



**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. 208 Alain L. Locke

Elementary 03M208

**21 WEST 111 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10026**

Principal: Susan M. Green

Dates of review: March 18-19, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 208 Alain L. Locke is an Elementary school with 164 students from 3 through grade 5. The school population comprises 63% Black, 34% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 26% 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 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School faculty craft coherent curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning standards (CCLS) integrating the environmental stewardship magnet theme to emphasize rigorous habits and high level thinking for all students. (1.1)
 - The school has adapted the Ready Gen curriculum in English language arts, with an emphasis on reading complex texts and identifying evidence and supporting information. To increase capacity, teachers attend professional development by the network and the department of education (DOE) on the curriculum and share the information with their colleagues. In all fourth grade classes, the students are reading *The Birchbark House* and analyzing character development. Grade three is currently reading informational text on community and culture. Collaboratively, teachers shifted some of the science and social studies units to merge with Ready Gen. For example, in grade three, the social studies unit on communities is currently being taught through an interdisciplinary approach. In addition, to align with the magnet theme the teachers have identified the Education for Sustainability Standards, (EfS), national standards aligned with their magnet theme within the science and social studies curricula. A culminating task ensures students become a community activist and create a project identifying a problem in the communities with solid wastes, water pollution, or air pollution and offer solutions that are reasonable and realistic, thus preparing students to meet the expectations of future learning experiences. In mathematics, the school is utilizing the Go Math curriculum with emphasis on real-world problem solving and writing in mathematics. As a result of purposeful curricula decisions, there is coherence across grade levels ensuring college and career readiness through standards-aligned curricula in all content areas.
 - Through teacher teams and collaborative planning, teachers develop three-tiered activities for every lesson to address the varying levels and needs of students in their classes. In grade 5, students are engaged in a unit on Latin America and are learning why deforestation is harmful to Brazil's environment. Students receive a specific QR code scanner on the iPads and answer questions based on research from a website. Tasks are scaffolded to support English language learners and students with disabilities. In grade 4, intentional student groupings were observed based on reading level and teacher's formative data on character development. Identified students receive guided instruction from the teacher while the other two groups worked with their peers on the task following the specified directions. Thus, all curricula and tasks are designed with rigorous learning experiences that appropriately challenge all students.
- Administration makes strategic organizational decisions to support the instructional goals resulting in high-level instruction and student engagement in challenging tasks. (1.3)
 - The school is committed to increasing teacher effectiveness and improving student achievement through their use of resources. The school continues to fund a magnet coordinator to oversee their hydroponic lab as well as professional development from a consultant with Education for Sustainability to support teaching and curriculum planning aligned with the environmental stewardship theme. Additionally,

a Generation Ready consultant provides training to ensure effective planning and teaching with the Ready Gen reading program. The school has invested in per diem days to release teachers to attend off-site workshops on the curricula. Intervention programs such as Leveled Literacy, Wilson and an afterschool testing preparation program are used to address the academic needs of the students. Technology is utilized to enhance the teaching through the use of the smart board and students have iPads for research and academic tasks. As a result of strategic use of resources, teachers are able to plan effectively resulting in students' production of meaningful work products.

- The principal has structured the schedule to ensure that there is consistent time for teachers to analyze student work and plan collaboratively. Every grade is programmed for a common planning period during the week in addition to Thursday mornings for a minimum of 2 periods a week. Teachers state that through applying the protocol of reviewing student work, they get to know each other's students and collaboratively identify next steps for individual and groups of students. Together they plan and develop tiered tasks to ensure that they are meeting the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for the grade. Teachers also follow a unit planning protocol where they determine the pacing, review and then revise unit plans. Out of classroom teachers rotate to attend each grade's meeting that ensures shared accountability. A reporting template is completed providing the administration with the means to determine their effectiveness and provide feedback. Teams include their next steps so that administration can support teachers with resources to support their work. As a result of structured teacher time there is greater vertical and horizontal coherence and improved instruction addressing the needs of all students.
- The school creates a culture of trust and respect where students are well supported by the staff towards growth in their academic and personal development. (1.4)
 - The school begins their day reciting a school motto "I was born from greatness". This sets the tone and behavioral expectations. Students articulate that this means to do their best and to be kind. The positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) program rewards the students and classes for behaviors around the pillars of greatness such as safety, thoughtfulness, respect and responsibility. The students unite to earn tickets for their class bucket and contribute to a positive class and school culture. Classes earn rewards such as no-uniform coupon or a treat. Students schedule meetings with the principal to voice their suggestions. Students initiated thematic days as well as a stewardship where they help out the younger students at the nearby early childhood school. The school implemented a structured recess program with Asphalt Green, a community program to ensure cooperative play, teamwork, fitness, and conflict resolution skills. In addition, the school offers a sports leadership academy through Play Rugby to develop students' self-esteem while learning a new sport. The attendance team and pupil personnel committee (PPC) are in place to ensure that students' social-emotional needs are being met. Teachers make recommendations to the PPC and as a result, at-risk counseling or academic intervention services are provided. Parents state the principal and teachers are very welcoming and address any concerns brought to them in a timely manner. As a result of the school's culture building and supports, students are demonstrating effective behaviors as indicated by the reduction of suspensions and incidents by 46% compared to last school year.

