



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Elijah Stroud

**Middle School 353
750 Classon Avenue
Brooklyn
NY, 11238**

Principal: Tricia Delauney

Dates of review: January 29 - 30, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Renee Peart - Zachary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Elijah Stroud is a middle school with 267 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 85% Black, 13% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school leaders and faculty adopt Common Core (CC) aligned curricula, providing all learners with access to academic tasks that promote college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - The school selected Common Core aligned curricula of Scholastic Code X for English language arts (ELA), Pearson Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3), Glencoe Science and Holt – McDougal United States History for social studies. Additionally, teacher teams use varied resources that include Teachers College (TC), Peoples Common Core Math Program, Engage NY, New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Common Core Library, and New York City Science and Social Studies Scope & Sequence, to create units that focus on the instructional shifts of building academic vocabulary and fluency and requiring students to provide text-based answers. Teacher teams select a specific “skill of the week”, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, such as citing textual evidence to support analysis of the text, and compare and contrast texts in different genres. Teacher teams evaluate tasks so that they promote college and career readiness. For example, grades 7 and 8 students discussed how they use the Cornell note-taking method to gather information for a research-based argumentative essay, which supports college and career readiness.
 - The school leaders and the curriculum specialist team review unit plans weekly to ensure rigor and access to the curriculum for all learners. The curriculum specialist team uses Norm Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and Hess’ Cognitive Rigor Matrix to determine if tasks are rigorous. Unit plans identify essential questions, big ideas, guided questions, content skills, strategies, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), assessments, resources, rubrics, vocabulary, differentiated tasks and culminating tasks. Additionally, school leaders created a lesson plan template to support teacher preparation to meet all students learning needs, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), which includes CCLS, objective, materials, prior knowledge, academic vocabulary, modeling, student grouping, scaffolds, guided practice, differentiated tasks, assessments, reflection and homework. For example, a grade 7 English language arts unit outlines how students will write an argumentative essay citing textual evidence from the text “They Broke the Law – You Be the Judge” by Thomas A. Jacobs, JD. The students compare and contrast peer evidence and support their claim by participating in a mock trial. As a result, teachers have access to and use school resources in unit and lesson planning to provide opportunities relative to the needs of all learners.
- The school leaders make organizational decisions that are aligned to the instructional goals. (1.3)
 - In order to address recent standardized test data indicating that 3% of students are performing at or above grade level in both ELA and math, the principal now in her second year, has made a purposeful decision to

provide academic intervention services to students. Funding has been allocated for a Saturday Academy, and an after-school program, both providing tutoring for students. Teachers also volunteer time during the lunch periods to provide tutoring to at-risk students. A partnership with Community Counseling Mediation (CCM) provides additional support via counseling services that support students with behavioral needs. As a result, the principal stated that the quality of student work, specifically noting writing, is improving.

