

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Lady Deborah Moody**

**Elementary School 212**

**87 BAY 49 STREET  
BROOKLYN  
NY, 11214**

**Principal: JOSEPHINE MARSELLA**

**Dates of review: April 8-9, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 212 Lady Deborah Moody is an elementary school with 678 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 17% Black, 32% Hispanic, 20% White, and 31% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well developed.**

### What the school does well

- Curricula across all subject areas align to the Common Core Learning (CCLS) standards providing all students with access to rigorous tasks that place students on a path of college and career readiness. (1.1)
  - Data analysis of student work products as well as formative and summative assessments of individual students and subgroups drives curriculum development. Teachers meeting in grade teams develop curricula maps and units of study that align to the CCLS and integrate the instructional shifts across all content areas. Curricula maps across grades specify scaffolds including graphic organizers, vocabulary cards, manipulatives and technology support to ensure that all students including English language learners and special education students have access to content and skill development. Teachers specify alternative texts to meet the language skills needs of English language learners. These texts ensure appropriate complexity so that students participate in rigorous learning while building language skills. The curricular focus across grades and subject areas is to provide entry points for all students building the skills necessary to use multiple resources to formulate and communicate independent ideas, as well as to solve complex problems. Students have exposure to learning that has clear purpose, and rigor leading to opportunities for productive struggle promoting student persistence and perseverance. The curricula and use of resources results in instructional coherence throughout the school and clear pathways for students to achieve academic and personal goals.
  - Through analysis of student assessments and work products, teachers plan and refine curricula and tasks, that include opportunities to close read and analyze complex text in both fiction and non-fiction and write essays using text based evidence to create and support a claim. Courses of study reflect the learning needs of all students with activities that scaffold the learning where appropriate. For example, teachers plan lessons and activities that specify the use of graphic organizers for specific learners to support their writing. At the start of the school year, the school implemented Ready Gen as the Common Core aligned program to support English language arts instruction. After completing the first unit of the program, an analysis of student outcomes revealed that the resources of the program did not fully meet the needs of students. Specifically, some of the anchor texts and support texts, as well as the tasks were not in alignment to the skill levels and needs of students. Teacher teams revised curriculum maps to integrate some components and resources of the program with more appropriate anchor and support texts, tasks, activities and supports that make sense for their students. As a result, teachers are able to plan instruction that creates opportunities for all students and student groups to engage in learning that appropriately supports progress toward reaching and achieving learning goals. )
- Teacher pedagogy demonstrates consistent instructional coherence and effective differentiated practices that scaffolds learning for all students resulting in high levels of student thinking and performance across the school. (1.2)
  - The core belief of the school is that in order for children to learn, they must be comfortable, not frustrated and feel safe to take risks in order to make progress. The pedagogy across the school supports this vision

through instructional practice that motivates all students to engage in high levels of learning. Lessons follow a workshop model, with teachers providing blocks of direct instruction of a specific skill or content points. Once the "mini lesson" where teachers model expectations is complete, students work in groups or independently on tasks that match the skill level of students ensuring appropriate access to the material. Assessments and on demand tasks provide teachers the data necessary to group students effectively. The tasks that the student groupings are offered are all highly engaging and cognitively challenging where students can demonstrate higher order thinking skills, however, they are differentiated with varying scaffolds to ensure that there are supports, extensions and enrichment for the various needs of all learners. During a third grade read aloud where the text contained similes, the teacher showed pictures of the images to a group of English language learners to support them in understanding the subtle language. For example, the text stated, "her skin was as smooth as a peach." The teacher showed a picture of a peach and engaged the English language learners in a brief discussion about the skin of a peach to elevate their understanding. Throughout the school, students engage in discussions where they ask and answer cognitively challenging questions and create work products that are evidence of high levels of student engagement. During a class visit whole group instruction included "turning and talking" to understand a complex concept in text, where the author was making a comparison between the literal and figurative meaning of a phrase. As students discussed their thoughts, the teacher listened and assessed the understanding of the students. Following the discussion, the teacher grouped the students for their independent writing task, and pulled a group of students that were struggling with the concept to work with her in a guided group. Students use rubrics and checklists to reflect on their writing, as a method of self-assessment allowing for ownership of the learning. The instructional practices of the school demonstrate an understanding of the CCLS, as well as the instructional shifts and result in students making progress toward learning targets, with a majority of students attaining grade level results on English language arts and math summative assessments at the end of each unit of study.

- Leaders make effective, strategic organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support all efforts toward improving student learning. (1.3)
  - School leaders use data analysis, anecdotal feedback from teachers and overall observation of school functioning to make decisions on resource allocations to ensure that the school meets its immediate and long-term goals. To increase the technology in the school to provide students with access to the tools they will need to succeed in the 21st Century, 33 laptops, 10 Promethium boards and several software programs were purchased this school year. Moreover, teachers receive professional development to build their capacity infusing technology into daily instruction. Students across grades demonstrate skill in using technology to enhance their learning. For example, during math instruction, students use the features of the Promethium boards to demonstrate their understanding of math concepts. Teachers use software programs for at risk students and English language learners to address literacy and language skills. The school is in the process of building an online library of 33,000 titles to support literacy instruction with a program that allows students to access books at school and at home. As a result, the school is making progress toward reaching its goals, with students demonstrating high levels of engagement, demonstrating their learning through the use of computer generated presentations and improving

their overall outcomes. Specifically, 68% of at risk students and 73% of English language learners are demonstrating progress and exceeding benchmark goals on the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment.

