

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**75M138  
1144 East 128<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10035**

**Principal: Jacqueline Keane**

**Dates of review: May 6-8, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.138M is an elementary-high school with 545 students from K through grade 12+. The school population comprises 33% Black, 53% Hispanic, 9% White, 3% Asian, 1% American Indian, and 1% unspecified students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 68% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 81.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Highly developed professional collaborations continuously strengthen cohesive curricula and classroom practices, with distributed leadership ensuring a shared commitment to increased student achievement. (4.2)
  - All teachers are active members of collaborative teams, both within and across sites, which focus on integrating the instructional shifts as outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) uniformly into instruction across the school. Lead teachers/facilitators support the weekly meetings and attend monthly instructional cabinet meetings during which agendas for teacher team meetings are reviewed. During weekly meetings, teachers identify a problem of practice and discuss instructional strategies and scaffolds that are suggested to address the problem. For example, during an Equals mathematic collaborative team meeting, a teacher stated she had been unable to teach one of her students the conceptual meaning of “more or less” in mathematics. She shared that the team suggested she try a more kinesthetic approach, which would allow the child to process the concept. The teacher reported that the student had successfully completed the task of demonstrating “more than”, “less than” using a weighted scale and provided a picture of the student work sample. In addition, during another team meeting, one of the teachers presented her lesson plan prior to the implementation in the classroom to receive feedback that focused on the rigor of the task and the level of questioning used. A review of the data, Student Assessment Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), indicates a 13% overall gain for Spring, 2014 in comparison to Fall, 2013. In addition, based on New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA), baseline accuracy increased from 23% to 79% in English language arts (ELA).
  - Collaborative teams embed leadership structures that serve as an instructional resource not only for colleagues, but to provide essential information to administration concerning academic and behavior concerns. Teams modify the CCLS aligned tasks so that students in alternate assessment benefit from grade appropriate learning activities connected to higher expectations of the new standards. Also, they discuss specific instructional strategies/support such as, modeling how to analyze a picture, using pictures for context clues, using T-charts and other graphic organizers so that alternate assessment students benefit from grade appropriate learning activities. In addition, teams stated that this structure affords them, “the opportunity to participate in decision making issues such as, which curriculum best supports the growth of our students”. For example, prior to purchasing the new curriculum, programs were piloted in classes to provide evidence as to which program meets the needs of their student population. As a result of this collaboration, teachers have a voice in cohesive practices that are embedded throughout the school and support each other with their instructional practices to ensure alternate assessment students benefit from grade appropriate learning activities.

- The school provides a curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, with appropriately rigorous tasks that promote college and career readiness skills to meet the needs of their students. (1.1)
  - The school purchased Unique Learning System which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and uses New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) standards, and supplements this program with Units of Study developed by the school to support identified student needs. The Unique Learning System is designed to help teachers deliver instruction to students with significant cognitive disabilities and offers differentiated tasks that are aligned with a parallel transition curriculum to prepare the students for adult community living. The school purchased Equals math program and Math Steps to support students with emerging math knowledge and skills. In alignment with a school wide commitment to transition and supporting students for positive post-secondary outcome and independence, emphasis is placed on making content relevant to real life situations to maximize the transfer of skills, as well as cognitive engagement of students. The school has made purposeful decisions, based on past student performance, to focus on the use of informational text to support students in developing functional life skills. In mathematics, the key focus is number sense and operations and how their students can demonstrate problem solving skills. This targeted focus is the basis for teacher team meetings, including interdisciplinary teachers. As a result of this focus, in English language arts, 55% of middle school students scored “Independence” in February and 72% in April. High School students scored 56% in February and 72% in April. In mathematics, 55% of middle school students scored “Independence” in February and 72% in April. The high school students scored 58% in February and 76% in April.
  - “Rigor”, defined by the administrative team, as well as the entire staff is to “challenge students to engage in purposeful higher order thinking and demonstrate their understanding through appropriate tasks. For example, students are in charge of all operations related to the “Snack Attack Store”. I observed students reviewing their inventory, calculating the money exchange and providing excellent customer service. In addition, they told me how they buy the snacks at Costco for a good price, and then sell it for a profit. In addition, when looking at the ‘business plan” for the Snack Attack Store, the lesson plan includes Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions from Level1 – Recall to Level 4 – Extended Thinking. Essential thinking skills were noted such as; self-regulating through demonstrating behavior that is safe, healthy and conducive to positive social interaction. The school has achieved measurable results in closing the achievement gap and promoting college and career readiness skills by increasing student placement into District 75 transition centers and adult support services. As a result of this focus, 99% of graduates this year will have earned placement compared to 90% last year.
- Strategic use of resources including partnerships and scheduling, support the school’s instructional goals and ensure access to learning for all students. (1.3)

