

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

David Porter School

26Q094

**41-77 Little Neck Parkway
Queens
NY 11363**

JoAnn Barbeosch

**Dates of review: April 8-9, 2014
Anita E. Saunders**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The David Porter School is an elementary school with 401 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 17% Hispanic, 28% White, and 48% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 96.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Through regular use of relevant data, the school principal and staff have an ongoing understanding of the performance and progress of individual students that effectively informs instruction and organizational adjustments. (2.2)
 - The school's assessments are Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned and collected by classroom teachers and the principal on a regular basis. Assessments administered, analyzed and collected monthly by the principal include pre and post tests for Ready Gen and Go Math, unit assessments, writing assessments, Teachers College Reading and Writing using Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessments, and science and social studies formative grade level assessments. iReady and conference notes are checked periodically. Rubrics are additionally posted on display boards attached to work products and include next steps aligned to appropriate CCLS. The school's assessment system provides the school community with a clear picture of student mastery and progress used to make decisions.
 - Student self-assessment checklists and exit slips for reading, writing and mathematics are embedded in instructional practices in all classrooms K-5, enabling students, including English language learners and special education students to indicate their understanding at the end of a lesson or work product. For example, a grade 4 non-fiction reading and writing research project on volcanos and earthquakes included a student reflection page which indicated elements of comparing and contrasting, thus enabling students to check for accuracy. In another class, a Volcanic Files computer project included a "glow and grow" self-reflection checklist and a self-reflection rubric. As a result, students and teachers are engaging in feedback that provides information for appropriate planning, scaffolding and individualizing instruction to accelerate learning for all students. Tracking of all students' progress enables the principal to observe curriculum adaptations and the use of recommended strategies by the teacher teams for skills instruction to meet the needs of specific students. Color graphs and lists are kept by each teacher indicating student growth and the number of students who are below, on and above grade on Teachers College reading levels and iReady reading and mathematics assessments. Similarly, growth percentages are kept for each English language learner and special education student in English language arts and mathematics. As a result of these systems all students are demonstrating increased mastery. For example, 97% of all students moved to the next level in reading. 74% of grade 1 students are reading above grade level and 79% are above grade level in mathematics as of March and 21 % are above grade level on the final piece in opinion writing. Additionally, grade 1 English language learners increased 14% in reading, 55% in mathematics and 22% in writing; special education students grew 16% in reading, 56% in mathematics and 24% in writing. These results demonstrate the impact of the schools' assessment practices as well as their ability to make effective curricula and instructional adjustments.

- The principal makes informed and data based organizational decisions across all aspects of the school and allocates resources to support student growth.(1.3)
 - The principal leverages partnerships and uses fiscal resources to promote student achievement, evidenced in student work products. The principal has not hired any new personnel this year and has managed a budget with a formula that does not allow for odd numbers of students. For example, the principal had 79 students in one grade, too many for two classes and not enough for three classes. Consequently, she had to make the decision that was best for students and have three classes. She also had to collapse one kindergarten class. The principal moved the kindergarten teacher to grade 2 and a grade 2 to grade 3 to close the achievement gap. She also carefully matches students with teacher personality and strengths to maximize student growth and progress. The Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) has been designated to two teachers, one providing services to K-2 students and another for grades 3-5 students. These teachers push in to classes, as well as, pull out for small group instruction. Similarly, the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher also provides support. In this manner these providers are knowledgeable of the instructional strategies used in the classroom and are able to supplement the instruction with a variety of strategies in the small group 'pull out' sessions. The principal has also scheduled the SETSS and ESL teachers so that they are able to participate in the weekly teacher team meetings, thereby ensuring additional collaboration and responsibility for student progress. The school has many partnerships to increase student achievement through challenging experiences that require reading, writing, critical thinking, and questioning. These include the Alley Pond Environmental Center for National Estuary Day, Udalls Cove Research Project with Queens College, United States Forestry Department, The Seeing Eye, United Nations International Children's Fund, Lego League, Department of Transportation, NYC Walk to School Project, SNAP (Fort Greene Strategic Neighborhood Action Partnership), and the Juvenile Diabetes Association. The collaborative work of these partnerships has encompassed many of the school's academic initiatives. For example, the research involving testing the waters of Udalls Cove for invertebrates will be presented at the Queens College Science Department on May 8th refuting the findings of the college and encouraging scientific research across the student body. As a result of these systems student work products are indicative of good citizenship and caring about the environment and promote college and career readiness.

