



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Simon Baruch

Middle School 104

**330 East 21st Street
New York
NY 10010**

Principal: Rosemarie Gaetani

Dates of review: November 12-13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Mary Barton

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

M.S. 104 is a middle school with 1,034 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 10% Black, 19% Hispanic, 20% White, and 50% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 17% 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 96.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula, purposefully aligned to key standards and to the instructional shifts, offer a wide range of rigorous learning opportunities that promote college readiness. (1.1)
 - The school made a conscious decision to continue working on the units of study that have been developed over the past two years in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies. In consultation with and support from the school's Generation Ready consultant, teachers from each department meet 90 minutes weekly with the consultant around this work, revising units based on data and student work products. In order to ensure that the units for the full school year are aligned to the standards and that they are offering the same learning opportunities for all students across all grades, the school has incorporated elements of Expeditionary Learning and Connected Math Project 3 (CMP3) into their units in English language arts and mathematics respectively. Science and social studies units have a literacy focus after reviewing data showing that students still needed support in providing text specific evidence in their writing. Teachers also select texts used in English language arts, Science and Social Studies to promote 'productive struggle', mirroring the expectations of state assessments and high school curricula. Through the curricula work done by teachers, the school backwards plans, keeping in mind what students need to know and be able to by the end of each grade, to strengthen vertical alignment. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses are offered and unit plans for these courses include English language arts and Mathematics standards as well as the Next Generation Science Standards. As a result, students are exposed to a curriculum that is carefully planned ensuring that students have the opportunities necessary to be well prepared for high school and beyond.
 - As a part of the school's instructional focus for this school year, students are being provided with the opportunity to grapple with appropriate texts and to engage in Socratic Seminar work across grade levels and classrooms, particularly in English language arts. Teachers have developed various protocols for students to follow to ensure that all students are engaged in either the questioning or discussion itself or assessing and providing feedback to classmates during the activity. Close reading of text is necessary for students to engage in seminar and this was seen in classrooms across the school. As a way for English language learners and students with disabilities to develop higher order thinking skills, they are supported in the work of developing questions for seminar as well as work in other content areas by purposefully creating "thin" and "thick" questions as well as what the responses should and could be. Having an exposure and knowledge of text helps these students to work their way into developing "thick" questions with opened ended responses which promotes rigor for these students. In this way, students are given the opportunity to develop the habits of reading text closely and engage in questioning and discussion building on higher order thinking skills.
- The principal makes deliberate organizational decisions using resources to support the school's instructional goals and addresses the learning needs of staff and students resulting in improved instruction. (1.3)

- With one of the school's instructional goals being that curricula in all subject areas be fully aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, two consultants from Generation Ready, one who specializes in mathematics and science, the other in English language arts and social studies, meet with teachers from the respective departments for a 90 minute block of time weekly on Thursdays to engage in curricula work. These professionals make curricula and assessment revisions during these sessions, based on data and student work. In order for teachers to have this time to work on units of study, the principal has hired f-status teachers who work on Thursdays to teach enrichment courses to students and/or schedule non-academic subjects during this time to enable teachers to consistently engage in this work. As a result, teachers are able to meet regularly, focusing on instructional work in meeting the school's instructional goals of ensuring that all curricula is Common Core aligned and reflecting the instructional shifts in English language arts and mathematics. They also ensure that curricula are sufficiently rigorous for all students meeting them at their entry points.

- The academic as well as all around development of students is highly valued. Students are assigned to classes that are structured in "houses" where the same teachers for each of the content areas teach the same group of students. The assignment of teachers to a particular house is carefully considered. Supervisors look at the strengths of teachers and who works well together as a team. Teachers are also encouraged to ask for assignments to work with specific colleagues. There has been no teacher turnover for the past two years in the houses which have given consistency to students and the school. In order to ensure that the needs of all students are met, including students with disabilities and English language learners, the school provides an additional six periods a week in core classes with additional remediation for students in the lowest third. An Academic Intervention Services (AIS) teacher team meets weekly to study the needs of students suggested by teachers, particularly students with disabilities and English language learners, and provides teachers with additional strategies to support students at their entry points. This team serves as a resource for teachers to gain insight into various ways to meet students' needs. Teachers on this team also work with at-risk students providing remediation as well as support around their exit projects. The school offers students an array of clubs that meet both before and after school as well as sports teams in basketball and tennis, and tutorial sessions open to all students. As a result, students benefit from the consistency of adults who know them well and to school offerings to enhance their school experiences.