- All resources are used to support the school's instructional goals to increase student learning and prepare them for independence outside of the school environment. The principal has added an "F" status alternate assessment specialist coach and identified lead/mentor teachers. Coaches support classroom teachers in the understanding and implementation of "next steps" identified during observations. Lead teachers for students with autism, are provided with an extra coverage period so they can support classroom teachers on implementing the Treatment and Education of Autistic and other related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) methodology and Verbal Behavior protocols. The school has added a math cluster teacher to support teachers and students in making math germane to everyday living and established a transition coordinator position to support the goal of preparing students for adult community living and independence. Based on parent and student feedback on the Learning Environment Survey, the school has reached out and established partnerships with community businesses, such as Petsmart and Staples, thereby increasing opportunities for students to work outside the school in order to support their independence. During a high school lesson on the benefits of getting a job, one of the students stated, "Let me get this straight, I get a paycheck at the end of the week!" In addition, the school has invested in iPads, SMARTboards and augmentative communication devices to support the development of student learning through interactive engagement in language and reading skills across all subject areas. This has allowed teachers to expand the use of tools providing students an additional method of demonstrating the intended learning outcome. For example, in a 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class for students with severe cognitive disabilities, morning meeting centered on the concept of "who, where and why". The teacher used the SMARTboard to allow students to "touch" their answers to questions like "Where do you go when you get hurt?" The decision to purchase and implement Getting Ready to Learn (GRTL), a school wide daily yoga program, has positively impacted on student learning. This program promotes high levels of student engagement as well as nurturing interests and talents. In addition, to increase student engagement, the school has partnered with Henry Street to provide all students with opportunities through writing, music and art, to nurture self-discovery, which has resulted in increased enthusiasm toward school activities that foster creativity and a sense of value, as evidenced in students engaged in building sets and props which support the school's instructional goals.
  
- Through strategic programming, in alignment with the school wide goal of high expectations around teacher practice, the principal has supported professional learning communities by scheduling weekly meeting time so teachers can examine student work and track student progress in meeting their individual goals. Staff time is structured so that teachers have time for inter-visitations focusing on questioning and discussion techniques. Furthermore, there are monthly classroom team meetings during which teachers and paraprofessionals collaborate and related service providers participate to offer additional support and feedback. Teachers meet with school and District coaches in the areas of literacy, mathematics and positive social behaviors, to review feedback and make instructional adjustments such as, "provide specific manipulatives or using technology to support students when challenging tasks are

presented". As a result, the school is on track to meet their ELA goal of a 20% increase in accuracy of question asked/answered and their math goal of a 20% increase in the number of accurately completed functional/work tasks with embedded math concepts.

