



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Conselyea Preparatory**

**Middle School 577**

**208 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11211**

**Principal: Maria Masullo**

**Dates of review: January 29-30, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Conselyea Preparatory is a middle school with 496 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 6% Black, 64% Hispanic, 27% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14 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 94.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well- developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school leaders and teachers purposefully provide coherence in curricula and academic tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards resulting in access for all learners and preparing them for college and careers.(1.1)
  - The school decided to implement two recommended programs, fully aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), in English language arts and math. Instructional shifts, embedded in curriculum and units, emphasize reading closely and discussion of complex informational and literary text by citing evidence, building academic and content vocabulary across disciplines, and real life application, fluency, deep meaning and problem solving in math. A review of curriculum artifacts revealed that individual teachers, teacher teams, and school leaders use these programs, the Scholastic Code X and the Pearson Connected Math Program 3, to ensure planning coherence across the grades and subjects. For example, all teachers deliberately plan for academic and content vocabulary development. Lesson and unit plans, inclusive of the arts, also contain higher-order questions and multiple differentiation strategies planned for distinct groups, including English language learners, special education students, and high achieving students, thus providing all learners with access to rigorous curricula. An English language arts lesson plan, for example, includes three differentiated tasks with visual representations, graphic organizers and open-ended questions for students to participate in a text based discussion about topics such as the civil rights, democracy, poverty and race. Likewise, individual plans consistently contain multiple entry points from the menu of strategies like roundtables, guided note taking, or investigations supporting auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learning styles the school intentionally addresses. Similarly, teacher teams regularly analyze student work and achievement results to modify and refine units and tasks for diverse groups of students as observed in teacher team meetings. For example, a vertical English language arts team discussed successes, concerns, and next steps by asking questions such as “How will reading skills and small group instruction be incorporated?” and by listing audio-visual supports for the next unit. All teachers and teams consistently focus on increasing student engagement in learning and intentional planning for questioning, discussions and defending arguments in groups and partnerships, thus promoting college and career readiness in all subjects across grade levels. Moreover, all students from grade 6 to grade 8 have opportunities to access rigorous and engaging curricula that challenge their thinking and equip them with skills and strategies for future academic and professional success. In addition, students demonstrate improved reading comprehension and math understanding in their discussions and written responses to tasks by citing more text based evidence and showing multiple ways of problem solving.
- The vast majority of teachers strategically engage all students in high quality instruction promoting critical thinking skills through discussions that are in alignment with the curricula and school beliefs. (1.2 )

- All teachers purposefully implement a range of strategies to address individual students' learning styles, thus supporting the school's intrinsic philosophy that children learn in different ways and pace, based on the Multiple Intelligences Theory that the leadership and the faculty researched and collaboratively agreed upon when aligning teaching practices with the Common Core curriculum. Furthermore, instruction is rooted in strategic use of questioning and ongoing assessment leading to grouping students for discussions about the text or solving problems as observed during classroom visits. Moreover, all students including the school's relevant subgroups are engage in discussions with peers in groups or partnerships as all teachers engage their students in high quality tasks and provide a choice of entry points that reflect their knowledge of student needs. In one Integrated Co-Teaching class, all students actively discussed the definition of symbolism and symbols used by an author. Some students were engaged in a think-pair-share discussion and wrote responses to the objects and their symbolic meaning on a pictorial, while others were creating symbols representative of the text and selecting text-evidence quotes from the chapter they read, supported with a graphic organizer. In another class, a teacher gave students an option to choose from pre-writing tools including diagrams, charts, and jotting down notes, thus addressing student learning styles and providing them with differentiated scaffolds. In a math class, students watched an interactive video about water plants on the SMART board and drew real life conclusions when answering a higher- order question, "What information do you need to write an equation that represents an exponential function?" This careful and strategic attention to providing multiple entry points has resulted in higher levels of student engagement in discussions as observed in classroom visits across the school and their success as measured by unit assessments and daily formative assessments indicating that students are asking higher order questions when analyzing tasks.
- Students routinely demonstrate their content knowledge, independent thinking, risk taking and ownership of learning. Teachers constantly challenge students to be critical and independent thinkers and to defend their opinions, arguments and solutions. In English language arts classes across the grades, engage in small group literature circles with clearly defined roles, such as community connector/summarizer, discussion director or vocabulary enhancer. They ask and answer questions, choose themes to discuss or issues to debate, consistently following a well embedded protocol for group discussions allowing all students to contribute in a risk-free setting while a teacher facilitates with additional supports. In science, social studies and math classes, all students participate by working in independent or guided groups grappling with challenging questions and offering explanations and reasoning in problem solving. Furthermore, a review of student essays and performance tasks indicates high levels of student thinking. Consequently, students are greatly motivated to participate in engaging and challenging tasks in all content areas.
- The school deliberately uses ongoing assessments to analyze student progress resulting in effective instructional adjustments that meet the needs of all students. (2.2 )