- Teacher inquiry teams meet four times a month in addition to at least four periods per week for grade team meetings to collaborate on developing curricula, including units of study, lesson plans and cognitively challenging tasks to measure student performance and progress. These sessions are supported by the administration and ensure that there is a coherent curriculum in use across the school that aligns to the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers study the impact of curricula and teaching practice across the grades and study data to uncover where and how the curriculum across grades needs to be revised. The works of these teams are shared across the school, with teachers across grades sharing best practices in all content areas and skill development during vertical team meetings and whole staff faculty conferences. As a result, teachers are focusing on how their curricula development, planning and pedagogy is affecting student learning with a specific focus on the overarching school goals of providing students with opportunities to engage in high level discussions and to create pieces of work that demonstrate critical thinking and mastery of standards. There is instructional coherence across the school with the vast majority of teachers demonstrating effective pedagogy and student work product evidencing student growth toward reaching and exceeding learning targets.
- School leaders and faculty have high expectations and communicate effectively with parents so that there are multiple opportunities for families to be active partners toward improving student outcomes. (3.4)
  - School leaders start the school year by clearly articulating professional and pedagogic expectations for teachers informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching as well as the values shared by the school community. This includes instruction that is highly engaging, accessible to all children using the Universal Design for Learning and provides students with opportunities to build the skills necessary to be on a path to college and career readiness. It is expected that teachers provide students with opportunities to demonstrate responsibility, perseverance, and the ability to work in a group as well as independently. Teachers receive support in reaching expectations with professional development sessions during grade team meetings, faculty conferences, lunch and learns, class intervisitations and in one on one sessions with supervisors. The principal constantly reinforces the expectations through communications with staff including emails, weekly notices and conversations. This results in a common understanding and shared belief in expectations for professionalism, instructional practice and communication and an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust and accountability between faculty and administrators.
  - School leaders and teachers effectively communicate high academic expectations to students and families across all grades. The school goals are posted in each classroom and are discussed with students and all students can appropriately articulate expected behaviors and academic outcomes. Each grade embeds the personal behaviors relevant to career and college readiness including perseverance, organization, reflection and determination into units plans. Each month there is a book of the month assembly to reinforce the character values and traits highlighted in the school-wide reading. For example, this month students read *Sophia's Dream* and explored citizenship and the

behaviors that lead to a positive impact on a community. Students have opportunities to engage in productive struggles with texts and math, pushing them to higher levels of learning. For example, during a 5<sup>th</sup> grade math lesson, students worked in groups to understand how to properly divide fractions by whole numbers and apply the skill to various word problems. The level of conversation evidenced students deep understanding of complex math concepts and through discussion most students were able to decide on a method of solving the problem. Families collaborate with the school and participate in workshops to understand the CCLS, college and career readiness skills, and specific strategies to engage learners with special needs, English language learners and at risk students. Workshops include opportunities for families to engage in tasks that their children complete during the school day. They work with complex text and use the tools that students use, such as graphic organizers, post-its and highlighters to mirror the experience of their children. The experiences at workshops allow parents to gain insight to the expectations for their children and allow for a deeper understanding of how they can assist their children's learning. Additionally, adult English as a second language classes increase parent communication with the school and helps parents deepen their ability to support their children's academic growth. Consequently, there is a true partnership between the school and families in supporting the academic and behavioral growth of all students.

- School leaders support a high level of pedagogy through effective evaluation of instruction aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, resulting in strong teacher practice across the school positively affecting student learning. (4.1)
  - The principal sets forth expectations of a positive environment that supports each individual's needs and learning styles. To that end, the principal engages teachers in rigorous cycles of evaluation that align to the Danielson Framework of Teaching, where teachers receive effective feedback and clear next steps toward improving their performance. Supervisors align professional development opportunities to the overall trends that observation data illuminates, as well as individualized opportunities for teachers with specific needs. For example, whole school professional development includes support in questioning and discussion to engage all learners and provide opportunities for critical thinking. Then based upon individual observation and feedback, teachers receive support that scaffold teacher learning to build individual capacity. All teachers have opportunities to build their leadership capacity with many volunteering to share best practices to support each other. The principal and assistant principal provide a system of teacher support including new teacher mentoring, peer support and class intervisitations. Teachers are invited to colleague's classrooms to observe a best practice, taking notes and then have the opportunity to debrief and ask questions to the classroom teacher observed. There is an expectation that teachers will implement the strategies in their own classrooms and share their results at team meetings. There is a culture of learning at the school where teachers feel respected and supported by administration, appreciate the opportunities for professional growth and feel safe to be honest about their professional needs. Consequently, an analysis of informal and formal observation data indicates competency among the faculty in ability to use questioning to engage students in meaningful discussion with 80% of teachers improving at least one level on the Danielson rubric in this area and 60% of teachers improving their rubric score in student engagement, resulting in the school reaching its overall goals in these areas.

## What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the methods of assessing student work to provide meaningful feedback and to track progress toward reaching goals so that adjustments to curriculum and instruction accurately reflect the needs of students. (2.2)
  - Across grades, the school uses common assessments including end of unit assessments in math and English language arts and writing tasks to assess student understanding of the standards. School leaders and faculty analyze the data to guide curriculum revision and planning. Rubrics align to the standards and although most teachers stay true to the ratings, there are differing levels of feedback to students. While some examples of student feedback are very clear and provide detailed next steps, other instances exist where the feedback although actionable does not necessarily articulate specific comments that provide clear next steps to students on how to improve their work. As a result, the use of assessments as a tool to inform students of mastery and next steps is not always meaningful to provide the guidance necessary to improve student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 212 Lady Deborah Moody	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>