- The principal has created a supportive environment that comprises of high expectations for learning, behavior and attendance resulting in the importance of continuous learning and personal growth by students and staff. (1.4)
 - Work has been done over a number of years to build a school culture in which both student and adult learning is most important and valued and where students learn to become good citizens. Students strive to become members of Arista in which both academic excellence and community service are necessary for membership with expectations clearly outlined. A team of three guidance counselors and deans support students in areas of social and emotional growth. A Positive Behaviors Intervention and Supports program (PBIS) is in place with students receiving "Baruch Bucks" for academic excellence and excellent behavior. They can spend their "bucks" in a school store open at lunch time. Students continually voice their ideas to the areas of expectations for their peers to supervisors and teachers who have promoted an environment of open dialogue. Students rally around being "responsive, responsible and ready" at

grade level assemblies where student expectations are shared and reinforced. A weekly student advisory also exposes students to curricula, designed by school staff, centered on college and career readiness behaviors needed for success. Additionally, student attendance is tracked very carefully by an attendance team who reaches out to ensure students come to school. The school also has a mentoring program for identified students where staff members work with students around attendance, academic and social and emotional issues. Due to these structures, attendance has increased by 0.50% to date from last school year. Additionally, the culture of teachers learning from colleagues is very much in practice with teacher learning led by teacher leaders. For example, teachers have been reading the professional book Lost in School to look at ways to continue to reach all students academically and emotionally with learning used to adjust the college and career readiness curricula used in Advisory. As a result, learning is highly valued by adults and students and students are supported socially and emotionally to be ready for high school.

- The school supports teachers through identified feedback using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to meet teachers' identified needs and inform instructional changes that improve student outcomes. (4.1)
 - As a result of extensive professional development, teachers have a deep understanding of the expectations of the Danielson Rubric. The principal and her team have set clear expectations around the work of teachers and follow up in several ways. Through feedback and next steps given in observations, teachers are supported in their performance. The school's cabinet meets weekly to identify instructional trends from their observation reports. The Generation Ready consultants as well as the school's Instructional Leaders, who are fellow teachers, and the Children First Network are called in, where needed, to address trends through coaching and/or professional development for particular teachers and/or for departments or the school as a whole. Instructional Leaders, for example, open up their classrooms for inter visitation with teachers they are currently working with and spend time debriefing the lesson and discussing how they can incorporate their learning into a future lesson. Teachers set goals at the beginning of each school year and supervisors meet with teachers three times yearly to check in on the progress of the goals, review student data and provide actionable feedback with next steps. Goals are also addressed in observation reports and post observation conferences. All of this work has led to improved teacher practice with teachers taking on the role of facilitator enabling students to think and speak more critically as evidenced in observation reports.
- Teacher teams consistently engage in well-structured inquiry based professional collaborations to strengthen instructional capacity and develop teacher leadership, resulting in improved student outcomes. (4.2)
 - All members of the faculty engage in teacher team work. They meet in designated rooms by departments but meet in groups within a particular room by grade level. Protocols are used with fidelity to ensure that there is time on task. Teachers review lesson plans and study student work and data, making revisions to what is taught and how it is taught. For example, a 7th grade Math team spent meeting time looking at ways to incorporate increasing the use of math language so that students could solve word problems making better sense of them at the outset. This was discussed as a result of looking at a prior classroom assessment. The protocol is laid out so that there is discussion and revisions are made to a lesson plan, for example, and that concrete next steps

are shared at the end of each meeting. The next meeting's agenda is planned before the meeting ends as well. In these meetings, teachers share their best practices with each other that influence changes in lesson planning and delivery. All teams use a note taking template to memorialize each meeting. Supervisors and team leaders review the minutes and artifacts at regular meetings for this purpose. This work is supported by a teacher leader who is present in each room at every meeting and checks in with teams frequently. Teachers report that they are grateful to have the support of a colleague who offers a different perspective or assistance. Additionally, through this ongoing inquiry based approach, the school has increased its score on the Progress Report in English language arts in the median adjusted growth percentile for its peer group from 64% in 2011-12 to 80% in 2012-13 and in mathematics for its peer group from 60% in 2011-12 to 80% in 2012-13. English language learners had an overall increase in the pass rate on the New York State English Language Test (NYSELAT) of 3% from 2012 to 2013. As a result, teachers have regular opportunities to share their practices with each other, to improve in their planning and delivery of lessons and additional students have made progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the articulated set of beliefs on how students learn best to ensure that all students are afforded the supports needed to produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Consistently, student are exposed to and expected to think critically when solving math problems, studying the scientific method or grappling with complex text. Students, across classrooms, were asked to share their thinking with classmates, working in groups, around opened ended questions. For example, in one class, students were asked to apply knowledge of different types of limitations to find and explain a limitation in a faulted science experiment using a protocol. Also, the school has a major focus in which students annotate text and provide textual evidence in their speaking and writing and create questions for peers. Students also share their thinking and problem solving pathways with each other in mathematics showing multiple paths of inquiry. This work was seen in all classrooms. In addition, the school has adopted the use of Socratic Seminar. Teachers make adaptations to the philosophy to include more student voice by, for example, splitting the class in half so that while some students are engaged in the actual seminar work, a classmate with which each student is paired, takes notes using a protocol around the context of their contributions as well as their delivery. After one group finishes their Socratic Seminar, the pairs confer with each other about the first student's work and they then switch roles for the next seminar. This partnership provides students with the expectation that they are held accountable whether they are actively speaking or not through this peer assessment. This was seen specifically in sixth and eighth grade classrooms. In visiting some classrooms, it was apparent though that for some students, particularly current and some former English language learners, speaking in front of peers was challenging and students did not participate fully. Additionally, in some classrooms, there were not sufficient supports in the form of charts or sentence starters to meet former English language learner students at their entry points. As a result, not all students are able to fully engage in the learning taking place nor produce as meaningful work products.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Simon Baruch	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