- Teachers benefit from an observation process that is grounded in the Danielson framework and allows for the implementation of effective instructional techniques and strategies. (4.1)
 - The principal believes that adults learn best in a caring environment where they are free to take risks, try new methods or strategies, learn by doing, and have opportunities to reflect, and share successes with others. The staff and leadership have studied and participated in professional

development on the Danielson's Framework for Teaching rubric, including watching videos to norm ratings and two full days of receiving support from the talent coach for the entire staff. Grounded in frequent observations conducted by the principal, teachers are making improvements in questioning and each has been supplied with Bloom's Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge questions as a guide. Effective feedback to teachers has encouraged student discussions and every class now has groups with a discussion protocol. For example, a grade 1 classroom observed used a group protocol, with a Monitor (Facilitator), an Illustrator, a Collector, and a Presenter, for a picture walk through a picture book that was provided to each group. A fifth grade observed had a Questioner/Discussion Director, a Literary Luminary, a Travel Tracer, an Illustrator, a Connector, a Vocabulary Enricher/Word Wizard, and a Summarizer, each with a specific sheet of directions for use with Literature Circles and discussion protocols. The four teams were organized according to various achievement levels and were provided with different graphic organizers to complete their assignment, thus differentiating instruction and challenging all students to achieve. This activity illustrates the teacher's growth in effectively planning multiple entry points and teaching students how to effectively engage in discussions. Teachers set individual goals early in September such as questioning and student engagement and have received feedback on establishing discussion groups using protocols to increase student engagement. As a result, clear expectations and supports are provided for teacher development. The principal visits classrooms to observe and monitor changes in practice and uses student work products to inform evaluative feedback. Inter and intra visits are used to support teachers in developing strategies based on their growth models. For example, one teacher was paired with a strong teacher to improve classroom management and planning, and to learn instructional strategies. The teacher was additionally provided one-on-one support several times a day for several months. Another teacher who is highly effective was given next steps for accelerating high achieving students and encouraged to share instructional strategies with colleagues at a principal's conference. Feedback from Danielson observations with next steps has helped improve instruction and 90% of the teachers moved from effective to highly effective on at least one of the domains. Furthermore, teachers are cohesively collaborating, sharing best practices and scaffolding instruction, growing professionally and ultimately improving student achievement as a result of the support systems in place for their professional growth.

- Relationships across the school are warm and inclusive of students, teachers and parents who feel valued and take pride in being part of a school community that supports their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - David Porter School is a warm and caring school that is safe and orderly with no suspensions this year and only three in sixteen years. Students are happy and greet everyone with a smile and a hello, as well as state that this is a bully free school. Students are polite and always say thank you. One child stated, "Mrs. Barbeosch is 100% amazing...so nice and supports us all. She is very serious about her job." The principal appears to "love" the children and knows each by name. She makes teachers part of the working team and include them in decision making such as planning professional development and choosing materials and

