



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Augustus Saint-Gaudens

Elementary 02M040

**319 East 19th Street
Manhattan
NY 10003**

Principal: Susan Felder

**Dates of review: May 6 & 7, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Nicky Kram Rosen**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Augustus Saint-Gaudens is an elementary school with 589 students from Kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 3% Black, 14% Hispanic, 67% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% 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 95%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions to offer rich curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with emphasis on coherence and access for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school implements the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) curriculum for English language arts (ELA), and the Story of Units math curriculum by Common Core, Inc. found on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) web site <http://www.engageny.org>, supplemented by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC) math program and teacher created materials, to ensure teachers address the NYS P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) instructional shifts and student activities and tasks are appropriately rigorous. One way the school is strategically incorporating the instructional shifts across grades is by requiring students to cite evidence from texts as well as use a balance of informational and literary texts. Across all grades in math, in order to attend to the instructional shift of focusing on problem solving, teachers provide high-level questions and opportunities for both independent practice and student-to-student discussions. This was evidenced in each observed class through students' individual use of personal boards and small group differentiated tasks. Moreover, second and grade teachers via collaborative inquiry look at students' responses in math to identify patterns in students' problem solving work; they refine student tasks and determine multiple strategies to support both independent and small group work to improve student achievement. Their work as well as each inquiry teams' is shared across all grade levels, resulting in school-wide consistency and coherence.
 - School leaders and all staff members ensure curricula not only helps all students meet grade-level benchmarks, but also meaningfully supports the school's core belief of educating the whole child. Equal attention is paid to academic excellence, social responsibility and student self-efficacy. Academic as well as personal behaviors that support academic readiness, including non-cognitive, socio-emotional qualities that support resiliency and college/career persistence are woven throughout all grades. From the moment you walk into the building there is the Morning Message and Photo of the Day, which highlights a small moment of student learning. Then each "Photo of the Day" is displayed in the main stairwell for all to view and revisit throughout the year. New to P.S. 40 this year, Playworks, is supporting the community provide structured recess activities; however, all stakeholders – administration, teachers, parents and students, noted that the Playworks' rituals and routines do not only live in the school yard, they are utilized in classrooms, the hallways and at home. Moreover, the guidance counselor has developed a movement curriculum for Kindergartners that pro-actively focuses on the personal and social skills necessary for students to become students. These curriculum enhancements along with the school-wide use of Reading Logs and students' persuasive writing, performance-based assessment presentations to real audiences across grade levels resulting in school wide coherence and promotes college and career readiness.

- Practices reflect school's beliefs about how students learn best, articulated by all, shareholders and aligned to Danielson Framework for Teaching and the curricula; thus all students can access content and produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - According to the school's mission, the school community is dedicated to three inter-related concepts: academic excellence, social responsibility and student self-esteem, which drives the curricula with a focus on the instructional shifts, such as citing evidence in argumentative writing, as well as problem solving in math with written explanations for answers. Teaching practices across all classrooms are informed by the Danielson Framework to support teachers in engaging students in rigorous activities and discussed by Inquiry Teams to support high expectations across the school. Towards that end, the workshop model is at the heart of the school-wide teaching practices to provide students multiple entry points, scaffold the learning, guided and independent student practice and ownership of learning. Key instructional strategies such as the "Grand Conversation" protocol helps develop teachers' discussion and questioning technique and students' higher-level thinking and reasoning skills. In addition, to promote active learning and increase and sustain student engagement, strategies such as "stop and jot" applied across subjects and grades, along with the use of personal boards and school-wide reading logs, which includes checklists, goal setting and revising, keep all learners cognitively busy, tackling rigorous tasks, having increased student-to-student discussions and regularly receiving feedback and self-assessing. As a result, all learners acquire learning strategies that ensure that they not only learn new content and skills, but also learn how to acquire new knowledge, which leads to improved outcomes for all.
 - All teachers not only implement an approach to learning that encourages students to be actively involved, but pursue their interests, share their opinions, ask questions and make connections with their own experiences and the curricula. Critically important to this work and present throughout the school, as well as in the work of teacher teams are high expectations of what constitutes deep understanding from students. School-wide students are provided with several strategies which can be applied across all content areas to support what they think and believe based on evidence from text or the work they are doing. This provides a consistent and coherent strand of work in areas across all grades and classrooms: writing about reading, narrative and non-narrative texts, or in math, by providing defending statements that articulate why something works or does not work. Then embedded in every unit of study, students are encouraged in all classrooms to want to find out things for themselves and to present their findings through evidence based discussions and writing such as a persuasive letter to the principal regarding the classroom pet policy or exploring the relevance of learning ballroom dancing This self-learning applies to all students throughout the school, as well as an integral extension of research skill development—a key element of the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and college readiness. This student-focused approach is another hallmark of the teaching practice throughout the school and original student work products which support thinking participation and ownership. As a result, students are provided with the opportunity to present their work to real audiences and reinforce the school's mission of supporting all students' social responsibility and self-esteem.

