grades 3-5 will demonstrate a 5% gain in proficiency rates, as measured by the New York State Math Exam. To meet this goal, administrators provide opportunities for collaborative conversations during inquiry work meetings, common planning meetings in order to monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices and curricular adjustments. Observation of pre-assessment in math indicated that teachers performed an item analysis with instructional next steps for each student. Student progress and other goal related updates are shared at bi-weekly math team meetings. Concurrently, administrators brief the teams on their observation of strategic classroom practices that were identified to accelerate students toward meeting the math goal. Additionally, collaboration during vertical curriculum team meetings and the extended instructional cabinet comprised of grade leaders assures coherence and alignment of curricular units across grades and content. During regular meetings with curriculum teams, students and parents, the principal gathers relevant data that helps to monitor and adjust plans. Such strategic goal-oriented practices allow the principal to make timely adjustments in order to meet the school's goals to provide expert instruction and promote increased student progress.
  - Analyzing multiple forms of data in order to assess progress towards goals is supported by periodic check-ins and based on the school's goal of using assessment to inform instruction. Review of observation notes and student writing samples indicated a need to strengthen students' writing ability. In response, the decision was made to add a writing focus across content areas with rubrics in order to meet the goals of increased writing stamina and volume along with conferring with students. The school is committed to establishing an optimal learning environment that offers extended periods of time for students to practice writing skills and implement strategies that had been taught using a workshop model approach. Teachers receive professional support on writing instruction through Lunch and Learns, literacy coach, consultants and administration in order to meet school improvement goals. To ensure students have sufficient time to engage in rigorous writing activities and to maximize teaching plans, the prep schedule was revamped to provide this additional time. Data-driven targeted small group instruction and focus on writing aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in response to their stated goal is the hallmark of the purposeful work conducted by the school. Across classrooms, such school-wide assessment practices track student understanding and progress toward goals via common assessments, conferences and CCLS aligned rubrics to modify instruction and ensure student progress.

- School-wide assessment practices track student progress toward goals using common assessments and CCLS aligned rubrics to modify instruction and ensure student progress. (2.2)
  - Teachers perform regular assessments including Teacher's College benchmark assessments, performance tasks and pre-and-post assessments for every unit. On a bi-weekly basis administration meets with literacy and math teams to review student progress noted in team meetings in alignment with what they have observed in classrooms. In one conversation with the math team, it was determined that re-teaching in its current state on Flex-Fridays was not having a positive impact on student learning. Since teachers believe in depth versus breadth of curriculum, they decided to have students work with exemplars as a standard practice across the grades. This attention to student performance based on closely monitored progress and strategic instructional adjustments promotes improved student outcomes.
  - Teachers meet to review results of common assessments and plan for re-teaching and pedagogical refinements. Benchmarks are used to measure the progress of the instructional focus and are reviewed cyclically. For example, during the September/October curriculum and grade meetings, teachers looked at the CCLS aligned rubrics in literacy to note student progress in their identified area of instructional focus which is narrative writing that includes key ideas and details derived from the text. In math, teachers reviewed the CCLS aligned rubrics that addressed the identified focus of problem solving with attention toward developing a shared understanding of the rigor in the performance task. In addition, student performance and Tier 2 students were identified and plans developed to address the specific student needs. The school has a scheduled bi-monthly team meetings targeted to review ongoing assessments. Observation of a teacher team meeting notes indicated teachers' noticings on the narrative unit pre-assessment data collection form. Consequently, small groups were formed, instructional strategies noted that are aligned to CCLS and this data will be used during the post-assessment analysis to track student progress. This careful and systematic monitoring and adjustment of instruction based on data analysis enables teachers to make targeted and timely modifications designed to support student academic progress.
- The school makes effective and efficient use of resources through strategic staffing and scheduling to support the school's goals in meeting students' learning objectives. (1.3)
  - The school ensures that all teachers are engaged in planning and curriculum team meetings and schedules all teachers for three to four weekly sessions. Meeting notes from a kindergarten math inquiry meeting indicate that the analysis of the post chapter test yielded suggestions for re-teaching. These suggestions were then used to inform the upcoming unit instruction for the targeted group of students. Additionally, teacher teams review math progress of students on a consistent basis. A scheduling adjustment was made to carve out an additional 50-minutes of instructional time to support the school's commitment to align instruction and to solidify the workshop model

teaching practice in alignment with the school's belief about how students learn best. As a result of this structured meeting time and schedule modification, teachers plan and prepare lessons that target specific student needs and have additional time to hone their pedagogical practice, increasing opportunities for student achievement at higher levels.