- To support consistent and ample time for collaboration the principal eliminated the homeroom period from the teachers' schedule. This programming change allows each teacher team to have opportunities to meet by department and grade at least once a week to plan lessons and review student work. Additionally, teacher teams known as professional learning communities meet daily. The school improvement team, and a curriculum specialist team, meets weekly to discuss targeted students' needs and curricula. The amplified focus on collaboration has led to teacher teams working cohesively to plan lessons that align to the school's instructional goals.
- The school creates a culture of respect and trust that foster opportunities for academic and social-emotional growth. (1.4)
 - The student government, a venue for student voice, meets monthly to plan school-wide events like "college day" and "color pride day". These events build school community and allow students to assume leadership roles. Additionally, after obtaining students' opinions through surveys, school leaders organized after-school enrichment clubs whereby students enroll in clubs such as Spanish, chess, tap and yearbook. One student said, "I would recommend this school because they have a lot to offer". One parent said, "I love this school because they really know the kids. The staff stays late in the evening to help our kids." As a result, the pride of all stakeholders is seen in the school's Environment rating of "B" on the 2013 Progress Report, which increased to 10.7. from 9.6.
 - The administrators and the school support team meet bi-weekly to address attendance and needs of at-risk students. The school uses Global Connect to outreach to parents on attendance issues. Furthermore, the guidance counselor meets with students during weekly advisory classes where she provides instruction and guidance on topics such as bullying, peer pressure, college and career readiness, and study habits. The school's STAR Program, (Showing respect, Taking responsibility, Acting safely and Respecting yourself and others), is devised to reward students for making positive choices. Students receive tickets that they utilize to shop at the school's store. Consequently, the principal highlighted how she has seen a difference in the tone of the building. One student said, "If there are problems, students talk with the guidance counselor". On parent said, "If there is an incident, the school reaches out immediately to arrange a parent meeting. Also, if there are any attendance or lateness issues, we will get a phone call from the school's messaging service." The UFT representative said, "Teachers feel supported and everyone works together to help our students." These interventions have led to a reduction in suspensions, from 11.8 % in January, 2013, to 8.6% as of January 2014.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the work on questioning techniques and discussion protocols to promote high levels of student thinking for all learners. (1.2)
 - The school community is working on a core set of beliefs that students learn best through effective questions and discussions. School leaders have provided professional development opportunities on pedagogy practices that include student discussions. However, across classrooms the teacher directed lessons showed evidence of low-level questioning techniques and student discussions. For example, in a grade 6 self-contained math class, the teacher's Depth of Knowledge level one comprehension questions to assess students understanding of the math problems on how to convert fractions to equivalent decimals included, "Did everyone get that? Great. Do you see? Great. What is the answer? Good job, let's move on." In a grade 7 science class, questions posed were "What is an indicator? What is a ph scale? Do you understand?" All students responded, "Yes.", although, students were unclear on the vocabulary and task. Consequently, teaching strategies result in uneven levels of rigorous questions that foster deep thinking and student discussions.
 - There is an emphasis that lessons include modeling and scaffolded learning to support all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities. In a grade 8 English language arts self-contained class, the teacher assigned students to a task and asked them to cite evidence in their essays using informational text. To differentiate, some students received the informational texts in chunks. The teacher walked around and took conference notes as she provided each student with immediate feedback. In a grade 8 social studies class, students used laptops to conduct research on Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois. Some students took notes on graphic organizers and other students used their notes to formulate their argument for a class debate. One small group of students was given guided notes from the mini-lesson. However, these teaching strategies are not consistently embedded as school-wide practices. Hence, there are limited opportunities for student engagement in rigorous tasks.
- Strengthen the school's assessment practices to make necessary adjustments to meet all students' learning needs. (2.2)
 - Across subjects, teachers use common assessments that provide information on student performance. The school leaders identify common assessments on the assessment calendar so that the school community has information on upcoming assessments. Teachers have data binders where they collect results of common assessments. Students have opportunities to review assessments on "data days" where they develop goals from teacher feedback on tasks and assessments. However, although, some students attend tutoring during lunch, after-school and on Saturdays, there is no school-wide system in place to track progress of students receiving academic intervention services. For example, the

English as a second language teacher had no interim data relative to the progress of English language learners. The school's system for tracking progress by grade, class, subgroups, and individuals, is not used consistently to guide school-wide adjustments in units and instruction, hindering its ability to determine if they are sufficiently targeting students' needs to impact progress towards the goal of students attaining a 10% increase in both English language arts and math. (b)

- Exit slips are incorporated into lesson plans to check for student understanding. In a grade 6 math class, the teacher selected students to model dividing decimal problems. Students worked independently, received peer feedback, and the teacher took formative conference notes. The teacher conducted a mid-point adjustment where she pulled a small group to re-teach the skill. This teaching practice included making effective adjustments to the instruction based on mid-point checks, questions, teacher observation, and conference notes. However, these various forms of assessments are not consistent school-wide practices. Implementation of lesson plans that include checks for understanding were not evident across classrooms. As a result, opportunities are missed to carefully note where students need immediate intervention.
- Refine the tracking of school-wide goals and action plans to improve teacher practice and student learning outcomes. (3.1)
 - School leaders have a list of goals that focus on student improvement. As only 3% of students are on or above grade level in both English language arts and math, the school's goals relative to Danielson Framework, 3b, using questions and discussions, and a 10% increase in English language arts and math, are at the forefront in planning and evident in documents such as the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). Additionally, teachers have professional goals and students have academic goals that are aligned to the school's instructional vision. The principal shared that the school's goals are reviewed at monthly cabinet meetings. However, a review of cabinet meeting agendas indicated that at meetings, administrators discuss administrative items and goals but do not address action plans, timeline for implementation, interim checkpoints, adjustments, next steps and progress towards goals. Thus, there are missed opportunities to track and provide targeted interventions and strategic adjustments to the action plans to sufficiently accelerate student performance and progress.
 - A yearly professional development plan has been developed based on observations, reviewing student work, and data. The school has a goal of having at least 85% of teachers rated effective in the Danielson component of 3b, questions and discussions. The principal tracks data of teacher observations and shares the data with the staff through administrative memorandums. However, this administrative process has led to minimal improvement in teacher questioning practice as evidenced by Danielson Framework data on the school's goal of improving questions and discussions. As of January 2014, only 41.8% of teachers have been rated effective in the area of questions and discussions. Additionally, the yearly professional development plan has not been adjusted based on this data. As a result, effective action planning to improve teacher practice is hindered.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Elijah Stroud School	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