

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**P.S. 198**

**K198**

**4105 Farragut Road  
Brooklyn  
NY 11210**

**Principal: Joy-Ann Morgan**

**Dates of review: April 10-11, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas**

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

### **Information about the school**

PS 198 is an elementary school with 503 students from pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 6% Hispanic, 1% White, 1% Asian, 1% multiracial, and 3% other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.3%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Across the curriculum, rigorous tasks intentionally embed the instructional shifts and are aligned to content standards to increase academic performance for all learners. (1.1)
  - A consultant from Generation Ready, formerly AUSSIE, has worked with the teachers to create rubrics and curriculum maps in literacy to integrate the instructional shifts and ensure alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). In math, the school uses “Go Math!” for kindergarten through grade 5. Essential Questions, such as “How can Reading help us to explore and understand the natural world?” and “How can we use questions to guide our research and learn more about our topics?” in kindergarten and grade 3, respectively, are infused in the curriculum maps and investigated throughout the units studied. Similarly, in a third grade math unit on problem solving and multiplying two-digit numbers, students explore essential questions, such as “How can deconstructing and reconstructing help us to solve multi-step real world mathematical problems?” These questions are common threads that link yearlong lessons and units, frame and promote conceptual student thinking, and have become the guiding force in the school for ensuring rigor, deepened understanding, and program coherence across all grades and subjects. In addition, the school’s curricula include specific vocabulary words pertinent to each unit of study. In a fourth grade unit on using informational texts to learn about natural disasters, terms such as *tsunami*, *debris*, *tension*, and *calamity* are included. Strategies for meeting the range of learners, such as visuals, think-pair-share activities, graphic organizers, and digital media tools, such as a text-based resource entitled *Four Hurricanes in a Row* and a video entitled *Volcanoes* from Time for Kids are used, which provide ample opportunities for all students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) to have access to the curriculum and demonstrate their thinking. In addition, students are exposed to rigorous tasks that push their thinking. For example, one student produced a brochure entitled *Future Way to Aviation* in which he included research he collected to learn about schools that offer the courses he would need to take to bring his aspiration to fruition. He included in his brochure a middle school, high school, and a college that would provide him with the required 300 flight hours he would need to become a pilot. As a result of this well-structured curricular coherence across grades and content areas, students are mastering higher-level literacy and math skills, placing them on the path of college and career readiness as evidenced in the 63% and 73% increases in student median adjusted growth percentiles in reading and math, respectively.
- 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)
  - To build internal capacity to meet the school’s instructional goals for supporting teachers’ knowledge and skills, as well as students’ informational writing and overall academic growth, the school leaders have provided each

teacher a flash drive, which includes the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), Webb's Depth of Knowledge resources, the instructional shifts, the Danielson Framework for Teaching, and the guidelines for Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to equip teachers with resources at a glance to support them in meeting the instructional goals and guide their instructional planning. They also have ensured that teachers have numerous opportunities to collaborate on teams as they examine student work by embedding a minimum of three common planning periods into the teachers' five weekly preparation periods. During these planning sessions, teachers design questions and tasks that require students to think deeply and reference various sources to support their claims. The principal reports that this practice "has become part of our DNA." The purchase of technological resources, including, but not limited to, 20 mini I-Pads, six additional SMARTboards, and 24 new desktop computers provide students the tools to engage in research as well as refine their keyboarding skills so that they are able to type their final drafts. The principal also hired two support staff members to provide push-in academic intervention services for all third grade classes, as well as an external staff developer from Generation Ready, to provide job-embedded, collaborative, professional learning in continuous and collegial cycles of learning, practice, and reflection that has resulted in teachers becoming more effective practitioners who design instructional strategies to engage all students in challenging academic endeavors. A compelling example was in one student's written piece in response to the Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) W.5.2, *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly*, in which he wrote, "Sonia Sotomayor is an amazing woman because she is an inspiration to anyone; no matter where you come from or who you are, you can be what you want to be. If we work hard and are passionate about what we do, we can be successful. Follow your heart and your dreams and anyone can be as accomplished as Sonia Sotomayor who became the first Latina Supreme Court justice after being nominated by President Barack Obama in 2009." Such writing reveals that students are engaged in meaningful and authentic student work products across the school that consistently align to the school's instructional goals to demonstrate the use of authoritative voice and text evidence to support their claims.

