



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**P.S. 185 - The Early Childhood Discovery and Design  
Magnet School**

**Early Childhood 03M185**

**20 WEST 112 STREET  
MANHATTAN  
NY,10026**

**Principal: JANE MURPHY**

**Dates of review: Dec 3-4, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 185 - The Early Childhood Discovery and Design Magnet School is a/an Early Childhood school with 237 students from PK through grade 2. The school population comprises 54.9% Black, 38.0% Hispanic, 2.1% White, and 3.8% Asian students. The student body includes 6.8% English language learners and 11.0% special education students. Boys account for 40.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 91.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders make purposeful organizational decisions to support the instructional goals resulting in improved teacher practices that engage all students in challenging tasks. (1.3)
  - The principal strategically analyzed last year's performance data to determine the best use of resources. The school decided to hire a staff developer in lieu of the academic intervention coordinator and restructure the intervention program due to the limited progress of the students in the lowest third quartile. The staff developer is scheduled to support teacher pedagogy with a particular focus on addressing the needs of the struggling students within the structure of the classroom. Furthermore, there is a math consultant through Metamorphosis and a literacy consultant through the Journeys curriculum that provide intensive support in planning, addressing the needs of the varying levels and aligning to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The teachers receive in-class lessons from a consultant from Salvadori to enhance the engineering and design curricula aligned with the magnet grant and the work in the Lego lab. The school is in the final year of the magnet grant and to ensure the sustainability hired the previous magnet coordinator as an assistant principal. Additionally, this work supports the schools long-range goal to continue the work of the magnet grant through the engineering design process of ask, imagine, plan, create, improve and share. The school has also received a grant from Lego to implement a grade one curriculum "Build to Express". Consequently, the consultants, staff developer, and the addition of the administrator strengthen instruction across all grades including integration of technology and the goals of the grant as well as the goal to increase teacher effectiveness resulting in improved student achievement.
  - Teacher teams are structured to ensure optimal time every week for analyzing student work, looking at data, collaboration, and curriculum planning. Every grade team meets weekly for seventy minutes following a formalized structure to guide the discussion. Administration created templates on a seven week cycle to guide the teacher team work. Teachers use the ORID protocol (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional) to review student work. Additionally, teachers meet for an additional thirty-seven minutes once a week with a focus on curriculum planning. The well-planned use of staff time enables teachers to focus on the instructional work leading to improved pedagogy and student engagement as evidenced through observations and progress monitoring.
- The administration and staff utilize the Danielson Framework to appraise teacher practices and to provide strategic professional development resulting in elevated instructional practices. (4.1)
  - All teachers benefit from the strategic cycles of formative rounds followed by summative observations. Administrators conduct regular feedback sessions and data meetings where there is a thorough review of the observation evidence, student work and assessment data. Meaningful and actionable feedback is provided aligned to the Danielson framework with next steps. Staff and administration have normed around the Danielson framework through the use of the ARIS learn videos, instructional rounds, and reference to the framework during the feedback sessions with clearly identified low-inference evidence. The learning rounds were developed to give teachers an opportunity to learn from their peers, and identify patterns, trends and successful practices. One teacher stated, "I elicit the feedback (from my colleagues) because I don't think I can get better without it." The

professional development aligns with the teachers' professional goals and instructional practices. The administration developed action plans for several teachers to address their next steps and identified supports. Teachers are tiered and there are six-week cycles for professional development. A consultant from Journeys provided two varying professional development sessions and teachers were identified for participation based on their experience with the curriculum. After the completion of cycle I, the administration has identified growth and progress in communicating with students and ensuring that the classroom environment establishes a positive culture for learning. The school is cultivating teacher's strengths and providing opportunities to take on leadership roles. The assistant principal advanced from the magnet coordinator position and the staff developer progressed from a classroom teacher. Teachers' progress is tracked on an individual basis as well as trends are noted across the school. As a result of the observation process, teachers are reflective practitioners and school wide instructional practices are advancing.