- Teachers routinely use an array of formative assessments, aligned to curricula, to monitor student understanding and growth. The results of school-developed and other benchmark assessments, periodically supplemented with the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and student Lexile scores, are tracked and measured against grade level college and career standards. They are also regularly shared with grade level teacher teams. Additionally, teachers use and adjust content and genre specific 4 and 5 point rubrics the students receive to set learning goals which teachers then annotate to provide actionable feedback. Next steps, for example, include rubric specific strategies such as “Always include evidence with data and units” in science, or “Cite the documents in your essay by first labeling them” in social studies. Hence, these meaningful comments, in addition to asking clarifying and probing questions, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and exit slips, provide all teachers with assessment data for strategy lessons, student grouping, and immediate instructional adjustments in individual lessons, thus leading to timely instructional modifications that meet students’ needs. Likewise, teachers are able to guide students toward improvement in small groups and provide them with specific learning strategies to improve their work as evidenced in self-assessment forms. In addition, the assessment data is entered into an electronic grading system, aligned with the school policy that serves to further monitor student progress. Moreover, all students across grades and subjects participate in self, and peer assessments leading to evaluating their subject mastery and increased understanding of next learning steps. Students, for example, reflect on organization and clarity of their writing tasks or problem solving strategies. Consequently, the school equips all students with self-assessment strategies resulting in academic improvement evidenced in the monitoring of student growth between the two benchmark assessments administered in English language arts indicating significant increase in mastery of inference skills.
- The principal’s commitment to student success is reflected in strategic use of time and resources that result in enhanced instructional capacity, professional collaboration and college and career access for all. (1.3)
  - Departmentalized vertical teacher teams and grade level horizontal teams, inclusive of special education teachers, meet several times a week during commonly scheduled time and are deliberately structured around professional agendas focusing on instruction, planning, and analysis of assessment results. The English Language Arts Congruence team, for example, analyzes the implementation of new CCLS aligned units of study by listing successes, identifying gaps, and developing and adjusting classroom and unit assessments, thus aligning their next steps with the school’s goal of improving instruction. Similarly, math teachers from across the grades share their observations about student understanding and obstacles such as math vocabulary. These teams share their instructional reflections and findings with all teachers, including foreign language and art teachers who are purposefully matched with the same groups of students, thus strengthening accountability for collaborations and progress. Furthermore, all pedagogues plan and adjust tasks for groups of students and regularly share best instructional strategies, aligned with the Danielson Framework. All teachers routinely plan technology enhancements and schedule their classes in the computer lab for additional research resources or strategic interventions utilizing school electronic subscriptions to skill-based programs. Content and special

education teachers are strategically hired or assigned to teach identified groups of students in Integrated Co-Teaching classes or are deliberately programmed to stay with the same cohort of students for consecutive years to provide continuity of instruction supported with knowledge of students. Additionally, all teachers have multiple professional opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues and the leadership, and their time is maximized to improve instructional practices leading to engaging all students in challenging academic tasks. This is evidenced in the student informational writing portfolios or multi-step problem solving in using ratios and proportions for comparing, resting and exercising the heart rate and in active student engagement in lively discussions and questioning about these tasks noted during classroom visits.

- The leadership and staff uphold an inclusive culture of mutual respect and trust, supportive of student growth and positively impacting students' academic and personal behaviors and adult learning. (1.4 )
  - Exceptionally respectful tone exudes through classrooms and hallways. Parents, students and staff affirm they are safe, welcome and respected, and invited to contribute to the school's growth by offering ideas or participating in collaborative teams and activities such as the School Leadership Team, the student Community Service Team, monthly assemblies and frequent educational trips. Everyone says that the leadership's direct involvement in individual student academic and behavioral well-being supports all constituents and contributes to the inclusive culture of the school. Moreover, the school leaders and staff invite students to be partners in learning and decision-making by surveying them about their interests, learning styles, ideas for school improvement and goals based on the theory of multiple intelligences, thus leading to validating student voice. Moreover, students publish a school newsletter, participate in clubs of their choice, and meet with advisors to plan incentive trips or community and charity events. All teachers reinforce the "be an ally" behavioral model during homeroom advisory, thus resulting in positive attitudes toward classmates and adults. Likewise, students of the month regularly share their thoughts about commitment to learning, such as "I stay committed to learning because it will help me with my dream job of becoming a doctor." The administration and teachers also emphasize teaching an adolescent child and implementing programs such as ThinkB4YouSpeak, Speak Up at School, or Respect for All in the advisory program for all students. In addition to four accessible advisors to all student, teachers and leaders make regular weekly phone calls home regarding achievement and supports, leading to growth in scores on the most recent New York City School Survey in academic expectations, communication, engagement and safety and respect. The school increased the number of student advisors this year to better shift towards promoting safe and inclusive environment and to reinforce the school's student leadership goal with emphasis on engaging female and shy students by embedding support programs such as Unleashed for girls. Moreover, the school has two guidance counselors, a designated attendance teacher and a social worker who assist students and families by providing mandated and at-risk services, holding parent meetings, and collaborating with advisors and classroom teachers in developing individualized support plans. As a result of all these efforts, the number of safety or behavior infractions is very low, as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Report System and this allows for minimal disruptions in class.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enhance the use of frequent cycles of observations and next steps to further support teachers in meeting their professional goals. (4.1)
  - School leaders purposefully schedule observations with weekly instructional focus, and follow up with needs based professional development for teachers, thus supporting teacher development with emphasis on engaging students in learning and using assessment in instruction. Furthermore, they provide new teachers with additional professional support by programming them strategically for professional partnerships, class visitations and teacher teams. Likewise, the professional development plan divulges that teachers lead and participate in workshops, including questioning techniques for developing higher order thinking skills. Consequently, all teachers have multiple opportunities to receive support in their pedagogical growth. The review of observation forms indicates that feedback to teachers regarding instructional foci, areas mainly on student discussions, questioning, and assessments. This feedback, however, is not always fully aligned with teachers' professional goals. Similarly, next steps, although aligned with the Danielson Framework, do not always strategically include analysis of student work. Therefore, teacher reflection is hindered, thus limiting individual teacher growth.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Conselyea Preparatory	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>				<b>X</b>			
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
<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?				<b>X</b>			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?				<b>X</b>			
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
<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>