



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

75K231

**5601 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204**

Principal: Christina Foti

Dates of review: January 13-15, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.231K is a/an elementary/middle school with 351 students from K through grade 8. The school population comprises 44% Black, 25% Hispanic, 20% White, 7% Asian, and 4% unspecified students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 84% of the students enrolled and girls account for 16%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 86.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrates the instructional shifts to ensure a range of learning experiences that cognitively engages all students. (1.1)
 - The school makes purposeful choices about curricula based on past student performance and school-based benchmark assessments that ensure academic tasks are focused on students with a range of learning needs. During the 2011-2012 school-year, there was a dramatic shift in the school's population from 50% of students in alternate assessment to presently 80% in alternate assessment. In order to meet the needs of these students the school has adopted the Treasure curriculum for English language arts (ELA), Math in Focus, SRA reading intervention and Connecting Math Concepts intervention programs. This curriculum emphasizes both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency, with differentiated instructional resources, including interactive lessons. Essential questions and teaching strategies are included in each unit, thereby providing teachers with best practices in developing 21st century skills for their students. "Rigor", defined by the administrative team, as well as the entire staff is to "challenge students to engage in purposeful higher order thinking and demonstrate their understanding through appropriate tasks". The school wide focus on using Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) in the design of rigorous tasks ensures engagement for all students. For example, in a first grade class, the art teacher was reading "Leo the Late Bloomer". The teacher pointed to a picture and asked is Leo happy or sad? The student responded sad and immediately the teacher asked "how do you know that"? Throughout the school teachers are asking students to infer, classify, predict and use context clues to provide details. During a collaborative team meeting, teachers discussed multiple ways to appropriately challenge students so that all students have equal access to the curriculum. The teacher teams analyze student work to identify strengths, areas of growth and next steps for instruction. For example, it was noted that the "labelling" domain of the Assessment of Basic Language Learning Skills (ABLLS-R) which outlines pre-readiness skills students need to acquire in order to access CCLS mathematical content is crucial in specific lesson planning. The use of this assessment has resulted in an increased proficiency in the labelling domain for math concepts by 46%. The school's priority initiatives for the 2013-2014 school year continue to expand and deepen prior years' work in curriculum mapping, strategic teacher team planning and instructional coherence across sites. Planning is evident in the revised curriculum maps used to support multi-level grade bands in classrooms across all content areas. For example, each unit now addresses the priority standard for each grade and the final performance task. A review of data such as: Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), ABLLS-R, Scantron/Ed Performance, Fountas and Pinnell running records and end of unit tests, surfaced instructional gaps for students. Students had difficulty in providing key details in a text, retelling stories and asking questions pertaining to the story. Based upon this knowledge, the instructional cabinet analyzed these gaps and chose

priority standards that would address the cited deficits. These priority standards, RL.1, RI.1, RL.6, RI.6, RL.7, W.3, W.7 and SL.3, are outlined in the curriculum maps, thereby supporting cluster teachers in their content area, resulting in increased coherence between classroom and subject area teachers.

- Teaching practices across the school reflect a coherent set of beliefs that promotes high levels of student thinking in appropriately challenging tasks that are differentiated to support increased student learning. (1.2)
 - The school community believes students learn best by being engaged in purposeful lessons that directly relate to their lives and include embedded opportunities for students to engage in productive conversations. During the first teacher team meeting, I observed teachers using the same lesson plan template that stresses reflective planning with connections to previous teaching/student learning, the skill addressed instructional strategies, differentiated tasks and DOK level questions. Understanding the instructional shifts and Danielson's Framework, competencies (1e) and (3b) are an integral part of the school's makeup. Teacher teams also address Universal Design for Learning (UDL) concepts to support the design of specific teaching strategies so as to provide multiple entry points for all learners. Also, the strategic use of scaffolding techniques such as graphic organizers, visual aids, manipulatives, technology, leveled texts, oral recordings, activities with questions that match the appropriate DOK level for the student and the direct teaching of academic vocabulary across all content areas, provides access for all students. Students were able to speak about how these "aids" helped them in achieving their goals in reading and writing. During the small group meeting, a fourth grade student stated that he can "write" better sentences because he uses a T-Chart organizer. Across classes, evidence of rigor in learning is embedded into daily routines; for example, in a 2nd-3rd grade classroom, the teacher asked the question, "Why did most people live near the Nile River?" The students immediately turned to their partner and began discussing their thoughts. The teacher then asked, "Does this still hold true for today?" and "Why?" To ensure that students assume ownership of their own learning, all classes provide opportunities for students to engage in guided and independent practice. This is part of the school's belief for effective teaching and is consistently reflected in teachers' instructional practices across classrooms. Teachers strategically group students based on an analysis of formal assessments, such as the Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Ed Performance, Fountas and Pinnell and unit assessments. To support students with targeted skills development, teachers provide academic intervention services (AIS). Pedagogical practices across the organization are tailored to the unique makeup of the students and their Individual Education Plan (IEP). As a result, students receiving AIS have shown a growth of 2.7 reading levels in grades 1-3 and 1.5 reading levels in grades 4-5, based on Fountas and Pinnell assessments.
- School leaders make deliberate organizational decisions with an emphasis on the use of technology, scheduling, partnerships and professional development to ensure ongoing growth for all community members. (1.3)

- All resources are strategically aligned to the school's overarching instructional goals and key priorities to extend schema, build problem solving skills and opportunities for students to question each other, using open-ended questions. As a result of the school's commitment to technology, the administration applied for a Resolution "A" grant to provide computers and assistive technology for its students, in order to enhance their ability to engage in real world opportunities outside the classroom and support college and career readiness skills. It also enables students who are non-verbal to participate in all classroom activities. Consequently, every classroom across the organization received a SMARTboard, two iMacs and access to a class set of laptops, iPads and document cameras. In addition, the school's focus on developing the Arts has resulted in strategic and collaborative partnerships. This school is one of five schools accepted into the Disney in Schools program and is the only special education school chosen to participate. The school was also awarded a \$500,000 grant to participate in the Everyday Arts in the Special Education (EASE) program. The artists provide professional development to classroom and cluster teachers on using strategies to integrate arts education into their daily pedagogy, resulting in student enthusiasm around school activities that make them feel valued, creative and motivated to learn, as well as enhance their content and skills knowledge. As a result of the schools dedication to instructional initiatives, the school was selected as a Math in Focus pilot school, Universal Design for Learning pilot school, Verbal Behavior Model school and selected to participate in the Early Childhood iPad Project. As a direct result of the school's commitment to the use of technology and to engaging students in hands-on instruction, alternate assessment students demonstrated a 37% increase in the ABLLS-R domain of reading, surpassing the goal the school set at a 10% increase.

- The principal has supported professional learning communities by building into the school-wide schedule, 100% of teachers meeting weekly during school hours. In addition, as a result of a SBO vote, all teams meet weekly after school to engage in professional development and common planning that result in coherence in levels of questioning and creating rigorous activities to support higher order thinking skills. These twice weekly meeting times allow teachers to examine student progress in obtaining their goals, adjust or modify instruction and select appropriate supports. For example, during the 2nd teacher team meeting, it was suggested that a teacher with a nonverbal student use the Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PEC) to act as a cue for the student. During the meeting another teacher stated that incorporating a "thinking map" into her lesson planning would help students organize their writing visually and sequentially. Staff time is also structured so that teachers have time for peer reviews and intervisitations in the areas of questioning and student engagement that has resulted in consistency in pedagogical practices, as evident in different classes.

- School leaders and staff utilize Danielson's Framework that ensures all teachers receive effective feedback, next steps and clear expectations aligned to teachers' professional goals for growth. (4.1)
 - The school maintains a rigorous schedule of observations, both formal and informal, and provides immediate feedback to teachers. Feedback clearly identifies strengths and challenges and provides actionable,

targeted next steps to promote improvement. For example, after an informal observation the principal wrote “have your classroom be more student centered. As we discussed, this can be evident by having your students bring other students into your whole class discussions and asking peer questions. Continue to incorporate opportunities for turn and talk”. The principal has set clear expectations and provides ongoing support for teacher practices that are specifically connected to professional goals that teachers have aligned to competencies within the Danielson Framework. Administration encourages peer to peer inter-visitations to provide concrete “modeling” in an area of need such as “using questioning and discussion techniques”. Teachers track their progress towards reaching their goals by using the feedback provided by administration after observations. In addition, administrators consistently review student work products, and data related to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goal mastery, to correlate teacher practice to student performance. The administration’s prioritized teacher support is in alignment to the Danielson Framework and professional goals around components 2.a, 3.b, 3.c, 3.e. The data from the second observation cycle demonstrates an average growth of 3% in the components listed above in keeping with the school-wide goal of an increase of 10% by June, 2014.

- Highly developed professional collaborations continuously strengthen cohesive curricula and classroom practices ensuring a shared commitment to increased student achievement. (4.2)
 - All Teachers across sites are active members of collaborative teams focusing on the implementation of the CCLS and integrating the instructional shifts as outlined in the CIE, consistently across the school. Lead teachers attend bimonthly instructional cabinet meetings during which protocols for teacher team meetings are reviewed. The lead teacher models the facilitation of the first cycle of inquiry using the Atlas protocol. During the cycle of inquiry, teachers identify a problem of practice and determine a variable they feel will address this problem. A goal is written during the process and the team tracks progress towards the goal. For example, during the teacher team meeting, a teacher stated she has been unable to teach one of her students the conceptual meaning of “more and less” in mathematics. She was encouraged to try a more kinesthetic approach which allowed the child to process the concept.
 - Team members engage in structured protocol to review student writing pieces generated prior to instruction on a unit of study and again at the close of the unit. An analysis of the data reflects that student work samples at the end of the unit demonstrate consistent increases in writing stamina, the use of key vocabulary in content areas and the inclusion of supporting details as measured by the rubric attached to the initial Common Core library unit. Furthermore, they discuss specific instructional support strategies such as, modeling how to analyze a picture, using pictures for context clues, using T-charts and other graphic organizers, so that alternate assessment students benefit from grade appropriate learning activities aligned to their IEP goals.

- Extend assessment practices in order to continue to inform instructional decisions and provide opportunities for student self-assessment to promote student ownership of progress. (2.2)
 - Administrators, teachers and related service providers collect and use a range of formative and summative assessments that include Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) Assessment of Basic Language and Learning (ABLLS), NYS Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), Ed Performance, Fountas and Pinnell, teacher constructed rubrics and checklists. The use of the data helps track student progress in meeting their IEP learning goals, complete student profiles and adjust lessons to meet all students' learning needs. In addition, Academic Intervention Service (AIS) groups are created based on these assessments. Consistently, student work products are graded using rubrics which provide teachers with targeted information related to student performance from specific learning activities. However, currently there are no embedded structures in place for students to self-assess that provide clear next steps. As a result, there are limited opportunities for students to articulate how their work products demonstrate their academic success and limit their consistent ownership of progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: 75 K231	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
Instructional Core							
<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				
School Culture							
<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			
Systems for Improvement							
<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			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed