



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

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**The William T. Sampson School**

**Elementary School 160**

**5105 Fort Hamilton Parkway  
Brooklyn  
NY 11219**

**Principal: Margaret Russo**

**Dates of review: March 13 - 14, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The William T. Sampson School is an elementary school with 1,254 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 12% Hispanic, 5% White, and 81% Asian students. The student body includes 64% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 97.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a rigorous engaging coherent curriculum that includes the arts, physical and health education for diverse learners and is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). (1.1)
  - The staff at P.S. 160, having a large English language learner (ELL) population (69% ELLs and 11% former ELLs) adapts the ReadyGEN curriculum to make it accessible and support the performance of their English language learner population, while maintaining the rigor of the program and CCLS. For example, units of study across content areas provide opportunities for student discussion, team talk, and develop second language acquisition aligned with the speaking and listening standards. Accountable talk stems are used to strategically support students' academic language. Embedded in the learning tasks is the use of technology, differentiated graphic organizers, modified anchor and support texts, and shorter articles to scaffold instruction and support student in accessing content. For each grade, the emphasis on language acquisition involves, but is not limited to, vocabulary cards with definitions from the various texts, simple vocabulary bricks and sentence starters to describe textual evidence. For example in first grade, teachers integrated sentence started such as Lips and Ears to assist student subgroups in developing English as a second language speaking and listening skills. In grade 2, tasks required students to research an important person in American history, thus affording students with the opportunity to independently conduct research in a small group, develop questions at various Depths of knowledge (DOK) levels, and incorporate questions from the other student groups for discussions. Each task includes a self-assessment for students to reflect on their work, as well as, an organizer to create big ideas thereby increasing students' ability to demonstrate their thinking. As a result, the school's curricula provide opportunities for all students to engage in rigorous learning tasks, thus building students' skills for college and career readiness.
- Across all classrooms, teachers' instructional practice reflect school-wide beliefs about how students learn best and provide multiple entry points to engage all learners in high levels of thinking. (1.2)
  - As a school community, the principal and staff believe that students learn best through the incorporation of visual aids and listening and speaking opportunities into classroom instruction. In addition, they are building on their previous year's goal of increasing written and oral language development with a focus on academic vocabulary. Across classrooms, students can be seen turning and talking, engaging in team talk where each student has a role, and using discussion prompts. For example, in one fifth grade class, the students were discussing figurative language and the essential question was "Can we get meaning from figurative language?" Students first used close reading strategies as they read the selection, identified words that presented a challenge, and eliminated extemporaneous sentences. Looking for the meaning of the sentence, "The man looked sinister as he was hovering....," English language

learners looked at a picture that teachers had prepared as an entry point for the complex text the children were about to read. In addition, the teacher used Tier 2 vocabulary as students described the man in the picture as hovering, “looming” in another character’s personal space, and matched the picture with the words to describe the man. As a result of their active participation, the students were able to take a first step towards understanding the passage through discussion. Continuing the discussion, the teacher then asked what the author hoped to communicate, as students turned and talked to each other using their recently learned vocabulary. This technique was observed in many classrooms across grades for developing academic vocabulary and applying new learned words in writing, thereby pushing their thinking in students’ work products. In a kindergarten 12:1:1 class, students read a picture book about the fourth of July, while also viewing a video about a neighborhood parade to point out the similarities between the picture book and the video. The Chinese teacher, who translated for a group of English language learners, had students turn and talk in Chinese to their partner as the English proficient students turned and talked to a partner about what they saw. In math, students in a third grade class used the SMART board to determine distance and length. Children had to determine how far they would travel to reach a certain destination. Using the number line on the SMARTboard, each child had a chance to go up to measure and identify a unit fraction. All students are encouraged to speak in complete sentences using the discussion prompts, providing multiple opportunities for use spoken language. The impact of these practices is evidenced in how English language learners in grades 4 and 5 improved in at least four out of seven areas on the 2013 New York City Performance Based Assessment.

- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions to support the schools’ instructional goals and meet students’ learning needs as evidenced by improved pedagogy and students’ progress. (1.3)
  - The principal has organized the school to provide maximum supports to teachers and students. Teachers in every grade have at least two common preparation periods to revise and blend existing curriculum with ReadyGEN. In addition, the principal has arranged for English as a second language (ESL) teachers to meet after school to adjust and scaffold the ReadyGEN curriculum, thereby making it accessible for English language learners. They also plan vertically with other grades to determine entry points for student sub groups. To ensure implementation of strategies for English language learners, the principal hired two English as second language (ESL) teachers per grade to support classroom teachers via push-in or pull-out model depending on students’ needs. Additional hires include two reading recovery teachers to support first grade students, two academic intervention teachers to support second and third grade students, a two day retired (F-status) teacher to support the bilingual first and second grade classes, and two Orton Gillingham teachers to provide intervention to beginning English language learners from grades 2 through 5. The impact of this support is the increased number of English language learners in grades 3 through 5 scoring at level 3 and 4 on the 2013 English language arts exam. To further support students, the school hosts an early morning program five days a week to support academic achievement of English language learners in grades 4 and 5, as well as an enrichment program in advanced math and debating