- School leaders utilize the observation process to provide feedback to teachers resulting in professional growth and increased instructional capacity. (4.1)
 - Based on observation data, administrators have identified the varying needs of the teachers. Teachers set individual goals in collaboration with the principal, based on strengths and areas for development at the beginning of the school year. Principal identified the focus for this year to develop effective questioning and discussion techniques. The majority of teachers participate in video observations and view the recording during feedback sessions. The videos are then added to a library to be used for future workshops. Teachers self-reflect and identify low inference evidence aligned with the identified indicators within the Danielson framework. Principal and assistant principal provide actionable feedback with clear next steps. Teachers state that feedback they receive has led to more student-centered classrooms and increased opportunities for discussion. They also added that they have participated in professional development that has helped them with planning and incorporating higher levels of questions. Teachers participate in professional development through the network, and Education for Sustainability. The consultant from Generation Ready is utilized to support teacher development through one-on-one modeling, demonstration lessons, or during teacher team meetings for planning. As a result of effective feedback and strategic professional development, school-wide practices have elevated. Based on Advance data, 63% of teachers are showing growth in questioning and discussion techniques.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen teacher practice so that all students are engaged in high level questioning and discussions so that work products reflect deep understanding. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms, there is a coherent practice to tier tasks and have students work in leveled groups with their peers, a teacher or a staff member. Through small group instruction, the teachers are able to focus instruction aligned to all students' academic level including students with disabilities and English language learners. Teachers utilize a variety of graphic organizers to provide all students access to the task at an appropriately challenging level. For example, in grade four, one group records their thinking about the character without any guiding questions whereas another group indicates what the character did in order to make inferences. In another class, two teachers and the paraprofessional each facilitate a group where the task is scaffolded through the use of differentiated questioning leading to their understanding. All students participate in the hydroponic lab where they are cognitively engaged in the process of harvesting seeds. Students are able to demonstrate their thinking and understanding of this process. Conversely, at the end of in-class lessons, students are citing evidence and using the accountable talk stems such as "I can add on" or "I agree with" but not all students respond and discussions are primarily between the student and the teacher. During a math lesson, the teacher requires the students to solve a challenging problem but opportunities for in depth discussion were not provided. Therefore, all students are not collectively engaging in complex discussions so that work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

- Further develop school wide assessment practices to utilize data to adjust the curricula and provide students with actionable feedback in order to improve achievement. (2.2)
 - The school created an assessment calendar indicating the assessments, time frame and purpose. Students are first evaluated for a baseline reading, writing and math level. Teachers are emphasizing writing within each unit. Student work is assessed using a rubric. In addition, students take the assessments in the Go Math and Ready Gen curricula as well as the performance based tasks in science and social studies at the end of each unit. In grade 3, students wrote a final chapter to the book, The Year of Miss Agnes. During the teacher team, they reviewed a student's work and the score for each criterion. Inconsistencies in the grading of the student work by different team members and the limited feedback hindered students ability to progress in the next writing task. For example, students had difficulty with conventions as they lacked understanding of what that means and their next steps to improve did not provide the means with which to address their learning. In mathematics, some of the constructed response problems are assessed using a three-point rubric but there is very little explanation of what these scores mean, to assist students in reaching increased mastery. Therefore, this inconsistent feedback to students prevents them from having clear and actionable information to support them in achieving higher outcomes.
 - Through the collaborative teams, teachers review class data and make necessary adjustments to their instruction for upcoming units. They analyze data from the periodic assessments which is uploaded onto Schoolnet, a data-base utilized by the Department of Education. This site enables the staff to identify student gaps and compare how the school performs compared to the city and the network schools. This assessment uncovered grade three students' difficulty with understanding the main idea and grade four students in identifying theme. Teachers recognize the need to revisit these skills. In grade four, teachers use their tracking system indicating whether students are meeting, approaching or did not meet the expected standard but this was an inconsistent practice. In grade 5, students were struggling with the math lesson and teachers identified the need to reteach but have not fully used their assessment data to inform modifications to instruction. Thus, current levels of assessment practices limit teachers' ability to adjust curricula and instruction to ensure student progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 208 Alain L. Locke	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