

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

P.S./I.S. 187 Hudson Cliffs

K-8 06M187

**349 CABRINI BOULEVARD
MANHATTAN
NY, NY10040**

Principal: Ms. Cynthia Chory

Dates of review: April 10 - 11, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S./I.S. 187 Hudson Cliffs is a/an K-8 school with 778 students from PK through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 55% Hispanic, 36 % White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leadership makes effective, strategic decisions regarding organization and use of resources to support school goals. (1.3)
 - A major priority for the school has been to keep class sizes as low as possible in order to provide students with individualized instruction. In alignment with the goal of helping teachers meet the challenges of implementing new curricula in literacy and math and the citywide instructional expectations, the principal uses coaches, consultants and network staff to support teachers. To meet the goal of providing instruction based on specific needs of struggling students in grades kindergarten to second, intervention teachers have been hired. In addition, all level one students have been scheduled for targeted instruction during the schools extended day program to assure that required support is provided. English language learners are clustered in grade level classes to allow service providers to push in and provide support. The principal has also secured grants to install air conditioning in the auditorium and cafeteria as well as the upgrade of the computer lab, purchase laptop carts and additional smartboards. Grade advisors have modified schedules to allow time to track student progress and support their academic and social emotional needs in order to meet grade level standards. The schedule allows teacher teams to meet twice per week in order to collectively analyze student work and develop lessons aimed at meeting student needs. Protocols have been established to norm the work of teacher teams. Administrators attend teacher team meetings to provide support and assure that teams are making data based decisions. Across classrooms, teachers implement school wide initiatives such as grouping students based on data to differentiate instruction, students using reading strategies for the close analysis of texts and students engaged in text based discussions. This has resulted in increased expectations across classrooms and an increase in the volume and quantity of student writing in all content areas as demonstrated by reports that require students to analyze the relationships found in the text “Of Mice and Men” or extensive research reports on the effect of natural disasters on society.
- The school has a well- established, nurturing culture that supports the academic and social development of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The principal schedules “Coffee with Chory” as a method to promote opportunities for open dialogue between administration, staff and parents. The issues raised as a result of these conversations are discussed at cabinet meetings in an effort to collaboratively develop strategic plans. Conversations with the principal have resulted in the creation of additional options for the afterschool program such as an on-line journal, additional training on the Danielson Framework as requested by teachers and a review of kindergarten homework policy as requested by parents. This supports the school’s beliefs that through the collaboration of administrators, teachers and students, the school can create an environment that encourages meaningful participation by all stakeholders, resulting in a learning environment that provides all students with opportunities to express and develop individual talents. The assistant principal and the guidance counselor discuss behavior expectations with students during school-wide assemblies. Expectations

for student behavior are sent home to assure that parents are aware of school and department of education policy. The school schedules monthly mass preps to present information to students regarding topics affecting students, such as bullying and adapting to change. In the middle school grades, advisors track student progress to offer support. Staff members, including the principal; volunteer to mentor at risk students to assure that they are on track to meeting grade level standards and to help remediate personal and academic behaviors. The principal shared that students who receive mentoring have demonstrated such success that they are now referring at risk students who need mentoring. Student attendance is closely monitored by attendance team which makes phone calls and home visits to students who are absent or late to make sure that all families get the message of how important it is to regularly attend school. The principal meets with the school's student government to discuss issues and concerns regarding school improvement efforts. The principal shared that as a result of student input, modifications to afterschool programs have been made. The school's guidance counselor and school psychologist collaborate with doctors from Columbia Presbyterian Hospital to assure that the needs of the neediest students are met. The school's Student Intervention Team (SIT) works with classroom teachers to develop instructional plans for struggling students. Students who need additional support are provided with pull-out services and/or targeted, small group instruction during extended day. For example, as a result of the support received during the extended day, one student who had struggled in literacy the year before demonstrated student work with grades ranging from 96 to 100. Furthermore, he shared that as a result of the progress he now "Really feels good about himself." The school's inclusive culture has resulted in an environment where staff, parents and students have developed a true collaboration to assure that all graduates of the school are adequately prepared for success in high school and beyond.

- Effective analysis of student data allows administrators and teachers to identify areas of strength and improvement to adjust curricular and instructional decisions. (2.2)
 - Formative and summative assessments are used to grade students in alignment with school grading policy that is regularly reviewed by the school to assure standardization of grades. Teachers use data from performance tasks in literacy and reading levels to assess student progress. The school has recently begun using the I-Ready system to analyze literacy test data as well as school level data to inform curricular and instructional decisions. The I-Ready program provides the school with disaggregated data that classifies students by level of intervention needed in literacy and math. Furthermore, I-Ready provides levels of proficiency in key literacy and math skills allowing teachers and teacher teams to incorporate strategies into curricular units to support the development of areas such as determining central theme, identifying author's point of view and synthesizing information across chapters to increase student performance. Results of school level assessments and teacher comments regarding student performance are entered on Engrade, an online grading program that also provides parents and students with up to date information regarding student progress. As a result of the school's effort to provide clear explicit feedback aligned to rubrics, students receive feedback such as "use quotes from the text to support central theme," or "add details to effectively convey ideas" that help improve writing pieces. One student shared, "I really use feedback

before I do my new piece for the portfolio. I look at what areas I have to improve.” School data systems enable teachers to take ownership of class and grade level data to plan instruction and provide students with targeted instruction and support.

