



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Fred R Moore

Elementary School 133

**2121 Fifth Ave.
New York
NY 10037**

Principal: Patricia Balbuena

Dates of review: March 18 – 19, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Gale Reeves

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Fred R Moore is an elementary school with 260 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 59% Black, 33% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian and 4% other students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 28% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A variety of in-house support services and structures provide students with consistent conditions to succeed socially and academically. (1.4)
 - Students shared that they feel secure within the school's environs and that the varied safety drills help prepare them, should there be an emergency inside or outside the school. The Leader-in-Me school-wide initiative fosters culture building within the school. During one of the student meetings, students shared the strategies aligned to several *habits*. For example, one student stated that Habit 1-*Be Proactive* means that he "must have a plan for the day", while another student shared that, for her, it means that she must be planned and prepared and do good things for herself and others, without being told to do so. Parents state that the principal has an "open door policy" and that the 7 habits are valued throughout the school and help support the change in the school's climate. The school recently hosted a Leader-in-Me symposium with visitors from New Jersey, North Carolina, Alabama, Boston and Brazil. Attendees were very complimentary of the student docents who facilitated their visits to varied classrooms, since students were readily able to speak knowledgeably about the varied tenets of the program. The school day begins with the student government president and vice president leading the daily town hall meetings for all students and staff in the auditorium. Members of the student government share recommendations with the principal and they are involved in planning the senior trip. They requested clubs which now meet after school on Mondays and Fridays. Additionally, student leaders mediate disagreements between their peers. Consequently, students feel that teachers and administrators respect their thoughts and input in decision-making. As a result, students are well supported towards growth in their academic performance as well as in attributes such as self-esteem, persistence, confidence and tolerance, as evidenced by a review of their work products, classroom visits and conversations with student groups.
 - The principal shared that the school collaborates with Harlem Children's Zone which ensures that students have access to academic assistance during the school day and homework assistance afterschool. School leaders ensure that the partnership with Medori and Friends, which supports art and music enrichment, coordinates well with school-based support structures to address the social-emotional and academic needs of students and their families. Parents stated that the principal and school staff know students well and address their concerns. Students who are tutored are demonstrating academic success in class, with increased proficiency levels noted on running records. Structured play during recess has helped to reduce incidents and bullying complaints. This school year, students greet visitors and parents early each morning from 8:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. and the principal notes that this has helped to reduce tardiness. Additionally, attendance team members utilize a laser-like focus when reviewing attendance data. Parents of identified students are invited to meet with the principal. Classes with 100% attendance score a *touchdown* and are recognized on the Touch Down attendance

board on the main floor, while individual students are rewarded with certificates. These targeted efforts support the school's efforts to maintain an attendance rates of 90% or higher and to reduce the number of superintendent suspensions.

- Critical analysis of a variety of student performance data provides school staff with a comprehensive view of students' strengths and next steps, resulting in targeted interventions to positively impact school performance. (2.2)
 - Teachers chart math progress, noting pre, mid and end of unit progress. They also use assorted streams of data from varied sources, including periodic assessments, end of unit and teacher prepared tests, running records and performance tasks, to gauge student understanding of the taught curricula in content areas. Across classrooms, teachers use formative data to flexibly group students and develop tiered activities in order to ensure that they meet the learning objective; additionally, teachers provide actionable written feedback to students, noting strengths (glow) and next steps (grow). As such, students are becoming cognizant of the connections between tasks and the expectations espoused by the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Consequently, teachers are demonstrating ways of understanding and sharing feedback on students' assessment results relative to select standards, with the focus on increased student outcomes, as noted in teachers' assessment binders and displayed action plans.
 - Across grades, teachers create common performance writing tasks such as the first, fourth and fifth grade task requiring students to cite evidence from text in order to support their opinions on varied topics. Teachers analyze student work products, discuss findings and suggest instructional strategies to further support students' growth. Each teacher compiles a data tracking sheet which tracks individual student's progress toward meeting established Fountas and Pinnell goals. Intervention cycles last four to six weeks, before students are re-assessed to note progress. The principal developed an assessment calendar and reviews data on a monthly basis. For example, after noting a decline in student math achievement in the third grade, the principal met with the teachers to discuss and develop an intervention plan. Likewise, third grade teachers noted that 80% of students did not perform well on a School Net benchmark task requiring students to refer explicitly to the text when answering comprehension questions. Staff members used these results, including student work products, to measure student growth and to make needed changes to the curricula. Several teachers noted that they, at times, re-teach specific concepts in order to ensure student mastery. Teachers review results and, in consultation with the principal, create individual plans for students. As such, teachers formulate specific action plans to address student needs as identified by assessment data.
- Administrators support staff through observations, with specific feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching that is improving teacher practice. (4.1)
 - The principal prints data from the Danielson tracker in the Advance teacher performance evaluation system to note trends; she then develops a teacher support system based on this data resulting from formal and

