

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Park Slope

Elementary/Middle School K282

**180 6th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11217**

Principal: Magalie Alexis

Dates of review: January 29-30, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Park Slope is an elementary/middle school with 1006 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 66% Black, 22% Hispanic, 8% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 11% 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 92.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school aligns curricula and integrates higher order thinking skills and instructional shifts in order for all students to have access to more rigorous and cognitively demanding academic tasks. (1.1)
 - The principal and several teachers viewed recommended Common Core aligned content materials. Staff perused and provided feedback on curriculum samples in order to determine what materials best meets the needs of students and teachers. The school selected Ready Gen and Expeditionary Learning for English Language Arts and Go Math for the elementary school and continues to utilize Carnegie Math for the middle school. Teams unpack and analyze the new curricula to ensure that there is vertical coherence in skill building such as close reading across grades. Content and grade teams continue developing and adjusting units of study in social studies and science using the citywide scopes and sequences as a guide in order to ensure they too are cognitively demanding. Gifted and talented classes have additional curriculum units of study based on the City Hall model located at Tweed. This has resulted in curricula that prepare all students for college and career.
 - The school utilizes the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Bloom's Taxonomy in order to develop and monitor the level of higher order thinking skills posed to students. The literacy coach attends workshops provided by the network and external vendors and then provides professional development to teachers on instructional practices and strategies to support the development of questions school-wide that lead to richer student discussions. Students are engaged in research-based projects that require sustained and close reading on specific topics, working collaboratively in groups, constructing thesis statements culminating in a research paper or other representation of their work. Students in a grade 1 Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class were challenged to deconstruct the number 9 and utilized manipulatives to show their work. As a result, all students demonstrate their ability to think critically and produce work that demonstrates rigorous habits.
- The principal aligns resources to school goals and uses teacher and student time effectively in order to improve instruction that challenges students resulting in improved student work products. (1.3)
 - The principal aligns resources to support the school's instructional focus of increasing student progress by supporting teachers in implementing new curricular materials. On-site English language arts and math coaches, and a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) teacher center provide additional professional development and materials to staff, including technology which includes SMARTboards and iPads for student/teacher use. Additionally, the school purchased the services of Urban Advantage to provide instructional support through professional development and materials. Furthermore, instructional supplies to support new curricula materials have been purchased such as additional informational texts and Urban Advantage professional development services. The principal

allocates funds to support afterschool and Saturday programming so that students have additional time to improve their skills and content knowledge. The school's effective use of resources supports instruction and results in improved student work.

- Weekly structured team meetings are designed to provide teachers voice in providing effective instructional supports and monitoring student progress. Teams discuss, in collaboration with special education teachers, the modification of rubrics and challenges that students might incur throughout the course of units of study as well as the accommodations and adaptations necessary in order for those students to be successful. Teacher schedules are created in order to provide instructional support such as team teaching and coaching time. Furthermore, the “push in” services of the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and speech teacher reduces the student-to-adult ratio to provide additional opportunities for small group work and enrichment opportunities within the classroom. These supports enable students, especially English language learners and students with Individual Education Plans (IEP), to engage in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work.
- School leaders communicate high expectations for teachers and students while providing training and support in order for all to be accountable for outcomes. (3.4)
 - All staff receives annually the school handbook which outlines expectations for teaching, lesson plans, and available services to support students. Teachers participate in informational sessions to understand the Danielson Framework and the expectations for teacher effectiveness in classrooms. School leaders attend monthly network professional development and are responsible for bringing back the information pertinent to effective implementation, such as the submission of artifacts for domains 1 and 4, to the school coaches who in turn work with teachers. The United Federation of Teachers (UFT) provides professional development opportunities such as classroom management and lesson planning. Staff is also aware of citywide trainings to support their knowledge of the new curricular materials purchased by the school and is encouraged to attend. Assistant principals are supported through workshops sponsored by the Council for School Administrators (CSA). Coaches are responsible for providing additional supports such as demonstration lessons, team teaching, and informal walkthroughs in order to provide additional instructional support. Additionally, the staff establishes a culture of rigorous expectations for students. For instance, essential questions are posed at the beginning of units and in most classrooms informational charts were displayed capturing the learning in the unit thus far. Students stated they were clear on the requirements in each of their classes and had an adult in the building who they were comfortable with in discussing their work. Students also knew where they could get support if they were struggling in a specific content area. The Usher Foundation sponsors a leadership conference which helps to strengthen student's leadership skills and independence. Students in grades 5 and 8 are supported by the school's guidance counselor as they articulate to the next level of middle/high school. Parent workshops are conducted to explain the articulation process. The school hosts fairs in order for families to gain additional information when making their school choices and counselors host meetings with students to discuss their choices and the requirements for selection. These efforts enable the