- School leaders provide a consistent message of high expectations for staff, students and families, resulting in support of the school’s goals to improve student achievement. (3.4)
 - The principal shares expectations for student achievement with staff via the staff handbook, faculty conferences, professional development sessions and memorandums throughout the year to ensure that all contribute to improved student outcomes. Using the Danielson Framework and the city-wide instructional expectations, administrators work with staff to model effective pedagogical practices to develop coherent implementation across classrooms. Cycles of observations have been aligned to school goals of promoting higher order thinking skills and student discussion in order to improve teacher practice. This supports the school’s theory of action that by developing the instructional expertise of teachers, students will learn in a deeper and more meaningful ways that will ultimately prepare them for college and careers. Teachers hold each other accountable for the success of students through the collaborative work of teacher teams and by providing feedback to each other as a result of inter-visitations. Expectations are presented to students at assembly programs by administrators, guidance counselors and grade advisors so that all students consistently hear the same message. Students in grades five through eight are also provided with planners that help develop time management and organizational skills that are necessary for success in school. Throughout curricular units, the school focuses on character traits such as perseverance and self-monitoring aimed at developing skills that would ensure access to higher education is available to all students. Student achievement is celebrated through publishing parties, awards assemblies and music and arts festivals in order to highlight student success. Parents and former graduates of the school are invited to present to students to demonstrate that endless possibilities that higher education provides. The school’s active school leadership team and the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) are instrumental in the development of support of school expectations. The PTA has developed a website to keep parents informed of school initiatives and to solicit feedback and ideas for improved parental involvement. Consequently, parents and staff work collaboratively to help meet school goals and student needs as evidenced by interviews and the plethora of additional programs funded by parents to help students meet academic and social-emotional expectations.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the rigor of the common core curriculum implemented across classrooms to engage and challenge all students. (1.1)
 - The school adopted ReadyGen and GoMath for grades K-5 and scholastics CodeX and Connected Mathematics Project 3 (CMP3) for grades 6-8 to provide students with a standards based curricula in literacy and math. Since adoption of the new curricula and after close analysis, the school has made modifications to units, resources used and rubrics to ensure instruction is sufficiently rigorous to help students

meet grade level standards. For example, in the upper grades additional novels were added as required reading and rubrics were revised in order to ensure instructional expectations are clearly reflected. The school also looks to supplement curricular units by promoting the use of the internet to access additional material related to content taught. Consultants in literacy and math and the network staff have engaged staff in professional development to provide teachers with guidance on how to incorporate the citywide instructional expectations into lesson planning. Teachers collectively plan tasks that require higher order thinking skills, demonstrate fluency and deep understanding of content aimed at helping students meet grade level standards. Teachers have established a DropBox to facilitate the sharing of lesson plans and resources with colleagues in an effort to build coherence across classrooms. Planning documents show that tasks and supports are differentiated for struggling students by providing materials at varying lexile levels, providing graphic organizers with varying levels of support and strategic grouping of students based on need aimed at providing all students with opportunities for participation. However, not all curriculum units are modified to suit the needs of students. For example, units that require students to compare and contrast the governments of colonial America and England or the development of effective persuasive essays are not sufficiently differentiated by providing scaffolds and extensions, in order to support and challenge all students.

- Further develop teacher pedagogy to ensure that lessons provide students with access to rigorous tasks in order to cognitively engage all students. (1.2)
 - The school has closely analyzed the Danielson's Framework and the citywide instructional expectations to develop the schools' instructional focus of explicit teaching of academic and content vocabulary, citing evidence to support arguments or theories. Lessons observed and student work products demonstrate that students are required to cite evidence from non-fiction texts, demonstrate fluency and deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Also evident across classrooms are student groups based on needs assessment to facilitate discussion and allow for the collaborative completion of tasks. The school believes that all students should be provided with rigorous, standards based curricula with appropriate scaffolds that modify content, process and or product based on needs of students to help meet grade level standards. Though there are teachers who use graphic organizers, manipulatives and visuals as well as differentiated tasks to meet student needs, scaffolds are not consistently implemented across classrooms. For example, the use of multiple scaffolds such as vocabulary charts, visual representation of concepts and a variety of manipulatives to support students were only used in two of the nine lessons observed. Such instances show that tasks are not consistently scaffolded to meet the needs of all students, including higher achieving students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S./I.S. 187 Hudson Cliffs	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	