



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

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**P.S. 003 Charrette School**

**02M003**

**490 Hudson Street  
Manhattan  
NY010014**

**Principal: Lisa Siegman**

**Dates of review: Dec 3-4, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Mariano Guzmán**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 003 Charrette School is an elementary school with 782 students from pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 5.6% Black, 14.6% Hispanic, 65.5% White, and 7.7% Asian students. The student body includes 2.6% English language learners and 15.7% special education students. Boys account for 51.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's culture of ongoing learning for all students is typified by rigorous curricula filled with opportunities for student inquiry in all content areas. (1.1)
  - A concentrated focus on embedding the arts, student writing and the use of classroom discourse, consistent with Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Citywide Expectations for college readiness, is infused in all aspects of instruction school wide. This priority, supported by extensive teacher monitoring to constantly evaluate the nature of classroom conversations and the quality of student listening, is also continuously observed by school leaders to determine the relative amounts of student and teacher talk time, and the progress that is being made towards students being able to sustain self-monitored conversations. Academic vocabulary throughout the school is rich, with healthy stretching of concepts and content language by teachers and students, to both enrich and extend rigor of lessons across disciplines—enhanced greatly by the mixed grade nature of many classrooms. Tasks show that students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, are constantly required to self-correct and reflect their understanding through their responses, paired conversations using *Turn and Talk* and in peer discussions while in groups. Lesson plans also consistently show tasks that engage students in using checklists and rubrics in their discussions and in developing rigorous work products. A 2nd/3rd grade science lesson plan focused on water molecule cohesion, required students to investigate concepts such as hypothesis, polarity, atoms and molecules as they analyze the composition of H<sub>2</sub>O, use scientific vocabulary, conduct experiments and capture the results of their experiment in artfully designed journals—illustrating the school's commitment to assuring that the arts are an integral element of curricula across content areas. This implementation of rigorous curricula has contributed to the school's Next Level Readiness score of 100%, above City and Peer group percentages.
- Teaching is consistently informed by a common set of beliefs about how students learn best, including teacher questioning aimed at extending thinking, groupings, and challenging tasks for all students. (1.2)
  - The school's commitment to ensuring the growth and learning of all students resonates throughout the daily practice of classroom teachers, the ongoing work of teams, the conversations between school leaders and teachers and the collaborative work of the extended school community of parents, aides and paraprofessionals. For example, teacher team meetings reflect a careful review of student work and data to see if students hit targets noted on a progression scale and to note shifts that teachers need to make as next steps in their instructional practice. A teacher team revised two work samples and listed what an exemplar piece would look like in writing, to share for the writers work shop. Common practices such as differentiated groupings, accountable talk and modeling are embedded in instruction, through tasks that engage all students in learning across classrooms. These practices evidence that instructional practices are aligned to the Danielson rubric so that the language of the school and the language of the Danielson rubric are the same, leading to constant improvement in student achievement. This was amply demonstrated in classrooms visited.

- The school's mission of high academic success for all students is evident via highly individualized differentiated instruction, with a range of entry points designed to meet the needs of all students. For example, in one classroom a group of students engaged in noting feedback from conversations about determining relevance and supporting details from their texts, while another group analyzed how an author develops ideas and supports reasoning. The teachers were consistently taking a pulse of the classroom, listening to conversations of group work and having students at various levels with IEP's all accessing texts at their reading levels. This evidence of differentiation supports the learning progression standard, M.R 1c - "using background knowledge of topics to ask and refine questions and summarize central ideas using relevant details." Recognizing that each student has different strengths and areas of difficulty, teachers provide multiple forms of support to help each one work to capacity and even beyond. For example, teachers review work during daily student conferences in every content area to pinpoint where students are individually, as evidenced by teachers walking around the room questioning students about tasks and using their assessments to gauge mastery of concepts. Consequently, teachers are able to adjust instruction, providing challenges that address individual as well as whole group needs, and supporting progress for every child. This work was evident in all classrooms where students were working on or above grade level, and was most notable in the support provided for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).
- Lesson planning and classroom practice are informed by feedback from ongoing assessments, leading to modifications in curricula and instruction to meet all students' diverse learning needs. (2.2)
  - Using curriculum mapping software that includes alignment to the CCLS, the school ensures that curriculum maps are available to all teachers, providing everyone with information about what is being taught both across the grade and on other grades, and ensuring a platform from which assessments are developed. This also ensures that feedback from assessments drives school wide efforts to ensure students meet relevant standards, with administrators and teams of teachers working collaboratively and celebrating and capitalizing on the differences among classes and teachers. This has contributed to an assessment program that is aligned to curricula across grades, supporting the school's goal of consistent learning outcomes across a grade, while allowing for variations in style and specific student projects from class to class (the "twin rule"). Progress toward this goal is measured in multiple ways, including the amount of collaboration and sharing of feedback among teachers, as they analyze student work and performance on a range of assessments to fully inform their understanding of the levels of mastery attained by students. The use of rubrics was also evident across classrooms, including a 5<sup>th</sup> grade class where students reviewed self-made rubrics which they used to monitor their progress against each other. As a result, teachers share specific strategies and materials for working with their students and provide highly effective feedback to students about their levels of achievement, leading to students being able to proudly discuss their goals and describe their growth as writers and learners.
  - Ongoing reflection on the school's instructional practice and curriculum is an integral part of the school's constant focus on ensuring that instruction is assessment driven, differentiated to meet the needs of all students and result in the school's continuous academic success. Summative assessments are supplemented with Teachers' College (TC) evaluations as