- Teachers consistently use and analyze common assessments and effectively make instructional adjustments, guiding student awareness of next learning steps leading to increased mastery. (2.2)
 - The school's pre- and post-assessments in content areas are disaggregated and analyzed by teacher teams to adapt curricula to address individual learning needs and support mastery for all students. Students create and reflect upon goals regularly, individually and during student-teacher conferencing, in order to further refine their goals to address next steps in learning. Post-it notes are evidenced on student writing, in portfolios, and on student work posted on bulletin boards inside and outside classrooms, indicating strengths and noticings according to rubrics, reflecting a school wide focus on student independence and meaningful feedback. Additionally, in writing, students use rubrics and checklists and receive peer feedback around goal setting and revision. The school-wide reading logs, which are revised and refined each year, are designed for all students, teachers and parents to be actively engaged in this process. They include spaces for students to reflect and note their progress for goals met and the next goals to set, as well as providing feedback to families with a clear understanding of student achievement. Classroom newsletters and *The Principal's Report* often include anchor charts used across grades and CCLS exemplars to provide a well-defined picture of student expectations to meet grade level goals.
 - Students self-assess using rubrics that include grade level CCLS expectations for the grade level above and below. Checklists and rubrics are student friendly for the early grades and special populations, including icons and pictures in order to orient students on the expected outcomes. Throughout lessons teachers monitor student understanding in a variety of methods including thumbs up, stop-and-jot and exit tickets. Teacher teams continually monitor reading levels and achievement on common assessments in content areas to track student growth and make effective adjustments to plans which yields consistent student performance and progress from year to year as reflected on the school's progress report.
- The principal's strategic decisions regarding organization and use of resources support the school's goals of meeting the social and academic needs of students. (1.3)
 - A full time ELA and math coach support teachers to implement next steps identified by analyzing student data and trends from classroom observations. They also reinforce the bi-weekly professional development with an outside math coach and Teacher's College consultants, which shows in effective classroom instruction. The school also engages in a variety of partnerships and provides grade specific enrichment activities aligned to curricula which is scheduled to complement other content areas to encourage high levels of student engagement and nurture students' interests and talents towards improving all student outcomes. The school's partnership with Playworks, National Dance Institute, Dancing Classrooms, Dancewave, Ballet Bridges and Marquis Studios, along with supporting the guidance counselor, addresses the needs of the youngest incoming students' social emotional development which is often cited in students' writing. The school's E-Chalk website provides weekly updates and logistics for parents and the broader school community. All

of which facilitate school-wide communication, support for the school's instructional goals and aligned to core beliefs and school mission.