programs. Her open door policy encourages trust and innovative thinking and projects. Caring and respect is modeled by everyone. The principal believes that collaboration among parents, students and staff will foster high expectations, academic rigor and critical thinking thereby enriching the learning experience of each student. To encourage the adoption of personal behaviors amongst students, positive behavior is recognized once a month at the Porter Pal Awards Assembly where good citizenship, acts of kindness, caring, cooperation, effort, generosity and spirit are acknowledged. In addition to school wide celebrations, the Student Council meets regularly and also writes notes to the principal on an on-going basis with ideas and suggestions relative to school activities. The council plans to request that dancing (ballet and tap), singing and poetry be included in the Talent Show. There is a Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA), inclusive of all in the school community, encouraging strategic communication and streamlining initiatives across all school constituents. Suzuki violin and tennis are offered and an Afterschool Care Program for homework and recreational gym and board games supports community needs. Professional development provided to teachers such as, differentiation of instruction, higher order questioning, and student engagement helps to support the schools college and career focus. In addition to these programs and activities, the school also has a self-sustaining business, "The Cozy Comfort Project," which manufactures and sells materials such as pillows and quilts made from recycled goods. The project has a Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, as well as managerial titles, enabling students to learn business skills for college and career readiness and drive school initiatives. This project raised \$300 which was donated to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Additionally, the school has a Lego team that made use of the Cozy Comfort Project by researching flooding and national disasters, developed a chamois pillow made with insta-snow that absorbs polymer and water, entered into the borough wide contest and received first place. This achievement enabled the school to enter the Citywide Lego Contest at the Jacob Javits Center and received the second place Champion's Award. The guidance counselor works with students individually or in small groups and has provided workshops on conflict resolution and anti-bullying for students in addition to various workshops for families grounded in college and career readiness. The occupational therapist has also implemented a yoga program to build relaxation skills in the student body. These tasks and activities, implemented by the school community encourage innovation, team work and school spirit resulting in empowered students leading school decisions, the building of personal and academic development, and college and career aligned activities and school improvement efforts across school stakeholders.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen curriculum alignment to reflect strategic integration of CCLS and the instructional shifts to offer meaningful, rigorous learning experiences that improve student achievement for all students. (1.1)
 - Teacher teams meet regularly, to analyze student work and curricula and instruction relative to the CCLS and the new instructional shifts. Curricula tasks are differentiated in many lesson planning documents and teams are working to ensure coherence across plans. English language arts and

mathematical programs, as well as science and social studies are working to enhance rigor and coherence across grades K-5 as well as making changes to units, pacing calendars and rubrics to meet the specific individual needs of students. Tasks observed were differentiated in many lessons; however in curriculum documents rigor for these tasks was not yet embedded coherently across grades and subjects. For example, in classroom activities the level of rigor varied across subjects. Additionally, teachers are discovering areas in the curriculum that are not fully coherent. For example, grade one and grade four teacher teams were analyzing and discussing three pieces of writing and discovered a trend in the need for additional conventions and mechanics instruction throughout the grades. In absence of fully coherent curricula documents that embed rigorous habits for all students, full college and career readiness is not actualized.

- Deepen the use of teaching strategies that embed multiple entry points in the curricula for all learners, including relevant sub groups, so that higher-order thinking skills are evident in discussions and student work products. (1.2)
 - The staff believes all children can and want to learn and it is up to the teachers to find the best way to help them achieve and succeed in all content areas, including the arts and sports. Consequently, teachers must be well informed about curriculum, as well as their students, so that they can plan appropriately to meet the needs of all students in a supportive environment that has rigorous standards. Teachers meet regularly, including during their lunch hour to discuss student progress, plan and share strategies to increase student growth and achievement. Children are grouped according to specific needs identified by data and provided multiple entry points and differentiated instruction. Student groups are flexible depending on the specific needs of students as noted on data spreadsheets. For example, in a fifth grade class there were four groups of students based on reading levels and each group had a different graphic organizer to determine whether the non-fiction in a specific chapter of a fiction book, “George’s Secret Key to the Universe” helps students understand space better. Each group had to discuss using a protocol and then persuade the other groups that their chapter was the most rigorous, providing the most evidence. In a fourth grade class students worked in heterogeneous groups to debate an article. Some teachers are assuming the role of facilitator and encouraging student to student responses in the class discussions using a protocol. High level Bloom’s Taxonomy of questioning was evident in some, but not all classrooms. Differentiation of tasks for sub groups including higher achieving and lower achieving students and English language learners were also observed in some classes. However, these strategies were not consistent to the same extent in all classrooms, thus preventing the construction of student work products that result in higher level thinking where students are reaching their fullest potential across all grades and subject areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: David Porter School PS 94 | 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 |