

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**The Magnet School of Global Communication through
Journalism and Technology**

Elementary School 506

**330 59th Street
Brooklyn
11227**

Principal: Lisa Sarnicola

Dates of review: December 12 - 13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Karina Costantino

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Magnet School of Global Communication through Journalism and Technology is an elementary school with 802 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 68% Hispanic, 3% White, and 27% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 14% 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 97.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has engaging coherent curricula including the arts, physical and health education, for a variety of learners, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) resulting in college and career readiness. (1.1)
 - Monthly assemblies, where classes perform for the entire school community, allow for every child an opportunity to be engaged in the arts. In addition, the school enjoys a partnership with Disney in Schools, as well as enrichment offerings such as, Dance Club, Chorus, Student Council, Journalism, violinists and band. Enjoying an additional partnership with Arts Achieve, the school looks at and reviews data to improve arts education by infusing rubrics, opportunities for peer assessment and a strong integration of technology aligned to the Common Core State Standards integrating the arts across English language arts, Social Studies and Science. There are additional partnerships with New Victory Theater, Brooklyn Connection (through the Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza), and the Greenwood Cemetery Historical Education Program to support the rigor of CCLS in the curricula. All arts activities, particularly those aligned to technology - activities, such as the creation of power points, are infused with CCLS performance tasks and embedded throughout all grades, resulting in developing independence and self direction for all students. Students in grade kindergarten through grade 5 are being prepared for college and career readiness by participating in “The Leader in Me” grant which provides all staff, families, and students, with guidance around *The 7 Habits of Successful People* by Franklin Covey. All students, in every class, learn how to practice the characteristics of successful leaders, namely, a shared belief in collaboration, cohesiveness and an opportunity for reflection. This results in the whole school using a common language, strengthening staff and student leadership abilities, and encouraging meaningful goal-setting, as children explore the connections to core subjects, such as ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. For example children create their own meaningful goals in ELA and Mathematics, reflecting on what they know and what they know they still need to learn, preparing them for college and career.
 - In every grade, all teachers use data from both summative and formative assessments to strategically plan lessons that provide multiple entry points and high quality supports and extensions so that all learners, English language learners and Students with special needs are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that require higher order thinking. Evidence of student work is displayed throughout the building. A specific example of this is that across classrooms students are being taught within their appropriate level of proficiency for that lesson. In Math, for example, students complete a 2 problem assessment to determine if they are in need of being placed in a reteach group, an enrichment group, or an on level group, thus making strategic curricula adjustments to provide access to English language learners and special education students. This occurs in every classroom and the groups are color coded using the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. All math problems are aligned with CCLS and

the impact is that students are cognitively challenged and immediate feedback is given to all students about their learning progress. As a result, students have increased the ability to create their own meaning, integrate skills into processes, and use what they learn to solve real world problems.

- Across classrooms, teacher practice consistently reflects school wide beliefs about how students learn best, and is shaped by teacher team and faculty input as evidenced by student work products. (1.2)
 - The principal believes in developing “bottom lines” or non-negotiable best practice to ensure success across all classes in all grades. In reviewing the data, the school community focuses on academic language, which is seen as a weakness, particularly for English language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs). Additionally, there is a focus on fluency in math to ensure that students gain proficiency so they can tackle complex concepts and problems that the CCLS entail. For example, students engage in Math Talk during the lesson, which has them discussing what their solution and strategy is, while other students agree or disagree stating their reasons. Following this, they may build on an idea while giving an explanation or example. They may also make a connection to think about the problem in another way, extending the ideas of other students. This results in successfully pushing all students thinking towards higher order thinking. Additional shifts in curriculum are addressed through professional development, reflection, and the sharing of best practices. Vocabulary charts, tiered vocabulary development, inclusion of Tier II vocabulary in writing, math fluency games, adjustments made to the curriculum during teaching and student-to-student accountable talk are evident practices across classrooms that push student thinking and improve student outcomes for all students. The evidence of effective practice is that in 2012, 12% of students in grade 5 were reading at level 4 proficiency, whereas in 2013, 32% of students in grade 5 are reading at a level 4 proficiency level as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment.
- The principal's strategic use of organizational resources, teacher time, and student programs, supports the school's instructional goals, with emphasis on further improving student performance. (1.3)
 - School leadership design the school's program based on observable teachers' strengths, students' needs, and grade level needs to develop coherence to support the school's instructional goals. Teachers receive an additional period a week to revise and prepare curriculum as grade teams. The introduction of Response to Intervention (RTI) leads into deep inquiry work on the part of teacher teams. In addition, the principal has hired four academic intervention teachers two for the lower grades, two for the upper grades, including a reading recovery teacher. Grade teams, academic intervention providers meet several times during the week for inquiry work. The school's schedule allows teachers to have common preparation and lunch hours for additional meeting time. Cross grade monthly meetings provide teachers time to identify best practice and make inter-grade connections to accelerate school wide learning outcomes. Department meetings focus their work on examining content skills, performance tasks, and the CCLS to develop high level tasks with