- Across classrooms, teachers' assessment practices measure student progress through the use of rubrics, conferences, and common assessments to adjust instruction and lead to increased achievement. (2.2)
  - There is a school wide system utilized for measuring student academic progress as well as behavioral progress. The red, yellow, green, blue dot system is universal and communicated clearly by all members of the community. Grading policies are aligned during team meetings and then the instructional cabinet reviews the plan to ensure coherency. Teachers explain what is needed to receive a green or blue dot on all tasks. For example: In a kindergarten class while in Lego lab, a discussion ensued on how each group worked on taking turns, staying focused, taking care of materials, and quality of conversations. Students were self-assessing, deciding if they earned a yellow or green dot as the teacher was charting the assessment and facilitating the discussion. The teacher stated, "I heard a grand conversation over which tower would topple first." The students agreed that they deserved a green dot. This practice was evident across all classes. Students receive a colored dot on their work and state what they needed to do to improve their work. All assessment data including conference notes are compiled in a binder and utilized to inform small group instruction. Teachers indicated that they are able to adjust their instruction as a result of the assessments and student work such as the need to increase lessons on using punctuation and reteach subtraction to grade one. Analyzing the progress in Fountas and Pinnell reading levels from September to November indicated that 58% of grade one and two students receiving tier I intervention are in need of a tier II intervention and teachers will be using the decodable readers from the Journeys program. Therefore, teachers are able to utilize varied assessment data to make effective adjustments resulting in instruction aligned to meet all students' learning needs.
- Inquiry based teacher collaborations align with school goals and promote distributive leadership, resulting in increased instructional capacity and teacher voice in key decision-making. (4.2)
  - The professional collaborations are the forum to track and monitor progress towards the school goals for coherence across the grades, to increase reading achievement of all students with particular attention on the lowest third, and to utilize the Danielson framework to improve student performance. Teacher teams are facilitated by a teacher leader who represents the grade on the instructional cabinet to ensure coherence. Teachers state that they feel empowered to have input on school-wide curricula as well as instructional decisions for their class or grade. They affirm that the administration is open to their ideas and their voice is respected. Through the well-structured team meetings, teachers consistently

analyze student work and curriculum. During one team meeting, teachers were reviewing students' writing and based on their analysis discussed their next steps towards increasing student accountability in using checklists and incorporating peer editing. In grade one, teachers reviewed the informational writing on the heart and discussed their noticings to inform the other teacher on how to best approach the lesson. As a result of the team meetings, distributed leadership structures affect student learning and support teacher development.

## What the school needs to improve

- Further expand the curricula units to ensure that academic tasks are planned and refined across grades and subjects so that all students are cognitively challenged. (1.1)
  - School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts through the use of the Journeys reading program, Go Math, and the school-developed interdisciplinary units. Grade level modifications are made such as reading *Little House in the Big Woods* in lieu of *Sarah Plain and Tall* in grade 2 according to the Lexile level and aligned with the social studies theme of "Then and Now". Staff has developed four units across all grade levels titled Delicious and Nutritious, Community and Diversity, Tools- Getting the Job done, and Playgrounds integrating science, social studies, and the magnet theme of discovery through the Lego lab. To ensure coherent planning, the units extend the learning from the previous grade level. In grade one of the Delicious and Nutritious unit, students learn about the heart and the importance of keeping healthy. In second grade, all students create a food plate, compare it to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food plate, and learn how to make their meal more nutritious. In Lego lab, students will build a robot and program it to move. The unit plan addresses the content areas, incorporates rigorous tasks and some Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies but doesn't clearly indicate the embedded supports for English language learners and students with disabilities. As a result of the planned curricula and tasks, there was uneven evidence of all groups of students successfully able to demonstrate their thinking and being cognitively engaged.
- Ensure that teacher pedagogy consistently includes discussion, questioning techniques and scaffolds so that all students are engaged in higher levels of thinking and produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, teachers are incorporating the instructional shifts with emphasis on close reading strategies, developing academic vocabulary, and finding evidence in the text. In one class, students were reading a shared text and were to find evidence using the pictures to understand the character's feelings. All students were paired together to discuss the lesson but only a percentage of the class were successful and engaged in the discussion. For example, in one class there was a push-in teacher who was sitting along the perimeter of the rug with limited interaction with the students. In a math class students were posed a challenging problem and were to share their thinking with a partner however tables of students were not attending to the task. Little supports were provided for struggling students or students with disabilities, leading to some students' inability to complete the task. Therefore, strategies inconsistently support all learners in demonstrating higher order thinking in discussions and student work.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 185 - The Early Childhood Discovery and Design Magnet School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	

### Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly...	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

To what extent does the school...	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

To what extent does the school...	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

<b>UD</b> Underdeveloped	<b>D</b> Developing	<b>P</b> Proficient	<b>WD</b> Well Developed
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