- The administration aligns resource allocation to support teacher development. Two administrators share responsibility across grades for English language arts (ELA) and math. One supervises ELA for grades Pre-K – 2 and another for grades 3 – 5. This structure allows administrators to ensure coherency across grades and subjects and provide focused professional development opportunities. Teachers reported that based on this revised leadership structure, they know whom to see for guidance and support and can provide better instruction specific to student need. Teachers loop with the class and two classes per grade are semi-departmentalized which takes advantage of particular teacher content area strengths, facilitates depth in lesson planning and coherency across grades. The full-time librarian serves to support curriculum mapping practices in literacy. The library serves as a lab-site for modeling the effective use of anchor charts that record student thinking and classroom discussions. As a result of strategic use of funds, teacher time and space, instructional practices are deepened, students are engaged in rigorous instruction and activities that promote higher achievement.
- The school has crafted curriculum maps and units of study that align to CCLS and NYS standards across content areas to ensure that all students are engaged in cognitively challenging curricula and tasks. (1.1)
  - Building from last year's work around CCLS alignment and integration of NYS standards in the content areas, the school adopted core curriculum in math and English language arts. Based upon a data review which evidence students lack of strong literacy skills, the Literacy Curriculum Team built a curriculum that honored the school's move to strengthen the workshop model approach and to strengthen literacy content skills pedagogy. Members attended a 3-day summer intensive with a literacy consultant to continue the school's planning for instructional goals. Emphasis was placed on the shifts such as identifying and citing textual evidence, explaining thinking through questioning and discussion and using vocabulary in writing. Additionally, the teams worked on strategies for English language learners including building vocabulary for language acquisition development. The school makes adjustments to curriculum based on the needs of their students. After reviewing student Running Records and Early Childhood Language Assessment System data, the decision was made to shift the grade bands for Reading to Learn and now grade 2 works with grades 3, 4 and 5 on curriculum mapping. Review of curriculum maps indicates an increased focus on vocabulary which is evident in the classroom word walls, including content areas, and posted student work. This effort focuses on curricular coherency across grades and subjects which provide challenging work for all students and progress toward increased student academic attainment.

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

- Continue to build school culture that deepens positive attitudes that support academic and socio-emotional growth for all community members. (1.4)
  - The school has implemented a system of rewards for students who exhibit strong work habits expecting that attention to the needs of the whole child will yield academic growth. A City Year partnership encourages positive social student-to-student interaction and desire to come to school every day through celebrations for improved attendance and lateness. Students are familiar with academic supports that will enable them to be more productive and increase academic progress. Student comments show an increasing movement toward independence in learning reflected in the comment, “When I am finished with my work I can get an enrichment paper where I get to show off the strategies that I use”. Parents report that the school has planned a math and literacy workshop to help them support their children and express that due to the Learning Leader Program, there is a greater sense of order as they assist with morning and lunchtime activities in addition to in-class help with targeted students. During a student meeting, a student council member spoke convincingly about how the council serves as role models noting, “Kids look up to me.” This initiative is supported by a Respect for All ceremony. While some students are aware of the structures such as Student Council to promote opportunities for increased student participation in school activities, awareness of the specific supports was reserved to limited students. Though there are signs of limited awareness of some of the schools cultural expectations, there are structures in place to infuse them throughout the school and increase the capacity to promote citizenship, responsibility and academic achievement.
  
- Strengthen teacher practices to ensure consistent use of questioning and discussion techniques and routines to promote rigor and further elevate student engagement and higher order thinking skills. (1.2)
  - Teachers work to align instructional strategies with CCLS in concert with their stated beliefs about engaging students in deeper ways through conversation and questioning prompts. Accordingly, teachers provide engagement in tasks using flexible groupings based on assessments, structured table discussions and interactive read-alouds. For example, in a 2nd grade class, students discuss how writers use words selectively to speak to a specific audience. Students were asked to engage in turn and talks with partners and encouraged to use accountable talk prompts to provide evidence of agreement or rebuttal. When one student with an IEP needed to remind herself of the assignment, she quickly referred to the anchor chart posted in a highly visible location and was able to proceed with the task. All students were able to readily engage and accomplish the lesson objective. While classrooms such as these and many others have such structures including tracking student performance and using conferring on a regular basis, student-to-student conversation is not as well established across the vast majority of classrooms. In a few classrooms, the teacher dominates the discussion and leads the questioning hence there is an over-dependence on the teacher as questioner and discussion lead, thereby potentially limiting increased student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Danny Kaye 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>