

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**The Kosciusko School**

**32K274**

**800 Bushwick Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11221**

**Principal: Maritza Olliviera-Jones**

**Dates of review: January 7-8, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Kosciusko School is an elementary school with 600 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 80% Hispanic, 1% White, and 3% other students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012-2013 was 91.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal strategically organizes resources, partnerships and time effectively to build teacher capacity and support the instructional goals to achieve success in meeting students' learning needs. (1.3)
  - The school funds two instructional specialist positions to support the implementation of the newly adopted English language arts and math curriculum. Instructional specialists work closely with supervisors, teachers and grade level teams to plan lessons, create pacing guides and develop assessments aligned to the rigor of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). They facilitate cohort meetings with English as a second language and special education staff including classroom teachers, the second language coordinator and a special education point person. During cohort meetings, teachers discuss student work and analyze assessment data to improve learning outcomes for English language learners and special needs students. A partnership with New York Psychotherapy offers counseling services at the school, thereby providing external resources to meet the needs of students and families. Collaboration with agencies such as Learning Extensions through the Arts Program (LEAP) and New York University offer integrated learning opportunities with the support of teaching artists and consultants that enrich students' academic and social skills. Therefore, the principal's purposeful utilization of funding and available resources results in effective programmatic and organizational decisions, thereby maximizing the school's efforts to meet students' needs as noted in Common Core aligned performance tasks and work products in student folders and on bulletin boards.
  - The school's schedule enables teacher teams to convene frequently to discuss student work and collaboratively plan challenging tasks that meet students' needs. An additional common planning period is scheduled every seventh instructional day for grade level teams to analyze student data. For example, the fourth grade team conducted a math cycle of inquiry focusing on 18 struggling students across the grade. Following an item analysis of the math assessment in the fall, the team surfaced learning deficiencies in math related to place value through 100,000. Based on the findings, the team planned and implemented specific adjustments to help students achieve individual learning targets. For example, they incorporated additional time for focused instruction during extended day, conducted small group learning activities, and used instructional materials such as manipulatives, visuals, leveled worksheets, and place value charts to meet students' needs. The team's targeted instruction and revisions to learning tasks resulted in improved learning outcomes as noted in the results of pre-test scores ranging between 5% and 55% compared to post-test scores indicating that 95% of the identified students met their learning targets and that 80% scored between 65% and 100%.
- School leaders strategically convey high expectations that support learning so that students and faculty achieve success in meeting their goals. (3.4)

- School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching as a source to communicate high expectations related to the four competencies of the framework which include planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Professional development, conducted through faculty conferences, grade level meetings, intervisitations and teacher team collaborations, offers training opportunities that help the staff develop a shared lens related to the school's expectations. Feedback from supervisors, collaboration between teachers and instructional specialists, and supervisory conversations with teachers promote mutual accountability for the expectations. As a result, the staff is well aware of the school's goals to enhance classroom instruction and accelerate student learning as noted in improved practices observed during supervisory visits to classrooms and data culled from the Advance system.
  
- An annual open house evening during the month of September is used as an early venue to communicate the school's high expectations for student success to families. Student goal pamphlets distributed to parents several times throughout the school year outline children's reading and writing goals and offer recommendations to improve their performance. Personal behavioral student goals such as persistence, communication, collaboration and self-regulation help families promote these college and career readiness behaviors in school and at home. Individual student progress reports provide families with a snapshot of how students are performing on unit assessments, thereby helping them understand their children's progress toward meeting academic expectations. Instructional specialists offer parent workshops to deepen parents' understanding of the English language arts and math curriculum, State assessments and Common Core expectations. Coffee with the Principal, Career Day, Annual Day in the Life school activities as well as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, workshops and information sessions on topics such as "Common Core Learning Standards and What it Means for Your Child", communicate expectations to families connected to college and career readiness. As a result, families understand what their children need to accomplish to be successful at their next level of learning and fully support the school's efforts in preparing their children for college and career readiness as noted in more than 90% parents indicating high levels of satisfaction according to the annual school survey.
  