well as rubric defined measures in all content areas and are maintained by all classroom teachers. Conference notes, running records and rubrics for performance tasks in writing are common assessment tools that augment test results by helping teachers to identify students who may be struggling in order to provide further differentiated guidance and instruction to meet their varied needs. For example, in several classrooms students worked with individualized thinking and graphic organizers designed to address their unique challenges. Moreover, student pairing and peer tutoring are practiced in every classroom, ensuring academic access for all students. The school utilizes assessment data to identify students' needs and track progress, as evidenced by school leadership and other staff collecting and analyzing classroom data to review trends and patterns in student performance and progress, especially for students who have been identified as needing additional support. In addition, coaches, grade teams and staff developers augment this data source with in-depth "design your own" assessments which inform instructional supports for sub-groups as well as at risk and accelerated students. As a result, consistent analysis of student data by school leadership and classroom teachers illumines a clear path of increased mastery of learning goals for individual and groups of students, including students with disabilities and English language learners, while driving targeted adjustments in curriculum and instruction as well as out-of-classroom support during and after school.

- School leaders are strategic in insuring that all organizational and instructional decisions are aligned to goals for all staff and students, thus promoting success for all learners. (1.3)
  - The school has developed a culture of problem solving that is inextricably linked to ownership, research and collegiality—if you identify a problem, you do your best to propose possible solutions and to consult with colleagues. This stance has shaped and developed a rich school-wide professional environment among colleagues that is marked by communication, experimentation and shared expertise. It has effectively served to broaden the use of limited resources while continuously increasing coherence throughout the school in both curriculum and instructional practice. An example of this approach is the principal experimenting with single grade classes, relative to mixed grades that have been a longstanding tradition of the school. This agency for problem solving and the accompanying support by leadership is also evidenced in the planning time made available to staff. For example, common prep time is provided weekly, allowing teachers to meet as grade level teams. Early dismissal on Fridays provides the opportunity for cross-grade meetings that are sequenced in groups of four, to focus intensely on literacy, math, science and social studies. These meetings help assure curriculum revision and coherence across grades. Lastly, leadership has made a practice of covering classes when teachers feel an urgent need to meet. This commitment to professional growth and development completes a full circle of focused problem solving and attention to the needs of all students, in keeping with the school's long term goals and action plans, which target accelerated and sustained growth in achievement by staff and students. It is notable that throughout the school, all students are engaged in challenging inquiry-based learning, with the students' success reflected both on the 2013 New York State assessments and in rich student projects displayed throughout the school.

- School leaders closely monitor, assess, and support teacher growth in building a shared understanding of instructional excellence, leading to increased student achievement. (4.1)
  - School leadership defines the foremost mechanism for school improvement as the maintenance of dialogue among staff and between staff and administrators. This philosophy has shaped a shared set of high expectations and validated an understanding that all teachers are expected to do their best in providing high quality instruction for all students. School leaders promote these high expectations using a collaborative nature by which new concepts are introduced. While the leaders have traditionally spent most of their time in classrooms conducting informal observations and providing feedback, they felt that the requirements of the ADVANCE teacher evaluation system required a more focused approach. As such they participated in *Breakthrough Coaching*, professional development provided by the network. They reported that the suggested adjustments to their schedule enhanced their capacity to regularly conduct formal as well as informal observations and provide feedback, including next steps for elevating teachers' instructional practices. Building on the culture of collaboration, school leadership worked with teachers to develop a lexicon that embeds the Danielson Framework in the culture of instructional excellence across the school. As a result, the Danielson Framework has been fully embraced by staff, allowing school leadership to employ low inference observations as a catalyst for specific suggestions for improvement, combined with differentiated professional development. Supported by a literacy coach and math consultant, teachers have taken the lead in further developing the instructional expertise of peers, including new teachers, by providing feedback that accelerates teacher growth schoolwide, as evident in differentiated whole-class, small group, and individual instruction across the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Expand methods that formally capture the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction to maximize alignment of school culture to the expectations of the CCLS and promote increased sharing of best practices across the school. (5.1)
  - The school's shared understanding of high expectations and a democratic process for decision making provide a guide to what works and doesn't work in curriculum and instruction and ongoing collaboration among all members of the school community. Teams of teachers meet regularly, often with school leadership, to refine the integration of the CCLS in their planning and promote a culture of shared expectations to support staff and student learning. The inquiry that results from much of this work has led to in-depth research and study among grade teams and across content area teams, allowing for the cross fertilization of ideas for meaningful shifts in classroom practice, based on shared assessments of students' learning needs. Thus ongoing collaborative inquiry work focused on student work in tandem with classroom observations, guides adjustments in classroom practices aligned to the CCLS and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. However, although the school's success in these areas is notable, there is limited focus on additional methods of evaluating and recording the adjustments and products associated with these practices, leading to missed opportunities to further support student mastery of CCLS expectations.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: PS 003 Charrette School	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>