- The school strategically hired a number of assistant teachers to further support classroom teachers by working with students and collaborating to develop instructional plans, in order to increase the academic achievement of all learners. Additionally, a Media Literacy Specialist was hired to not only further develop students' literacy skills, but to provide instructional time to teach students the skills and knowledge they need to learn to effectively and productively navigate access to a global and digital world to support critical leaning needs. Furthermore, the school has developed its own hiring process based upon a team approach. The hiring practice, the effective use of additional teaching staff and adding new and relevant positions support all learners, which results in English language learners (ELLs) and special education students being able to meet their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and a majority of students meeting grade level benchmarks.
- Through collaborative leadership supports, the school's inquiry work and implementation of the CCLS-aligned curricula results in improved student learning and mastery across grade levels. (4.2)
 - Both collaborative inquiry and grade-level teacher teams are unique structures for school improvement and create a unique foundation for staff to engage in both horizontal, as well as vertical planning and discussion around teacher practice and student outcomes. For example, teachers and administrators organize themselves by vertical grade spans, e.g. K -2, 2/3, 3 – 5, and around self-selected areas of interest related to the annual school-wide goals. As such, teachers and administrators are invested in better understanding content and how to organize instruction for more than one year of teaching. This leads to richer and deeper conversations regarding specific students and patterns in student learning from year-to-year at grade-level teacher team meetings. Combined with the school's focus on reading and math, they are poised to discuss student work through multiple lenses. Such distributed leadership and trust in the staffs' instructional expertise was evident in each teacher team observed. In one meeting, led by a teacher, team members were asked to have student work illustrative of high, middle and low-performing students. They were also asked to bring unit of study benchmarks and exemplars, if available. The meeting began with an examination of high-level work as an exemplar using the agreed-upon school-wide rubric in order to norm and creates a common understanding of the work. This approach clearly provided a simple means of analyzing and detailing what was missing from the middle and low-level artifacts. It further provided a framework to discuss individual students and how they might be supported in improving their work through multiple entry points. The various pieces of student work allowed teachers to discuss and reflect on their questioning techniques and what additional strategies or supports that might be employed in the classroom to better elicit and assess a students' understanding of the content. As a result, teachers left with an agreed upon understanding of the specific benchmark and what mastery would look like as well as some techniques to apply to their practice and how to scaffold instruction and/or the task to provide access for all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher teams, inquiry work; school-wide curricula, instructional and assessment practices in place purposefully, in order to meet all students' learning needs, with alignment and increase transparency. (5.1)
 - Throughout the year school leaders support staff to revise and refine their practices in an intentional and organized fashion while at the same time being mindful of the need to increase the rigor of tasks used to evaluate all students towards improving all their outcomes. Also, throughout the school year, school leadership revisits professional development plans using low inference data from classroom observations to identify areas for improvement and deepen understanding in order to align practice to the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric. Analysis of school-wide assessment data for students in grades K-5 informs school leaders and coaches as to students' learning needs and define school's annual goals and focus. The principal, assistant principal and coaches carefully analyze and evaluate the impact of the school's collective work and then carefully consider next steps and/or where to expand. Yet, this regular dialogue is not as transparent throughout the school community or rather seamless in clarifying the overall purpose; or rather the inter-connectedness of each shared process for all school constituents.
 - All teacher teams and individual teachers analyze school-based student data to ascertain if all students are making progress by tracking their growth toward mastering grade-level, specific benchmarks aligned to the CCLS. It has been noted that the school has many students that are making adequate progress throughout the year and reach mastery, thus teachers must adjust their Tier 1 program to meet the needs of high-performing students. New positions and curricula has led to increasing students' access to additional expertise, regularly occurring collaborative inquiry teams which include mandated service providers and cluster teachers working with the same students. Also professional development plans are adjusted and timely and relevant feedback is provided to teachers to improve their practice as it pertains to continually improving the outcomes with students demonstrating proficiency at and above grade-level. However, there is no identifiable, purposeful and unifying process which both administrators and faculty have created and then follow to allow for consistency, coherence and alignment of the collective efforts; thus limiting the full potential of each teacher's practice and strategically targeting support for each student and his/her mastery of the CCLS.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: Augustus Saint-Gaudens | 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 |