

Quality Review Report

2013-2014

P.S. 188 The Island School

01M188

**442 East Houston Street
Manhattan,
NY10002**

Principal: Mary Pree

**Dates of review: May 13-14, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 188 The Island School is a K-8 school with 501 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 28% Black, 65% Hispanic, 4% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 26% 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 88.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's thoughtful adoption of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) ensures that its curriculum prepares all students for access to and success in high school and beyond. (1.1)
 - Teachers across grades and working with all learners thoughtfully supplement a range of literacy units from *Core Knowledge* and *Expeditionary Learning*, and math units from *Math in Focus* and *Connected Mathematics*. In classes, students are required to read a variety of challenging texts, pursue skill development through *I-Ready* and *My On* individualized computer programs, derive multiple solutions through weekly Exemplars math problems, and write with stamina in different genres. As a result, students have access to challenging class work and assignments, such as 6th graders being asked to debate, using textual evidence, whether ancient Egypt had a civilized society and 8th graders being challenged to design real world science exit projects based on surveys and hands-on experiments. Moreover, middle school math teachers set a target of implementing Regents-level Algebra for eighth graders in 2014-15 by planning and preparing current students for mastery of pre-algebra curricula to meet the challenge of even higher standards. Focused on raising content standards that align with CCLS, teachers ensure that students achieve strong academic progress and readiness for high school and beyond.
- Organizational decision making strengthens the learning environment for students and maximizes structures necessary for continued school improvement. (1.3)
 - School leaders and staff have focused major attention - including professional development of teachers, addition of a new dean position, and close monitoring - to raising expectations for middle school tone and student performance, as the middle school had lagged in these areas. This deliberate shift of resources, leadership, and coaching to the middle school has resulted in teams of teachers planning regular intervisitations to each other's classrooms and social-emotional supports for students, including a re-invigorated advisory program. Additionally, all middle school students follow an extended nine-period school day, which automatically includes an enrichment or academic support period in the schedule. Moreover, teachers in grades 6-8 volunteered to combine three classes into two large classes per grade, in order to alter the middle school program by adding four periods of math and English language arts to students' programs (increasing instructional time from 8 to 12 periods each week). This teacher-initiated proposal and decision has enabled more sustained and deeper study of content. At the same time, school staff implemented a transition to high school mentorship program that included high school visits, presentations, and a "day in the life of" high school experiences. This comprehensive overhaul of the middle school has produced stronger academic achievement and personal development across classes, as evidenced by school data showing the most competitive high school acceptances in at least a decade, including several student offers to specialized high schools and city-wide gifted and talented programs.

- School leaders and teachers collaborate to provide students and their families with exceptionally high levels of support that accelerate students' academic and social emotional growth. (1.4)
 - Students and parents rave about the school, as noted on the 2013 School Survey and in interviews during the Quality Review. Parents and students describe the school consistently using phrases like "they are my family," "our home," and "where I belong and matter." This sense of inclusion is especially significant considering that nearly half the students in the school receive services as students in temporary housing, meaning that the school must consider particular needs of children and families without permanent housing. An often-cited reason for families' strong feelings about the school environment is the wrap-around structure of the school day, whereby after school and weekend programming provides several hundred students with tutoring, counseling, enrichment, digital media, sports, and hot meals. The school was awarded a Full Service Community School grant which further supports intervention and outreach initiatives such as the school-based health center, parent education programs, and youth and talent development of all children. Every student and family is known and supported by teams of school and Community Based Organization staff, and this deeply positive culture has contributed to ongoing growth in students' social and emotional development, as measured by a 30% increase in enrollment in three years, and improved student attendance and personal behaviors, as well as higher growth percentiles than city-wide averages for the 2012-2013 New York State English language arts and math exam scores.
- School leaders routinely observe classroom teaching and provide constructive, timely feedback that supports improved practices by all teachers. (4.1)
 - School leaders utilize frequent cycles of informal and formal observations for tenured and probationary teachers to identify and address the professional growth needs of all teachers. Administrators completed over two hundred observations, which kept them well on pace with meeting required observations. The frequent observation cycles, including ongoing analysis of student work and data, led to administrators noticing the need for teachers to deepen student engagement through the use of higher order-type questions. This noticing, in turn, led to targeted professional development and observational feedback in this area. Teachers affirmed that they have received more specific and actionable feedback than in past years, with clear next steps linked to consistent application of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, leading to growth in their instructional practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend teaching practices that engage students with challenging tasks in student-centered environments to maximize learning for all students. (1.2)
 - Teachers increasingly align curricula and instructional expectations to CCLS. As examples, 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 approaches for students' different learning styles. For instance, the eighth grade math teacher structured a lesson about the Pythagorean

Theorem through stations where students, grouped by skills, practice, apply, and generate math problems, with leveled questions, visuals on I-pad, and solution guides as supports. Similarly, students in a 5th grade Integrated Co-Teaching class engaged actively in small group discussions about worker strife in the novel, *Esperanza Rising*, while both teachers coached individual students with reading comprehension strategies to encourage their participation in the conversations. While these lessons have good routines in place for small group work and discussions, there is an over-reliance on the teacher in classes to mediate the discussion and push students' thinking. Teachers' "ping-pong" approach to questioning in several classes also led to all questions emanating from and returning to the teacher, with little expectation for students to deepen their thinking by questioning each other or building on comments made by peers. As a result, many learning tasks remain teacher-directed which then hampers students from demonstrating higher order thinking.

- Continue to develop and use meaningful assessment tools to generate accurate feedback about student achievement in order to help teachers deepen their focus on moving all students to higher levels of success. (2.2)
 - All teachers track pre- and post-unit assessments, running records in English language arts, as well as item analysis of State exams. Additionally, many teachers utilize on-line academic supports, such as *Khan Academy*, *IXL* and *Reading A-Z*, to further assess students' reading and math progress. Furthermore, the Reading Partners program of individualized tutoring exemplifies effective monitoring and improvement that averages 1.5 years of reading progress gains of students' reading skills, during the course of an academic year. Student assessment data is shared in team meetings and during professional development which informs instructional planning for next steps. However, there were many missed opportunities for quickly checking students' understanding in the midst of learning tasks during lessons viewed. For example, first grade students practiced enunciating different "c" sounds in a phonics lesson with the teacher calling one child at a time forward to read aloud a word card, so there was no way to gauge if other students understood how to read that same word. Across classes, some students expressed confusion about teaching points, the purpose of learning, and strategies taught. Moreover, teachers do not agree about the purpose or usefulness of rubrics for assessment. Some teachers utilize generic rubrics which they consider simplified and easier to understand, while others create genre-specific and task-specific rubrics, such as an "independent reading rubric." Therefore across classrooms, there is inconsistent use of rubrics as an assessment tool for instruction and feedback, with the result that students are unsure of their next steps for improvement and growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 188 The Island School	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