informal observations. During individual conversations with teachers, the principal reviews observation patterns, infuses formative and summative assessment results, including student work products, and uses this information to tailor next steps linked to identified teacher needs on a monthly schedule. Specific mid-year action plans are created for identified teachers who fall in the “ineffective” range of the Danielson Framework. New teachers receive mentoring support from experienced pedagogues. A review of the observation calendar and written feedback provides evidence that the principal shares frequent, specific, and timely feedback with staff across Danielson domains and components. At the beginning of the school year, the principal met with teachers who were encouraged to self-assess their needs. Some teachers consented to be videotaped and they use the tapes to deepen their pedagogic skills in specific areas. As a result of multiple forms and sources of feedback, teachers continue to refine their pedagogical practices and exhibit understanding of grade appropriate strategies that elicit basic student understanding.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the alignment between teacher practice and the school’s beliefs about learning, to ensure high levels of engagement and thinking so that all learners reach their full potential. (1.2)
 - In order to meet students’ needs, some teachers use scaffolding tools such as graphic organizers and manipulatives to support writing and math. This however, is not the practice in every class; therefore not all students receive the academic support necessary to accelerate their learning. Although students sit in groups, teachers do not always develop appropriately challenging tasks which allow students to struggle productively. For example, some math problem solving tasks are not real-world aligned and do not reinforce student’s conceptual understanding. As such, teachers do not yet consistently implement lessons that allow for sufficient student engagement in higher order thinking. Consequently, some teachers miss out on demonstrating strategies to consistently engage students in complex thinking so that work products and activities are cognitively demanding of all learners, especially students with disabilities, English language learners and students performing at the highest achievement levels.
 - The principal believes that all students must be engaged in rigorous tasks as evident through critical thinking questions and student discussions. As such, teachers are beginning to employ open-ended questions to spark discussions and students in some classrooms are questioning each other’s assumptions and ideas. For example, during a fifth grade math lesson on decimals, the teachers asked probing questions and students shared varied strategies, paraphrased responses and questioned each other. One student also posed a question which could have led to a rich classroom discussion. However, the teachers did not take advantage of this opportunity to facilitate a discussion which would have helped to solidify other students’ understanding. This missed opportunity resulted in the conversation remaining solely between the teacher and the individual student. This is the norm across classes and grades. Consequently, thought-provoking questions leading to conversations that

give students the chance to support their views with evidence, change their minds, and use questions as a way to further their learning, are not yet the norm across classes and grades. This results in uneven levels of student thinking, as noted in student work products and as evidenced by limited participation of students in discussions, across classrooms.

- Expand on the process of refining the alignment of curricula to standards across all grades and subject areas, in order to build coherence and emphasize rigorous skills to prepare students for the next level. (1.1)
 - The principal and staff are focused on embedding the instructional shifts in the English language arts and math curricula, with a school-wide focus on integrating content vocabulary and citing evidence when responding to prompts. Much of this work is done during planning meetings on Fridays. The principal continues to support teachers with roll out of the new curricula. Teachers use traits of the writing process to develop and align writing tasks. However, these practices are not yet evident across all grades and subjects. Although academic tasks at times emphasize higher order skills, tasks are not consistently rigorous enough to challenge students performing at varied ability levels. Social studies and science units are taught on a bimonthly rotational basis and although refinement of the units provide evidence of essential questions, at times developed tasks lack rigor and alignment to State standards across grades; thus, student work products at times do not demonstrate immersion in the unit, and tasks are not well aligned to the teaching points or the unit essential questions. For example, in one social studies unit task, students were asked to compare schools of long ago to schools today. Questions were at a low level and thoughtful planning to engage students in deep thinking and rigorous tasks was not evidenced, thus precluding students from broadening their knowledge base. As such, tasks do not consistently build in relevant challenge and rigor across all content areas, thus hindering some students from achieving at even higher levels than they currently attain.
- Deepen teachers' understanding of collaborative inquiry across all grades in order to strengthen instructional practices and develop teachers' leadership capacity. (4.2)
 - Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss specific skills and strategies. However, the development of an inquiry approach is not well defined across teams. Although teams review data results and analyze student work products to note trends, their conversation is mainly focused on individual students and they have not yet collectively identified goals for a core group of students for whom they track data results, while employing specific strategies to note which are successful and which strategies are not meeting with success. As such, there is no evidence of a clear understanding of the inquiry process by all teacher teams. Additionally, team members are at the beginning stages of using protocols to reflect on the implications of formative and summative data results in informing changes needed to their own their pedagogic practices. This limits the capacity of teams to identify and share exemplary strategies school-wide, resulting in uneven instruction, thus preventing student progress from reaching maximum potential.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Fred R Moore	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