- School leaders support the development of teachers with actionable feedback and next steps using the Danielson Framework in order to improve pedagogical skills across the school. (4.1)
  - The administrative team maintains a rigorous schedule of observations, with immediate feedback, both verbally and in writing. Student work produced during the lessons observed is referred to in written observation reports and referenced in feedback by school leaders along with supports and specific suggestions. Feedback to teachers includes, "provide suitable scaffolds and challenge students to explain their thinking", "utilize paraprofessional effectively to support learning" and "consult with counselor about challenging behaviors for student X". In addition, the Administrative cabinet has analyzed the specific "next steps" given to teachers and is monitoring the effect of the next steps on individual teachers. As a result, in October, 2013, 4% of teachers were rated Ineffective, 21% of teachers were rated Developing, 60% of teachers were rated Effective and 15% of teachers were rated Highly Effective. In May, 2014, 0% of teachers were rated Ineffective, 7% of teachers were rated Developing, 59% of teachers were rated Effective and 34% of teachers were rated Highly Effective.
  - Driven by the Measures of Teacher Performance (MOTP) coach, administrators review and determine where strengths and challenges are among the staff and provide targeted next steps to promote improvement. In addition, formal observations documents identify where observers saw teachers applying this feedback to their instructional practices. Several patterns and trends have been revealed during observations such as, teachers' need for additional support in using assessment to monitor learning and providing feedback to students. In addition, there is a need to increase in the use of Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) high level questions during discussions by staff and students. This purposeful collection of data determines the type of support needed for individual teachers. Due to this need, additional training was provided. Administrators consistently review student work products and data related to students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goal mastery, to correlate teacher practice to student performance. As a result, better teacher pedagogical practice has led to 10.4% movement to a Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for students.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Extend teacher questioning and student discussion, where appropriate, during instruction in order to enrich student participation, thereby increasing opportunities for further development of critical thinking skills. (1.2)
  - Teaching practices reflect the school's core belief system on how students learn; being engaged in lessons that are functional, pragmatic, hands-on and experiential, peer-to peer interaction and student initiated work, providing supports only as needed. Teaching practices are closely

aligned to a Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) driven curriculum emphasizing students' functional and instructional levels. Specific elements of the Danielson Framework, such as grouping students by their cognitive levels, as well as their behavioral levels, are examples of how students are grouped by need. In addition, the school views the Danielson Framework as an objective tool across all sites, providing staff with a coherent lens that emphasizes best practices of teaching and learning. Teachers asked students, "Can you predict what will happen next?" and "What would you do if you got lost?" In a vocational education class students were asked, "How do you get this job done?" Although the school has provided professional development on Webb's Depth of Knowledge, in some classrooms teachers used basic recall questions, which did not give students opportunities to expand on concepts, thus limiting the level of discussion. In addition, in some classrooms, staff found it difficult to "let-go" in relinquishing some of that responsibility to students to take ownership of their learning. For example, in a K-2 class for students with autism, during small group instruction the performance task was to discuss, then write and/or trace the day of the week, cut out their answer and place it on their individual calendars. Immediately, one of the paraprofessionals assigned to Group B asked a student what day it was and rather than waiting for the students to respond, she began to "cut out" the day or the week for group. As a result of this, some students did not have an opportunity to expand on concepts, therefore, limiting the level of discussion and for some students not being challenged to meet higher levels of thinking and engagement.

- Refocus analysis of data at the classroom level to develop a stronger understanding of student performance that results in meaningful feedback to students about their strengths and how to improve their performance. (2.2)
  - Across the school administrators, teachers and related service providers collect and use a range of common formative and summative assessment data that includes New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) Students Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI), Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS), Level I Vocational surveys, unit tests, teacher-made assessments, checklists and rubrics. Teachers use these to ensure that students are demonstrating the intended learning outlined in the teaching points included in instructional plans and guides adjustments such as whether re-teaching is required or additional scaffold are needed. Consistently, student work products are graded by using rubrics and for students in alternate assessment, accuracy and independence are also evaluated on performance tasks. The use of the data helps track students' progress in meeting their Individual Education Plan (IEP) learning goals and objectives. During a class visit students were observed self-assessing using pictures symbols and icons. However, in some classrooms, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment during instruction in order to make immediate adjustments to lessons is not strategically practiced across the school. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks are not always strategically adjusted, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: P.138M   | 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> |