

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**P.S. 191 Paul Robeson**

**Elementary School 191**

**1600 Park Place Brooklyn  
NY 11233**

**Principal: Elsi Capolongo**

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

**Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 191 Paul Robeson is an elementary school with 223 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 83% Black, 15% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 88.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

### What the school does well

- The school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) emphasizing reading and writing in all subject areas that fosters a culture of college and career readiness on all grades. (1.1)
  - The school is a Common Core Laboratory Site School, currently in their second year with “teacher ambassadors” regularly attending (with the administration) workshops related to the Common Core shifts and the utilization of the Instructional Planning Guides in literacy and math. Two teachers attended a full week of training New York State Education Department during the summer of 2013. Additionally, the school community has selected Common Core aligned Ready Gen for literacy and Go Math curricula to cognitively engage students and set them on a path towards college and career readiness. Both programs focus on instructional shifts including accountable talk and citing text-based evidence to support responses in English language arts as well as using multi-representations in solving multi-step problems in math. Additionally, during weekly meetings teachers adjust and modify their lesson plans to ensure that tasks engage all students in close reading of grade-level texts and are modifying the curricula to include purposeful decisions including targeted grade-level instruction through guided reading groups. Moreover, across grades after a unit assessment is administered teachers assess and grade student work. Together teachers discuss the implications for instruction and modify the curriculum collaboratively to meet individual students’ needs, such as modifying graphic organizers to support a variety of learners and adjusting pacing to offer additional supports for selected students to access the curricula. Furthermore, to ensure coherence across grades, vertical teacher teams use CCLS aligned rubrics and checklists to assess alignment and evidence of grade appropriate skills, resulting in a rigorous curricula for all students including special education students.
- School administrators ensure that the use of resources, including teacher and student assignments, provides intentionally targeted supports for students in order to meet the school’s instructional goals. (1.3)
  - Space is allocated to provide a guided reading teacher resource room, a conference room and an inquiry teacher team room to support work in achieving the school’s academic goals of increasing proficiency on the State exams. Students track their own progress on baseline and formative assessments as evidenced by the interactive labeling of charts with post-it notes in the inquiry room, thus raising their awareness of level of achievement and progress towards goals. These designated rooms are also used for teacher team meetings when student work is reviewed, successful teaching practices are shared, and instructional videos are viewed and discussed with low-inference note-taking. The inquiry room has a technology section for pedagogical staff, parents and student support staff to analyze student data and internet resources. The school has two dance studios, utilized by three dance artists and a computer laboratory used by classes to conduct research as required by the Common Core performance tasks. In addition, an afterschool test-preparation remedial program for grades 3 through 5 reinforces the use of literacy and math multiple strategies to develop confidence. A partnership with the Department of Temporary Housing finances an afterschool program for kindergarten through grade 8 that provides art instruction, to support art projects incorporated into content-

area tasks during the school day, character development, tennis and dance instruction, homework help and supper, thereby providing external resources to meet the needs of students and families. Therefore the principal's alignment of funding and resources to school-wide goals maximizes the school's efforts to meet student needs as noted in Common Core aligned performance tasks and work products on bulletins boards and in students' folders.

- The administration works closely with teachers to create strong partnerships in Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classes complementing teachers with strong management skills as well as academic content. The Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETSS) teacher is a lead teacher who facilitates the teacher team work and works with struggling students to support their needs. Teachers have common prep periods 3-4 times per week to review lesson plans, analyze student work, review assessments across grades and have adopted the attitude, "Together we can...." The principal used feedback of the School Leadership Team (SLT) to revise the structure of test prep and ordered different test preparation materials based on teacher feedback to align closer to what students are expected to know and be able to do on the State exams. The English as a second language teacher (ESL) provides both push-in and pull-out targeted, small group instruction for English language learners (ELLs) and other students at risk. The administration is always asking the question: "How are you working with struggling students?" To this end, the principal meets regularly with parents to discuss placement and movement to least restrictive environments. Student data shows trends toward moving to least restrictive environments. Therefore, special needs students receive support in 12:1:1 classes including a K-2 bridge class, and additional classes on grades 3 through 5. Interventions include at-risk resource room, Response to Intervention (RTI) and team work with inquiry group students in the bottom third. There is also an afterschool test prep remedial program for grades 3 through 5 to reinforce multiple strategies in literacy and math to develop confidence. Subsequently, the strategic teacher placement and support, and focused team work support instructional short and long-range action plans to improve student progress and performance. These accountability collaborations for student progress result in learning opportunities for all students, notably for these groups of students, which improve work products across grades, especially in English language arts and math.
- The school is a safe place, which cultivates effective partnerships, and students appreciate the level of support they receive, thus fostering their personal and academic development. (1.4)
  - The school maintains a strong and highly effective home and school connection that focuses on building trust between parents, teachers, students and the school community. The principal collaborates with key stakeholders to develop a vision of how to best support the social-emotional development of each student within classrooms and the school-at large. The principal has an open door policy and students indicated that they can visit the principal or guidance counselor at any time to discuss a concern or talk about a personal situation. In hallways and classrooms, it was evident that students and adults treat each other respectfully and student voice is welcomed and valued. The principal has an established system to actively engage parents, address concerns in a timely fashion and provides opportunities for parent outreach. Parents express that they are warmly received by administration and teachers in their children's classrooms whenever they visit. At monthly parent meetings, the principal, in collaboration with the parent coordinator, shares important information on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and new curriculum and

provides tips on how parents can help their children at home to master the academic expectations. Parents state that the monthly parent newsletter, science lab newsletter and physical education newsletter are invaluable resources that include interesting articles, projects to work on with their children at home, healthy recipes and additional websites specifically designed for parents. The school also provides monthly progress reports to parents that include the child's current reading levels (independent and guided) and progress status in the four core content areas. Teachers also provide comments regarding progress specific to each child. The guidance counselor works closely with students and families to provide resources and supports for students' emotional development and meets with all newly admitted students to ensure smooth transitions. He also facilitates middle school articulation and provides information for college and career readiness. The parent coordinator is a liaison between staff and parents as she informs parents when students need to improve their attendance, and arranges meetings and workshops for parents on understanding the State tests and the CCLS. The school has an established afterschool program that targets students who are in need of academic and social-emotional supports including targeted remedial instruction, homework help and test prep. As a result, there have been fewer incidents and student suspensions this year. In addition, students state that they are well known and cared for and parents describe the school as "family" where everyone knows and respects each other.

- The school uses classroom observations and analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices that promote professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
  - The principal has systematized a process to conduct frequent, low inference observations aligned to the Danielson Framework and builds a shared understanding of effective teaching. A talent coach supports this process by conducting lesson observations with the administration and teachers with a focus on low-inference fact-gathering and on rating the components of the selected domain with justification and evidence cited. Teacher inter-visitations are also part of this process. The principal and assistant principal norm their feedback so teachers are provided with consistent next steps and understands Danielson rubric ratings. Additionally, school leaders review lesson plans, track feedback, monitor growth over time, and identify needs. All teachers and school leaders attended Danielson Framework training with an emphasis on teaching special education students and English language learners. The principal runs the Advance report prior to weekly Monday meetings with her assistant principal to discuss where teachers are on the Danielson continuum and make decisions for professional development in response to identified needs of individual and groups of teachers. The principal ensures that teachers are getting feedback in the comment section of Advance by spot checking this information with her assistant principal. Teachers with an advanced capacity or skill in a particular competency assist other pedagogues through the modeling of practices and direct assistance in lesson plan review and preparation. There is also a monthly professional development newsletter for teachers highlighting best practices. All of this helps the principal ensure that the observation and feedback process is yielding improvements professional growth and reflection.

## What the school needs to improve

- Improve teacher practices to consistently incorporate higher level questioning and use of varied activities to maximize student participation and critical thinking skills. (1.2)
  - Visits to classrooms reflected the school's non-negotiable beliefs aligned to the Danielson Framework including respectful classroom environments and cultures for learning with organized physical space and procedures in place for managing student behavior. Additionally, all teachers prepare lessons with students accessing the Ready Gen or Go Math curricula. Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curriculum reflected in the school's workshop model philosophy of having a mini-lesson with a teaching point, independent student work time and some evidence of the instructional shifts. However, some lessons were teacher-directed with minimal opportunities for students to talk or work in groups. Furthermore, higher order questioning or multiple entry points in lessons to meet the needs of all students were not evident in several classrooms. In a third grade classroom, a small group of students were expected to divide using partial quotients, but were unable to complete the task because it was too difficult without additional scaffolds present and teacher support. In another third grade classroom, students were expected to engage in collaborative discussions, building on one another's ideas and expressing their own ideas, regarding main ideas and supporting details, but were unable to do so because they did not understand the figurative language used in the text. Although lesson plans reflect planning for differentiated instruction for English language learners and special education students, independent work tasks are not targeted for the specific groups of students leading to uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of these groups. Consequently, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. This results in uneven student engagement in challenging tasks and demonstration of higher order thinking skills in student discussion.
- Strengthen teachers' ability to analyze student data and ongoing assessments to plan and refine instruction with clear next steps to accelerate student learning. (2.2)
  - The school is beginning to use common assessments to measure student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas, such as Ready Gen and Go Math end of unit common assessments to track student progress and growth. Teachers use running records and rubrics for writing to track student progress which is helping teachers begin to implement the differentiation component of Ready Gen. Student writing products on bulletin boards and in work folders include feedback from teachers. However, feedback does not always offer meaningful information to help students understand their progress towards meeting specific learning targets and mastery of skills. As a result, some students are not clear on what they need to do to guide their improvement, thereby limiting opportunities to make progress.
  - Teachers are beginning to collect "on-the-spot" data through formative assessments that informs student grouping for independent work time. Teachers are also beginning to use ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment to group students for interventions and extension activities based on the information gathered from these assessments. However, these practices are not yet consistent across classrooms, and therefore, limit opportunities for effective adjustments that meet the immediate learning needs of all students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

|   |                       |          |                   |           |                   |           |                       |
|---|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>School name: Paul Robeson</b>  | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>   |                       |          | <b>X</b>          |           |                   |           |                       |
| <b>Instructional Core</b>   |                       |          |                   |           |                   |           |                       |
| <i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>  | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 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>   | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 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>   | <b>UD</b>             | <b>D</b> | <b>P</b>          | <b>WD</b> |                   |           |                       |
| 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> |