access points for all learners. Thus teachers' intense focus on attainment of the school's instructional goals, along with holding themselves accountable for the progress of individual students, leads to students completing high quality work, as evidenced by class discussions, students' work portfolios, and individual learning goals. The use of staff time is structured so that not only teacher teams meet to inform instruction, but additional time has been provided in the schedule for every grade to have three-four common preps a week to plan instruction which creates challenging academic tasks to push student thinking and improve student outcomes. Additional time is allotted for The Lighthouse Team to meet. This team is part of the *Leader in Me* Program and meets biweekly to create action plans to ensure that the high expectations of the *Leader in Me* program are consistent throughout the school. The impact of this is seen in the results of the Progress Report over the past two years. The school went from an overall score of 55.7% in 2011-12 to an overall score of 63.7 in 2012-2013.

- The school uses assessment results to refine curricula and adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level so that students demonstrate mastery of content and skills. (2.2)
 - The principal and teacher teams created new report cards on each grade to align to the Common Core State Standards which provides parents with a clear understanding of how their children are progressing towards their goals. In addition, teachers conference with students to highlight strengths and areas of need. Exemplars are used to have students reflect and discuss across content areas so they can then develop a checklist to determine what qualities an exemplary piece of work possesses. Teachers will work with students across grades to create rubrics to identify their next steps, promoting independent skills for college and career readiness. The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) which is done three times a year is to ensure that students are moving through the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels and reaching the complexity band in reading as identified by the lexile levels of text complexity. Running records are administered in kindergarten through grade 2, in addition to the DRA, and assist to identify students' progress. As a result, students are moving through the reading levels required for their grade. Writing-on-demand assessments are done prior to and at the end of each unit which ensures that students are grouped and taught based on their academic needs. A post assessment evaluates if the student was able to transfer the strategies taught to work done independently. Consequently, using results from assessments leads to effective modifications to the curricula and the ability for students to be grouped and receive instruction based on individual academic needs. In addition, the school leadership tracks the progress of all students when reviewing assessments during instructional team meetings. As a result, teaching practices and teacher discussions across the school support these beliefs in a coherent manner.
- School leaders consistently use data from classroom observations, and the Danielson Framework, to provide meaningful feedback to teachers leading to improved teaching practice. (4.1)
 - The school administration and teachers triangulate data from observation reports, peer-feedback, student work, and assessment results, to

strategically inform next steps for improving teaching practice. Teachers are observed and immediate feedback is provided that includes both support and actionable next steps. The principal collects and reviews all student assessment data, as well as identifying trends in teacher observations and feedback from the administrative team across grades, and individual teachers. Teachers stated that administrators provide immediate targeted feedback through individual conversations followed with next steps aligned to teacher's professional goals. This results in providing targeted and meaningful professional development and support. Findings are then compiled and shared with teachers to self-monitor progress toward their goals and the support available to them to achieve those goals. In the Learning Environment Survey, 93% of the teachers indicated that the principal gave them regular and helpful feedback about their teaching. In addition, comparisons of first round and second round data from observations show growth and improvement in many competencies as evidenced by an increase in the number of teachers achieving effectiveness. In cycle 1, round 1, 43% of teachers scored within the effective column of 3b, whereas in cycle 2, round 2, 61% of teachers scored within the effective column for 3b.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand existing supports for parent outreach to purposefully communicate the expectations of the CCLS in order to accelerate academic achievement. (5.1)
 - The school has established protocols that integrate teacher feedback and support parent involvement to deepen level of school culture and enhance understanding of the CCLS expectations. Further, the school continually assesses levels of parent participation, attendance at workshops and responses to written communication. However, despite this outreach and ongoing evaluation, parent participation has not substantially increased. This limits the degree of coherence in the culture of the school and restricts the in-depth understanding of the CCLS among parents, thus hindering students' progress.
 - The school has processes in place to assess the level of implementation of the CCLS and instructional practices to make adjustments as needed based on outcomes. These include regularly scheduled analysis of school wide unit and periodic assessment outcomes, analysis of student work at the teacher team and classroom levels, active participation of school leaders at teacher meeting and classroom visits. However, though these systems are embedded for English language arts and math. As a result, these systemic evaluations are not as completely developed, limiting the feedback and lessening the potential impact on student success.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Magnet School of Global Communication through Journalism and Technology	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