



**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. 134 Henrietta Szold

Elementary 01M134

**293 East Broadway
Manhattan
NY, NY 10002**

Principal: Daniel Kim

**Dates of review: March 11-12, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 134 Henrietta Szold is an elementary school with 318 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 20% Black, 51% Hispanic, 3% White, and 26% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's embrace of Common Core Learning Standards has involved major shifts in curricula as teachers prepare all students for higher expectations in middle school and beyond. (1.1)
 - The principal describes the school's adoption and adjustments of Common Core-aligned curricula as a year of "productive struggle." Teachers participated fully in the research and selection of Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning, and TERC Math Investigations as curricular programs, which resulted in genuine buy-in and commitment to implement units of study with fidelity and flexibility. Students, parents, and teachers note higher student engagement with richer content in lessons, texts, and class activities, with examples of students debating attributes of Greek deities, crafting "help wanted" ads for colonial trades, and discussing human rights issues within a novel. In addition to increased student engagement and rigor of academic tasks, teachers plan scaffolds to a good extent for different learners based on close review of student work and those scaffolds include graphic organizers, visual charts, flash cards, and varied exemplars. As a result, all students have sufficient access to enriched curricula and instruction.
- Organizational decision-making strengthens the learning environment for students and adults and provides structures that lead to school improvement. (1.3)
 - School leaders make strategic decisions and implement operational systems effectively in support of school improvement. For several years, the school struggled with a declining learning environment as teachers and parents expressed frustration with limited social-emotional supports for children and frequency of yelling by adults. Addressing school tone became an immediate priority for the new principal. Whereas, the school had a guidance counselor for 1.5 days a week and no overlap with the clinical team, school leaders realigned the budget to fund a full-time guidance counselor and collaborated with Henry Street Settlement for in-school social services. As a result, there is far more extensive Pupil Planning Team work happening in support of struggling students. Additionally, the entire school meets daily for a brief, quiet morning gathering of announcements in the cafeteria and this sets a changed tone of seriousness of purpose to the school day. Administrators engage specific external partnerships, such as Go Project and Studio in a School to provide individualized instruction and rich, visual arts programming. Finally, school leaders set high standards for hiring and teacher supervision, including preferences for holding dual licenses and prior experiences that demonstrate effective collaboration. As a result of strategic recruitment, selection, assignment and development of teachers, students benefit from improved teaching practices and growing teacher leadership.
- School leaders strongly support teachers with meaningful feedback about classroom practices and specialized opportunities to address professional goals which promote all teachers' development. (4.1)

- The new principal has prioritized trust-building and improved communication with staff which has quickly resulted in more open and effective instructional conversations about teaching practices. For example, beyond the mandated initial planning conferences at the start of the year, administrators devoted two weeks to midyear, 1:1 conversations with teachers in their classrooms, not the principal's office. These two-way conversations encouraged teachers' candid reflection about their strengths, areas for improvement, and progress towards their professional goals, and provided administrators a chance to share patterns of observation with student work as evidence and examples. Outcomes from these and routine observation feedback meetings have included thoughtful follow-up of inter-visitations to known teachers at other schools and individualized coaching, with teachers noting positive impact on their teaching. School leaders and teachers embrace use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching through weekly professional development sessions and far more frequent visits in classrooms. Teachers receive timely verbal and written feedback about strengths of the lesson and specific next steps for improvement. This consistency of constructive feedback has led, for example, to improved instructional planning across classrooms and a shared sense of urgency described by all stakeholders about higher academic expectations. Additionally, new teachers cite the usefulness of the principal's weekly written communications with faculty that highlight best practices and teachers' areas of expertise, which then reinforces those effective teaching strategies and invitations for peer-to-peer visits.
- Strong teacher collaborations drive ongoing refinement of curriculum resulting in a shared accountability for student success. (4.2)
 - All teachers have up to three common prep periods built into their schedules dedicated to teacher collaboration and planning. Grade teams have received training and support in refining routines for agenda setting, facilitation, sharing notes, and protocols for reviewing student work which has improved productivity of team meetings. Special education teachers now also meet vertically across grades to provide better consistency of planning and instructional supports. Together, teacher teams update curricula, design performance tasks, and norm their understanding and evaluation of student work. This purposeful and collaborative planning time leads to effective instructional use of all adults in co-teaching classes and many opportunities for individualized instruction in classes through push-in support and intervention services for groups of students. Additionally, school leaders are set to establish an instructional cabinet this spring as a forum for discussing school-wide issues around teaching and learning. As a result, a positive culture of professional learning communities has taken root with increased trust in distributed leadership, better communication about what is happening across grades, and coherence of team planning work.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' capacity to support student-to-student questioning and discussion in order to deepen student thinking, participation and ownership of learning. (1.2)
 - Teachers increasingly align curricula and instructional expectations with Common Core Learning Standards. As example, in many classes students engage in text-based discussions, solve multi-step math problems, and share explanations using reasons and evidence. Some teachers provide differentiated supports for all learners and vary approaches for students' different learning styles. For instance, teachers in a 1st grade Integrated Co-Teaching class structure a math lesson about data collection by first modeling how partners will represent survey data in two different ways and then having different groups "try out" different strategies, with leveled questions and worksheets as guides. Similarly, a 5th grade teacher agilely facilitates small groups as they discuss an article comparing and contrasting African and Asian elephants, while conferring strategically with individual students about using a Venn diagram as a pre-writing tool to help document the comparisons. While these lessons have good routines in place for small group work and discussions, there is an over-reliance on the teacher in some classes to mediate the discussion and push students' thinking. Teachers' "ping pong" approach to questioning in several classes means that all questions emanate from and return to the teacher, with little expectation for students to deepen their thinking by questioning each other or building on comments made by others. As a result, too many learning tasks remain teacher-directed which then hampers students from demonstrating higher order thinking.
- Ensure that there are sufficient, quality assessments in writing across grades, as well as regular checks for understanding in class to accelerate students' learning. (2.2)
 - There is good consistency to the tracking of student assessment data, as teachers maintain data binders with running records, project-based assessments, math unit tests, and item analysis of State exams. This data is shared in team meetings and during professional development to inform instructional planning next steps. Furthermore, teachers credit the new English language arts (ELA) programs of Core Knowledge and Expeditionary Learning for students' deeper knowledge of content. However, a drawback is that units of study provide limited opportunities for students to practice extended writing assignments. For example, upper grade students mostly write one and two-sentence, short answer responses to text with an occasional paragraph and a rare essay, story, or research report. Second grade teachers have supplemented the ELA curricula by creating writing workbooks with more open-ended tasks. Therefore, students do not sufficiently practice writing conventions and they do not build stamina for or investment in longer writing pieces. In turn, there is a lack of sufficient assessment in writing. Additionally, teachers plan minimal informal assessments, with many missed

opportunities for checking students' understanding in the midst of the learning task. As a result, some students express confusion about teaching points, purpose of learning, next steps, and strategies taught.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 134 Henrietta Szold	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	