- The school ensures alignment of curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and offers meaningful learning experiences that promote rigor to improve student learning. (1.1)
  - The school uses English language arts and math programs aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to ensure coherence and integration of the instructional shifts across grades. Instructional specialists create literacy, math, science and social studies curriculum documents that guide teachers in using the Tri-State rubric to plan Common Core aligned lessons and academic tasks that promote rigorous habits and critical thinking skills for all students. Lesson plans include depth of knowledge questions at various levels to guide close reading activities and augment class discussions. Science and social studies matrix activities reflect tasks that integrate the instructional shifts and the school's instructional focus to enhance student discourse and increase

evidence-based arguments in student discussions and writing assignments. Grade level teacher teams participate in planning sessions to adjust the pacing of lessons, incorporate guided reading components and revise learning activities that emphasize higher order skills and rigor for English language learners and special needs students. As a result, all students participate in a coherent curriculum and CCLS aligned performance tasks that promote college and career readiness skills as noted in performance based projects posted on bulletin boards and available in student work folders.

- School leaders evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices with a clear focus on promoting professional growth and reflection, thereby impacting classroom instruction. (4.1)
  - School leaders use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to support teacher development through clear expectations for classroom practice and feedback that specifies strengths, challenges and next steps to promote professional growth. Feedback from supervisors provides recommendations followed by supervisory conversations, e-mails or brief messages that inform teachers of their progress in meeting expectations related to their pedagogical skills and professional growth. Suitable supports meet the individual needs of new and experienced teachers. For example, following data analysis of the first cycle of classroom observations, supervisors identified competency 3B: using questioning and discussion, and competency 3C: engaging students in learning, as priority areas for teacher development. Therefore, supervisors provided multiple opportunities such as intervisitations followed by reflection periods with colleagues, video clips with guided questions for collaborative conversations, and a shared article for group discussion. As a result, feedback to teachers and tailored support to meet their needs are positively impacting daily classroom instruction as noted during classroom visits via questioning and discussion techniques, that include open-ended questions, increased opportunities for student discussions and attention to the pacing of lessons to ensure meaningful student engagement.

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

- Enhance shared assessment practices so that information on learning outcomes results in effective adjustments to instruction with clear next learning steps for students to accelerate their learning. (2.2)
  - Teachers use common assessments such as Ready Gen performance tasks, Go Math unit tests, grading policies and performance-based rubrics aligned to the school's curricula. Student writing products on bulletin boards and in work folders include actionable feedback from teachers and peers. However, feedback does not always offer meaningful information to help students understand their progress toward 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 hindering their potential to progress academically.
  - Assessment practices include the use of quick checks, exit tasks, self assessments and class shares to help teachers check for understanding

and adjust lessons to meet the needs of students. For example, teachers group students for interventions and extension activities based on the information gathered from these assessments. However, the varied use of ongoing assessment practices is not fully embedded across the school, which limits opportunities for strategic and targeted adjustments across grades and subjects to meet the immediate learning needs of all students.

- Refine the use of teaching strategies that strategically embed multiple entry points so that academic tasks further challenge all learners and result in meaningful work products that reflect student ownership. (1.2)
  - Instructional supports such as visual cues, accountable talk stems, manipulatives, and technology provide multiple entry points in lessons. For example, during class visits, struggling learners worked with place value charts and fraction tiles while high performers completed enrichment tasks such as games to stimulate their thinking. Teachers encourage students to use accountable talk stems posted on desks during partner and whole class activities. However, in some classrooms, lessons did not provide strategic scaffolds to promote language development and academic vocabulary for English language learners. In addition, some lesson extensions consisted of additional work for students who finished early, therefore lacking high quality, well-matched extensions to push thinking and broaden the learning experiences of high performers. As a result, some students are not always fully motivated to participate in academic tasks that foster high levels of thinking and promote ownership of their learning, thereby limiting their potential to maximize their learning.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Kosciusko School	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>