



**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**

**Intermediate School 93**

**Q093**

**66-56 Forest Avenue  
Ridgewood**

**Principal: Edward Santos**

**Dates of review: November 21 - 22, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

I.S. 93 is an intermediate school with 1,264 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 70% Hispanic, 19% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school aligns curricula to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) through learning experiences that promote rigor in order to advance college and career readiness. (1.1)
  - The school's curriculum maps and units of study are aligned to the school's instructional goals and citywide expectations. Across classrooms students are engaged in academic conversations around text-dependent questions in all subject areas that reflect the integration of the instructional shifts. Students are encouraged to explain and cite their findings, verbally and in writing. After careful analysis of English Language Arts (ELA) standards in grade eight, unit plans were created to incorporate informational and argumentative writing tasks in science and social studies. Based on an analysis of student profile sheets results indicate that students are now able to develop various solution pathways to identify possible interpretations of text.
  - The school offers a rigorous Special Placement (SP) program for high performing students in grades 6-8 which creates a strong foundation for preparation to the next grade level and high school. In addition, a large percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) participate in morning and after school programs which support academic achievement and promote engagement through rich literacy based activities. As a result, ELL students are better equipped to complete unit aligned tasks with an emphasis on appropriate transitions, phrases and writing that coherently matches the task.
- Teaching practices across the school reflect a common belief about student learning and provide purposeful supports to meet varied student needs. (1.2)
  - The design and implementation of standards based units of study across subjects coupled with clear expectations for teaching, as outlined in the Danielson Framework for Teaching supports the school's expectations to promote active learning for all students. Teachers agree that students learn best when they are involved in the learning process and grouped according to their needs. A shared belief exists that supports learning through the use of visual supports, diagrams, models, discussion stems, and tactile activities like sorting, categorizing, charting, as well as opportunities for movement within the classroom. As a result of teachers consistently implementing these strategies, 11% of eighth graders demonstrated growth when comparing baseline writing assessments to the culminating task, in the elaboration of details needed to support the evidence presented in their writing.
  - English Language Arts (ELA) teachers complete baseline writing profile sheets that indicate mastery of skills, unit learning outcomes to determine student proficiency, a reflection on the pre-instruction assessment in relation to the analysis of student work and baseline data in order to be aware of the varied learner needs. As part of a writing unit goal students

are assessed on pertinent responses, quality of supporting details, incorporation of background knowledge, evidence of structure within the writing, student voice and counter claims. Teachers work with small groups of students and record the aforementioned strategies that are most successful. Results have indicated that by providing multiple entry points into the lesson, students' work has improved with the majority of ELLs showing growth in writing from the baseline assessment to the final task and seventh graders improving between 20% - 40% in creating coherent writing and developing strong transitions between paragraphs.

- School leaders organize resources and time in order to support instructional goals and increase student outcomes. (1.3)
  - The school's instructional goals around engaging students in genuine discussions, creating text-based responses and making evidentiary arguments are supported by the hiring of an additional lead teacher to provide instruction for students and model best practices for staff. A partnership with Long Island City High School involves the principal and selected staff members in a teacher leadership program that assists the school with the implementation of initiatives to improve instruction and learning outcomes for the schools' sub-groups of students. Instructional practices like rubric alignment to offer students' feedback regarding their reading needs are becoming stronger as an outcome of this program. An after-school program provides academic support for all students in addition to offering programs in the arts and physical education. A morning volleyball team meets five days a week from seven to eight o'clock to practice and compete in house. Students posit that the extra-curricular activities "make the school great, exciting and interesting". Furthermore, data supports the fact that students who participate in after school have shown signs of greater enthusiasm for learning, better attendance and a greater confidence level in reading and writing.
  - School programming includes time for teacher teams to meet regularly to look at student work and revise existing curriculum units to improve student achievement. For example, the sixth grade math team surfaced learning gaps of students related to the use of simplifying fractions and creating equivalent ratios. During meeting times, this teacher team selected activities like labeling the ratios, providing more visuals and offering mathematical language to enhance students' knowledge of mathematical concepts. The team also identified academic interventions for targeted students needing small group support. Consequently, the math skills of students improved as noted in a 37% increase in proficiency level for simplifying fractions and a 48% increase in creating equivalent fractions.

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

- Improve the use of assessment results to monitor student progress and inform curricular and instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
  - The school uses common assessments and rubrics to measure students' progress in reading levels, as well as in writing and math. However, some rubrics are loosely aligned with the school's key standards and some do

not offer follow through or next steps for student planning. Furthermore, students' notebooks reflect ongoing, high quality work, and teachers are diligent about posting feedback on most assignments, but students have a difficult time converting the feedback into purposeful recommendations that improve their achievement, or making reference to the grading policies that are determining their grades. As a result, there is a gap between teaching practices and lesson modifications needed to achieve assistance and extensions for students in order to meet their goals.

- Teachers use a variety of assessments including interim assessments common to subjects and grades to monitor and respond to students' academic needs. At the classroom level, teachers assess students' reading and writing progress by listening to students' dialogue, reading students' writing and evaluating responses on sorting exit slips. The results of the assessment protocols are analyzed by teachers however, the analysis is not consistent across grades and subject areas. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to discuss how students are doing as a grade and the instructional modifications that need to be made in planning and teaching in order to improve student achievement. Consequently, there is inconsistency in teacher created plans of action to help struggling students improve and challenge high achieving students advance to the next level of scholarship.
- Utilize the observation process to provide quality feedback to teachers so that timely and individualized professional growth and reflection can result in improved instructional practices. (4.1)
  - The observation cycle is used to support pedagogical practice and student achievement. Coaching, mentoring and inter-visitations are an outgrowth of the feedback that is offered to teachers. Through the Advance system, the Danielson Framework is used for evaluating effective teaching practices. Although teachers receive timely feedback it is not clear at this time to determine if the feedback is impacting student work, data, or improved teaching practices. As a result, the observation data is collected and analyzed by administration, but at this time is not linked to individual teachers or professional development, thus hindering the ability to track teacher achievement.
  - Professional development is planned to meet the needs of the staff based on data collected during classroom observations. At this time, however, the professional development is generic and not specific to the diversified needs of many teachers based on experience and content specific skills. For example, professional development was provided in Common Core alignment but teachers are at different levels of understanding this concept, consequently an opportunity was missed to tailor the learning to advance growth in this area. Teachers are beginning to develop a toolbox of strategies to assist them in strengthening their instruction, however timely improvement in teaching practices across the school is hindered.
- Develop a system for evaluating the quality of school level decisions, making adjustments to increase the coherence of practices across the school in order to measure progress and accountability. (5.1)

- Although the school has made progress this year in adjusting some curriculum and assessment practices to align more closely with the CCLS there are no regular processes to evaluate and adjust curricular and instructional ideas. For example, vocabulary development of English Language Learners is supported by the software program Achieve 3000. Although this program, historically has yielded positive results there is no evaluation process in place to determine benchmark growth or next steps for these students. Thus, the lack of processes to monitor and evaluate initiatives inhibits the school from accessing useful data to improve learning and support CCLS.
- Organizational resources are in place as an outgrowth of student data and school needs. Although these resources are purposeful at the start of school there is a lack of clarity around measuring their sustainability and effectiveness throughout the year. In addition, school leaders regularly engage and monitor teacher teams by ensuring that protocols are in place to maximize time to determine next steps to meet students' needs. Teachers rotate the facilitators' role and act as a liaison between administrators and teams to develop cohesion around the teams' goals. However, there is no formal structure to review the work of teams and its relationship to instructional goals or practices. Consequently, the impact this work is having on teacher knowledge of student mastery of the CCLS is unclear.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Intermediate School 93	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		X					
<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?			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					
<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?			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				
<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?			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					
<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>