for all students. An afterschool program on Tuesdays and Wednesdays supports academic achievement in literacy for students who are at risk of not meeting the standards. On Saturdays, the school has a program that supports academic achievement in math for students not meeting the standards. On Thursday afternoons, the school provides enrichment classes in the Arts, as well as Chess, Chinese and Italian culture, global studies, mythology, physical education, and technology. P.S 160 has an award winning Chess Club, which competes every Saturday and is currently ranked the number one elementary school in New York City. Programming visual arts, vocal music, drama and dance, as well as violin classes provide students with challenging programs, thus engaging in an instructional program that pushes students' thinking and affords a rich learning environment for all learners.

- The school aligns all assessments to the curricula, uses data results strategically to monitor learning outcomes, and makes instructional decisions at the team and classroom level to improve student achievement. (2.2)
  - Teachers use ReadyGEN and Go Math assessments to create their own tests in order to get a clearer picture of students' academic needs, thereby meeting the needs of their students. For example, the math coach developed a baseline and mid-year formative assessment to better determine students' growth in math. Similarly, in the lower grades, the school uses Fountas and Pinnell to measure students' growth in literacy as well as using teacher created assessments for vocabulary. In addition, the school maintains a data calendar to facilitate curriculum pacing and student work analysis by teacher teams. To further develop formative assessment practices, teacher teams have created rubrics aligned to the CCLS, checklists, and reflection sheets to assess student progress, and monitor students' self-evaluation of their learning in order to adjust teaching and learning during the lesson. In addition, the rubrics and unit plans have been developed with the same categories across genres to provide an instrument to measure student progress and growth. Additionally, teachers maintain conference notes, assessment binders, and unit assessments. This consistent use of data to inform and differentiate instruction results in meaningful work products for all students. Students indicated that they are receiving excellent feedback from their teachers, not only helping them with next steps so they can achieve their desired goals, but preparing them for the skills necessary for college and career readiness. As a result of various learning opportunities to promote self-reflection and active engagement, students have demonstrated increased levels of thinking and participation.
- The school leadership uses the Danielson Framework to conduct focused observations of teacher practice that leads to teachers' understanding of effective instructional practice, thus resulting in professional growth. (4.1)
  - The principal introduced the Danielson Framework in the summer of 2011, developing a schedule and system for short cycles of classroom observations which included verbal and written feedback to teachers. Each year since then, through faculty conferences, grade meetings, professional learning communities, and outside workshops, the school's understanding of the Framework deepened. Teachers use the Danielson Framework to set their professional goals and along with observations,

are used to provide differentiated support to teachers. This year, the principal conducted a mid-year reflection to ensure that teachers receive additional supports as needed. New teachers are assigned a mentor to support their work. They are also teamed with colleagues to share planning and best practices. Furthermore, feedback after an observation includes a discussion about progress towards professional goals, including targeted recommendations and next steps aligned to the Danielson Framework, thus capturing the school's instructional expectations. In addition, the professional development calendar reflects ongoing opportunities for teachers to grow in their practice. These professional development sessions include: a School-based Option (SBO), to use the extended day for teacher team work, full day professional learning communities for every grade at the school every five weeks, full day professional learning communities for grade leaders and ESL teachers to collaborate and plan vertically, Network Ambassador programs in literacy and math, Ready Gen and Go Math sessions provided by Pearson and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Tony Stead workshops, Office of English Language Learner workshops, Response to Intervention (RTI) training, technology training, and Arts professional development. Teachers share by turn-keying information to colleagues during professional learning meetings grade conferences, and faculty conferences. The result of this highly diversified professional development program provides support to teachers to improve instructional practice across grades and subjects as indicated by the response on the Learning Environment Survey where 99% of the teachers feel that "the principal places a high priority on the quality of their teaching and 94% feel that the professional development has been sustained and coherently focused."

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

- Enhance the process of school level decisions and adjustments made to strategically evaluate policies and practices that impact the school's culture and organizational resources. (5.1)
  - Although, school leaders have an effective practice in place to regularly evaluate and adjust curricular practices and teacher pedagogy, there is currently no process to regularly evaluate the quality of school culture and the ways expectations are shared among school constituents. For example, the school has an exemplary Parent Involvement Program which was a model for America's choice. As a result of that, the school has increased parent involvement activities to include authentic participation in students' education. However, there is no structure in place to evaluate the success of these programs which impacts the relevance of addressing parents' specific needs. In addition, school leaders will visit teacher team meetings to note their efficiency and provide feedback on their progress. However, there is no overall process to evaluate and adjust the quality of all teacher team work with particular attention to the strategies the team develops to support student mastery on each grade, thus limiting an opportunity for the staff to strategically develop and share instructional strategies.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The William T. Sampson 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>							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed