

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Richard R. Green

Elementary School 244

**5400 Tilden Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Deon Edwards

Dates of review: April 9 - 10, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Beverly A. Wilkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Richard R. Green is an elementary school with 726 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 96% Black, 2% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 21% 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 92.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The expectations of instructional shifts, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and learning objectives, are all captured into the curricular units of study, thus promoting college and career readiness skills for all students. (1.1)
 - The school works to adopt and adapt curricula aligned with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the citywide instructional shifts by developing units of study that emphasize key standards and reflect appropriate challenge across grade levels. Consequently, a review of curriculum maps shows purposeful decisions to refine units by incorporating the Seven Traits of Writing, modifying text-based tasks such as the inclusion of alternate beginner tasks, additional resources, and/or extensions, and adjusting the pacing of units in Go Math! An integration of benchmark identified skills and grade-level concepts not only builds coherence in curricula, but also ensures real life experiential tasks that promote college and career competencies. "We make adjustments to curriculum relevant to students' needs", as stated by the principal. Namely, embedded in early grade units are opportunities for students to reinforce phonemic awareness skills and in upper grade literacy units techniques such as R.A.F.T., an acronym for role, audience, format, and topic, is used to teach students how to structure pieces of writing. Therefore, intentional curriculum design includes modifications that supplement access to rigorous curriculum, which sets the course for all students to be on track for higher learning.
 - Teachers unpack the curriculum to align lessons and resources to learning objectives. Specifically, the same lessons and resources are utilized across classrooms with adjustments to units that support opportunities for the development of higher-order skills and access to complex ideas, inclusive of English language learners and students with disabilities. Academic tasks embedded in interdisciplinary units promote higher levels of thinking and cognitive engagement with clear scaffolds that consistently emphasize rigorous habits. For example, students in a NEST classroom (program that meets the needs of children on the Autism Spectrum) convert pounds, ounces, and tons into equivalents using real life experiences to transfer knowledge and skills of customary units. The introduction of new concepts is supported through a review of previous learning experiences thus activating students' prior knowledge to enable them access to higher-order thinking skills. As a result, curricula and learning objectives lead to academic tasks that increase student success via high-level thinking and engagement as evidenced in 58% of students in the school's bottom third gaining proficiency levels at or above the 75th growth percentile in math.
- The school's assessment practices aligned to curricula and standards generate adjustments to instruction that meet learning needs and drive student progress. (2.2)

- Teachers continuously gather and use data culled from the ongoing implementation of classroom level assessments, which they create and adopt to target key skills and information taught from and embedded in units of study. Thus, data captured about students' needs and strengths results in detailed portraits of where students are regarding achievement. Across third, fourth, and fifth grade classrooms, teachers analyze State data, examine analysis reports, and scrutinize unit tests to fine tune instructional decisions that promote academic achievement. For example, based on class averages and median scores on benchmark assessments teachers adjust curricular and pedagogical next steps to refine teaching in order to target requisite geometry and fraction skills. This practice of analyzing data leads to the use of class level assessments that provide meaningful feedback to teachers critical to improving outcomes for students.
- Administrators analyze a wide repertoire of data to accelerate student progress by understanding school trends and patterns significant to identifying areas of strength, deficit, and confusion in the delivery of instruction. As a result, opportunities to utilize methods and materials designed to promote progress enable teachers to meet learning needs of students. For instance, Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments, administered four times per year in upper grades and three times per year in lower grades, help to track progress and highlight students who have not met intended gains. Consequently, two cohorts of struggling early grade students receive daily support from educational assistants. Thus, adjustments to instruction that drive early grade progress is aimed at increasing early grade progress based on third grade students' results on State exams.
- The principal's use of the school budget is judicious and strategic resulting in enhanced opportunities for students and teachers to access a broad spectrum of resources to support organizational and instructional goals. (1.3)
 - The newly assigned principal's dynamic use of resources including a literacy coach, United Federation of Teacher Center, per session allocations, and supplemental instructional programs such as Imagine Learning, Ready, and Recipe for Reading, broadens learning opportunities for all students resulting in an enhanced ability to meet instructional goals. Strategic purchasing aligns with CCLS and shifts and incorporates Response to Intervention for Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III learners. The instructional day, extended day, and after-school programs, coupled with investments in technology-based learning software such as Brain Pop and Kidspiration offer students animated cross-curricular visual thinking activities that further address gaps in learning and promote mastery. The positive impact of judicious use of resources is evident in more students meeting grade-level standards and special education students meeting Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals.
 - This year new hires did not join the school community, however, new assignments led to effective organization in order to narrow gaps in learning. To look closely at specific needs of students, the speech teacher works with three students providing at-risk service that proactively supports access to learning. In addition, the computer teacher undertakes a split assignment to support a colleague working with

struggling students in order to bolster their progress. Push-in models for classroom instruction engender the sharing of teacher workloads to promote assisting all students with access to complex ideas, and to help them keep pace with rigorous engagements leading to college and career readiness skills.

- School leaders purposefully support the development of teacher practice using frequent cycles of classroom observations and ongoing analysis of teacher and student work in order to advance professional growth. (4.1)
 - School leaders devise a schedule to observe all teachers frequently and provide timely effective feedback that aligns to teacher effectiveness goals. Student work produced during lessons observed is referred to in written feedback to teachers and referenced in dialogue between school leaders and teachers during professional conferences. As a result, an opportunity for teachers to grow their practice and increase capacity is evidenced in ongoing analysis of teacher and student work. In addition, low inference feedback relative to levels and competencies of the Danielson Framework for Teaching aid teachers in identifying strengths, challenges, and areas for development, which support their continued growth. Veteran teachers working with new teachers on lesson planning support the school-wide focus, Domain Three: Instruction, to promote pedagogical practice. This purposeful feedback cycle stimulates clear expectations for teacher practice articulated in agreed upon professional goals. One teacher remarked, "I am working harder than I have worked in a long time. I am learning a lot about my practice".

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure deliberate integration of multiple entry points into lessons to further engagement in challenging tasks, which fosters critical thinking and promotes participation in rich discussions. (1.2)
 - Observation of teaching practices indicates uneven application of high-level engagement that offers multiple entry points for all learners. In a fourth grade classroom, students worked to solve the same math equations with the teacher providing additional support through questioning strategies such as "Where did you find that number? What do we do now? What kind of fraction is that called? Who can show me another way?" Conversely, in a third and fifth grade classroom, there was little to no evidence of engagement that required high levels of student thinking, limiting students from producing meaningful work products.
 - Teachers have been working to improve their skills in differentiation in order to increase student achievement; however, instructional tasks are not always challenging for all students, leading to uneven levels of student participation and ownership. For example in a kindergarten classroom, teacher-student interaction in a class of 20 students primarily evolved around three students. Similarly, across classrooms teaching strategies and questions do not always create opportunities for students to think deeply, challenge each other's thinking, or generate questions of their own. As a result, the limited development of multiple entry points necessary for all learners to actively engage in lessons hinders participation and ownership.

- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of school-level decisions and professional collaborations to elevate coherence of policies and practices toward student mastery and CCLS expectations. (5.1)
 - Administrators thoughtfully review student academic data while considering changes to curriculum to meet the learning needs of students. In order to improve student mastery, groups of teachers develop common curricular maps aligned with CCLS expectations and instructional policy is regularly evaluated to ensure coherence in practice. However, a mechanism for gauging the effectiveness of grade-level teams is absent. As a result, protocols, accountability, and impact on improved instruction with attention to what teachers need to learn is not yet visible across grade levels. As observed during a teacher team meeting, class level data anchored the team's discussions. Nevertheless, agreed upon plans and next steps that maximize an inquiry approach was missing from the conversations. Therefore, optimized effectiveness of team collaborations is not fully realized in meeting the expectations of CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Richard R. Green	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