- School leaders support the development of teacher practice through their frequent cycles of classroom observation and ongoing analysis of student work that has led to continuous improvement in teacher performance. (4.1)
  - The principal and assistant principal have a structure for observing teachers and document strategies for translating their observational findings into effective feedback for teachers. An example of a goal set for Danielson Framework component 3B, Questioning and Discussion Techniques, one of the school's instructional foci, the teachers, in collaboration with the administrators, established the goal of creating tiered tasks that include higher order thinking questions for each of their instructional groups, based on student needs. School leaders also provide frequent, direct and actionable feedback on teachers' performance in relationship to the applicable competencies on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, an area for growth noted on a teacher's observation report included articles and resources pertaining to the quality of questions and changing the nature of discussion to support the teacher in honing her skills in Questioning and Discussion Techniques, the competency referred to in the written feedback. In addition, comments, such as "To help incorporate grand conversations with

the whole group portion of your lesson, you should use the book *Implementing the Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice*, pages 278-279 and pages 286-289 (attached) to teach into whole class discussion techniques.” As a result of these exchanges, teachers are held accountable for improving practice and report that they receive the support and feedback they need to improve their own teaching and student learning. In addition, teacher peers engage in a monthly ‘collegial walkthrough,’ a structure that provides multiple opportunities to observe other teachers to learn and discuss instructional practices, provide feedback to one another, and to discuss their strengths and areas of growth. They then engage in reflective conversations, refer to their low inference notes taken during the visit, and provide feedback to the teachers visited who report that they “eagerly await feedback from their peers,” after which time, the group members respond to questions, such as *What should be continued? What would be a recommendation for each teacher?* These teachers then share the experience with their grade level constituencies and decide which team member will go on the next walkthrough. To date, every classroom teacher has gone on at least one of these ‘collegial walkthroughs.’ They are currently planning to have content specialists, such as the science, movement, and physical education cluster teachers, participate in the next round. Consequently, 80% and 84% of teachers have progressed to effective and highly effective levels along the trajectory of the Danielson rubric in Domain 3, in competencies 3B and 3C, in questioning and discussion techniques and engaging students in learning, respectively.

- School leaders and faculty consistently convey high expectations and successfully partner with families to connect college and career readiness to support student progress. (3.4)
  - Numerous teams across the school comprised of supervisors, teacher representatives from each grade, and content area specialists, meet frequently to converse about curriculum, instructional practices, and Common Core alignment across grades and subjects. The teams are provided with a plethora of resources to further enhance their work, such as a Team Planning Toolkit, a resource from the School Improvement Resource Center, as well as material retrieved from *The Well Developed Classroom* in New York Public Schools, entitled ‘*Sample Focusing Question Resource*’ for looking together at student work, along with norms for group meetings. To ensure a culture of mutual accountability, these teachers then meet with their constituencies to share outcomes of their conversations related to grade specific and school wide practice related to curriculum planning and classroom instruction. In addition, school leaders, through faculty conferences, emails, and color-coded communiqués, define and promote a common vision of effective instruction. For example, in her weekly communiqués, which always open with an inspirational quote, such as “Every worthwhile accomplishment, big or little, has its stages of drudgery and triumph; a beginning, a struggle, and a victory,” by Gandhi, the principal emphasized that questioning and discussion techniques should be part of the school’s instructional DNA. She further indicated that teachers should plan purposefully and strategically to ensure that students are provided the opportunity to engage in discourse with their peers. In addition, she provided examples of how to embrace distinguished levels of questioning by suggesting that teachers involve all students, ask questions that go beyond recitation, and encourage students to justify their answers, information that serves to reinforce the high expectations established for pedagogy. Similarly, during School Leadership Team meetings, the