school to create a culture where high expectations are articulated for both teachers and supported for all students. As a result, students are being matched to their first selections and being admitted to more specialized programs throughout the city.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the school's shared belief system is consistently informed by the Danielson framework, the rigorous curricula, and instructional practices which provide multiple pathways in order for all students to succeed. (1.2)
 - The school shares the belief that all students can learn in settings in which they are engaged in talk, have the opportunity to work in multiple types of groupings with explicit teaching, and have opportunities to use technology to support their learning. In a grade 8 classroom, students read an excerpt from *The March on Washington* and worked in groups utilizing graphic organizers to determine the central idea of the text by analyzing its text structure. In a grade 5 math classroom students were engaged in a whole group lesson on deconstructing word problems focused on number and operations in base 10. Students then completed independent practice sheets that reflected additional word problems where they had to find the quotient and show their work. Nevertheless, not all classrooms provided settings that engage students in ample talk. Furthermore, opportunities for student interaction with technology as part of the learning process were limited. Therefore, instructional practices across classrooms were inconsistently aligned to the school's belief system and the demands of the instructional shifts resulting in a less effective presentation of the school's more demanding units of study and tasks in the classroom.
 - The school utilizes questioning to ensure that all students have access to the curricula. Levels and types of questions are based on Bloom's Taxonomy or DOK and teachers use flexible grouping in order to support students based on skill deficits. In a grade 6 ICT class, the teacher asked, "What does the author want to accomplish?" and "What do you already know that allows you to infer that?", while referring to an advertisement. Technology assistance is utilized in some classrooms for individualized work and access to curricula. Several students whose native language is Arabic were supported by individualized technology software which advanced in difficulty by the student's performance on prior lessons. However, teacher's questions do not always require higher order thinking skills nor do they address the multiple entry points of students especially special education students and English language learners, thus limiting opportunities for all students to engage in challenging work that demonstrates higher order thinking in their work products.
- Strengthen assessment alignment and its analysis to the curricula, grading policies, and effective feedback in order to make curricula and instructional practices modifications. (2.2)
 - The school's Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) selections, pre-, mid- and post- unit assessments in core content areas, benchmarks, and baseline assessments comprise the academic data teachers receive about

student progress. Through the work of five data specialists, information is given to grade and content teams and in structured team meetings. In turn, teachers discuss student data and how they will address student needs in upcoming units. Currently, the data revealed students need additional support in algebraic expressions and strengthening their comprehension skills when doing close reading of text. Modifications in lessons were evident in providing more opportunities for students to utilize concrete evidence from text to support their thinking. Middle school teams are working to align their class and marking period policies to the demanding curricula. Nevertheless, teacher analysis of assessment data and use of rubrics is inconsistent, thereby limiting actionable feedback to students, thus hampering the school's ability to advance student performance.

- School leaders utilize the results of common assessments and performance tasks to determine alignment between assessments and the school's instructional goals and has a classroom dedicated to data collection. Curriculum maps in English Language Arts provide the types of assessments during units of study, such as questions from the text, entrance and exit tickets, and mid-unit assessments. However, limited schoolwide structures such as content data meetings result in a lack of systems for data analysis and synthesis with the teachers, teams, and coaches. Therefore, data-driven instruction on school, content or grade levels and tracking of student progress toward instructional goals are inadequate. As a result, teacher effectiveness in adjusting curricula and instruction based on common assessment results is limited, thus hampering goal attainment.
- Improve structures to support teacher development that provides actionable feedback to teachers and is aligned to the Danielson Framework in order to promote professional growth. (4.1)
 - School leaders provide feedback on teaching practices through frequent classroom observations. The school focuses on all domains within the Danielson Framework and provides feedback after each classroom visit. The principal meets with assistant principals and coaches to discuss trends across grades and content areas in order to build coherence in observing classroom instruction. Coaches are utilized to support teachers throughout the cycle and following subsequent observations those cited areas are revisited. Cabinet meetings with coaches and leaders are designed to build capacity as well as trusting relationships during the monitoring of teaching and learning. However, not all school leaders provide consistent and effective feedback following observations thus limiting the ability for all teachers to get accurate next steps from observation data to improve their pedagogical skills. This hampers professional growth.
 - The principal has engaged the staff in work with the *Advance* system and has created teams that are monitoring planning and preparation and professional responsibilities through artifact submissions. The team, consisting of assistant principals and coaches, is also focused on working with staff around the critical attributes in each domain and what must be apparent in classroom instruction in order to receive high ratings in those categories. For example, competency 2c requires that students themselves ensure that transitions and other routines are accomplished smoothly in order for the teacher to receive a highly effective rating in this area. However, after reviewing several observation reports, inconsistent

feedback and next steps are not fully connected to the Framework, thus limiting teacher development supports resulting in hampering the elevation of instructional practices schoolwide.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Park Slope	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