principal shares information about the school's instructional foci, including the instructional shifts, as necessitated by the CCLS, engaging students in high-quality discussions, the Danielson Framework for Teaching for teacher evaluation and development, and using classroom assessments and student work to address gaps between what the CCLS requires and what students are able to do. Consequently, the school's 2012-2013 Learning Environment Survey reveals increased scores in Academic Expectations, Communication, and Engagement, all of which are above the citywide averages. Parents also assert that they feel certain that the school is preparing their children with the college and career readiness competencies they need for to be successful in the future. Testimonies, such as "The work is more challenging; they are already programmed for college and career readiness," "Kids are now thinking like scientists," and "The children are now thinking out of the box" authenticate that families recognize what their children need to achieve to be skillful at subsequent levels in their educational experience.

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

- Refine instruction across the school to ensure teachers' use of scaffolds and extensions to meet students at their respective entry points in order to increase student performance and reduce learning gaps. (1.2)
  - Across the classrooms observed, lessons were consistently planned according to the workshop model, with mini-lessons that connected learning to previously learned concepts and employed strategies derived from the instructional shifts to further students' engagement with standards-aligned tasks. In all classrooms visited, students participated in robust group and partner discussions, which provided evidence of teachers' focus on the instructional approaches delineated in the Danielson Framework for Teaching, particularly Questioning and Discussion Techniques, in Domain 3B. In a fifth grade Integrated Co-Teaching Class (ICT), for example, the teachers encouraged the students to lead a large-class discussion that involved questioning by their peers as they explained how they arrived at their opinions and defended their stance, which was mutually agreed upon by their table partners, and provided text evidence to support their opinions using *George's Secret Key to the Universe* by Lucy and Stephen Hawking as an anchor text. As a result of these collaborative interactions, all students had the opportunity to contribute and learn, hone their public speaking, interpersonal, and leadership proficiencies, and have exhibited self-confidence, requisite skills that will position them well on the path for college and career readiness. Although in the majority of classrooms, teachers use open-ended questions to promote deep inquiry and assess student mastery of material at a range of both lower and higher-order thinking, and effectively integrate technology as a tool to engage students in academic content, sufficient strategic supports were not evident, thus limiting teachers' abilities to adjust the degree of complexity for the diversity of learners and provide additional opportunities for students to apply and build skills beyond expected lesson elements. While the majority of lessons presented scaffolds, such as tiered tasks with questions to support students at their instructional entry points, appropriately differentiated activities were not observed in all classes.
- Further deepen the school's assessment practices, and analyze student learning

outcomes to make adjustments at the team and classroom levels to ensure that all students demonstrate increased mastery (2.2).

- Teachers across grade levels analyze the results of common formative and summative assessments aligned with the school's curricula, consistently record measures of student performance, and maintain meticulous data binders that include student work and unit assessments. As a result of these assessments, teachers have made adjustments to curriculum units and rubrics. Across classrooms, teachers use grade level checklists to monitor student understanding, provide actionable feedback to students with specific CCLS-aligned 'glows and grows,' and engage students in the practice of peer and self-assessing. For example, a second grade student commented on his own writing, "I need to work on putting temporal words like first, second, and finally." All teachers craft actionable feedback, which is individualized, typed, and captured on a school-wide 'glow and grow' feedback form. In two classrooms, teachers made adjustments to their instruction based on their checks for understanding. In a second grade math class, where the students were using the standard algorithm with possible regrouping of both hundreds and tens, the teacher, in response to a "quick check," changed a student's group to provide additional tiered support. Similarly, in a fifth grade class, one of the teachers realized that the group was struggling with the objective of identifying interactions among characters to determine tone and immediately adjusted the task by having the students first explore the setting. Although all teachers consistently engage in the practice of checking for understanding throughout their lessons and students frequently participate in self-assessment, the practice of formulating data based groups and making timely and effective adjustments to instruction based on teachers' formative appraisals, was not evident in the vast majority of classrooms. Consequently, their ability to leverage assessment data tools at the classroom level to provide targeted support to facilitate, advance, and extend learning for all students and to ensure that students in all classrooms are aware of their next learning steps is not maximized.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: PS 198   | 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> |