



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Public School 123

Elementary School 123

**145-01 119th Avenue
So. Ozone park
NY 11436**

Principal: Anthony Hooks

**Dates of review: May 29 - 30, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 123 is an elementary school with 688 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 14% Hispanic, 2% White, and 40% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school implements a standards-based curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and that integrate the instructional shifts and promote higher order thinking skills for a diverse group of learners (1.1)
 - Teachers' implementation of aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in literacy and math has been strengthened by the adoption and implementation of a new literacy program that includes the instructional shifts. Teachers worked in teams to unpack the new literacy programs and specifically fill in the writing gap, such as including vocabulary development, identified as a need from the previous school year. Therefore, curriculum-planning documents, such as curriculum maps, reflect a deliberate focus on writing and intention to increase students' academic vocabulary, and an additional 20 minutes was included in the curriculum for extended writing so that students' writing for the purpose to form an opinion is strengthened. Furthermore, teachers ensure that students engage in standards-based lessons that reflect the instructional shifts that address text-complexity, and include instructional strategies such as "close reading" that ensures that all learners have ongoing opportunities to engage in various critical thinking experiences that provide challenge in core subjects. In a grade 3 class, students worked in small groups to practice the concept of division. Students made real life connections, and were able to clearly articulate how they derived at their answers. To further enhance the math program, teachers implement a CCLS aligned computer-generated math component that scaffolds lessons and promotes college and career readiness for all students. As a result, the school's curricula provide consistency in developing a standard-based well-rounded instructional program that cognitively engage and deepen all students' thinking.
- The principal makes effective programmatic and staffing decisions that reflect the school's instructional goals and support staff time leading to improved instruction and engaging students in challenging academic tasks. (1.3)
 - The principal ensures that funding for instructional specialists in English language arts and math enable support staff to provide immediate differentiated support to teachers during common planning periods. Additionally, instructional specialists offer opportunities for struggling students to participate in small group learning experiences to further address their specific learning needs based on results from formative assessment data, thus ensuring alignment to the literacy and math goals of the school. Furthermore, the school partners with a prominent University that offers teachers professional development and the University's interns assist some teachers by working directly with students in classrooms during push-in periods throughout the school day. Funding and resources that are prioritized and aligned to school goals, center on curricular planning and adjustments to ensure student progress and allow for teachers to be scheduled for weekly common planning to analyze

student work/data to inform and adjust instructional plans. An additional 20 minutes was included in the literacy block to effectively extend the school's writing program, and provide students' time to enhance vocabulary and afford students more time to complete writing assignments using customized CCLS aligned rubrics. Grade 2 teachers serve the highest percentage of English language learners, and purposeful scheduling by the principal enable teachers of English language learners (ELL's) to join grade 2 teachers on the grade's team to provide ongoing effective strategies that result in improved students' performance on tasks in areas such as math and writing. For example, in a grade 2 class, students participated in a math lesson to identify angles in two-dimensional shapes. The teacher used the Smart board, and employed various learning styles to engage students in the lesson, including effective questioning that led to excellent student discussion and engagement in challenging academic tasks and resulted in meaningful student work products.

- The school has created an effective system for monitoring the observation of teacher practice utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provides differentiated pedagogical support resulting in improved student outcomes. (4.1)
 - The school conducts frequent cycles of teacher observations that are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching model enabling the leaderships' observation process to be successful in their ability to assess teachers' pedagogical needs and provide effective differentiated support, and to date, all teachers have been observed either formally and/or informally. The principal has a professional development support plan for teachers, (PDSP) and feedback provided based on classroom observations is in verbal and written form, with effective next steps. Teachers who fall in the developing domain are candidates for targeted support for improvement. Observation of practice resulted in professional development aligned to the instructional shifts, addressing the new instructional programs, and supporting the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Teachers engage in post-observation conferences with leadership, and observation reports reflect feedback that links to Danielson and demonstrates an accurate view of practice in alignment with the areas of school-wide focus and professional development initiatives. Based on the observation of teacher pedagogy, the school has been able to isolate trends in teacher practice. For example, the school's pedagogic strengths are teacher planning, and small group discussion. On a bi-weekly basis, the leadership uses cabinet meetings to discuss updates regarding the observation schedule, teacher ratings, feedback shared, and evaluate the use of the teacher effectiveness structure that is in place in an effort to firm up its support of all teachers. The leadership's conscientious work has led them to identify questioning as an area of school-wide focus. Consequently, the continuity of a targeted focus, strategic use of instructional specialists, and Network support, result in effective feedback with clear expectations for next steps in teacher practice.

- The principal has cultivated a safe and caring environment where students receive a range of supports that address their social-emotional needs and foster academic success. (1.4)
 - The leadership and staff are models of the school’s mission. There is a strong collaborative community of learners, and all constituents buy into a continual and focused improvement of the school so that each student is well known by at least one adult, and strategic adult-peer collaboration highly supports students in their social emotional and personal behaviors. For example, the principal has many fine award winning books lining the shelves in his office, that during lunch periods students participate in the principal’s “book club”, where they read and engage in academic discussion in his office. Students seek out the leadership and staff, such as the guidance counselor for daily academic and emotional support. Furthermore, care and concern for students are deeply acknowledged through effective school-wide programs. For instance, during the month of May, the school’s character education program promoted a character development word, “creativity”. Staff and students show off the button with the word “creativity”, and essays regarding how the word relates to students are reflected in classrooms across the school. All learners participate in the character education program that has a home and school connection, and staff members such as the guidance counselors help to promote positive student behavior by establishing activities that align with the program, including a character development poster contest the reinforces appropriate behavior for all learners. Students participate in many forms of recognition ceremonies, such as citizen of the month, and the school is broadening the school trip experience by going to places such as Washington, D.C. The school’s cultural awareness week involved all grades and classes, and during my meeting with students, a student stated to me, “We learn new things all of the time.” A student council member shared that they have a voice in the school by helping decide school activities, and picking out select songs for the school’s spring dance. Furthermore, students know and understand their learning, and articulate exactly why they are in school and what they hope to achieve. A first grader stated that while she loves what she is learning in school, “I would like to learn more about the environment”. Consequently, the positive attitudes that students exude towards their learning ignite a strong sense of confidence, and promote college and career readiness across the school.
 - School instructional specialists, guidance, school-based support team members, and the leadership team, support teachers in their continual development in providing all students with a challenging and broad-based educational program. There are deliberate structures in place, such as teacher teams, where teachers plan CCLS aligned tasks and adjust curricula plans, and ensure that school-wide activities that take place during and after school foster positive student habits that align with their goals. Students have opportunities to reflect on their goals using peer-to-peer collaborations, checklists, and conferences with their teachers. Student accomplishments decorate bulletin boards across the school and serve as models for peers in all grades. Consequently, school structures positively impact all students’ academic and personal behaviors.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen differentiation of instruction to ensure that all learners are provided with consistent learning experiences that extend and push their thinking and result in improved student work products. (1.2)
 - Across the school, there is a common belief about how students learn. According to the principal, “kids learn best when adults are focused on their needs”. Teaching practices, such as teacher planning aligned with the school’s instructional programs, evidence that students are expected to build on their thinking. Furthermore, most classrooms are clearly guided by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, which strengthens the school’s coherent set of beliefs regarding quality instruction. For example, in a fourth grade class, students practiced comparing customary units of length. The teacher circulated the classroom and took notes as she assessed student learning, used to assist with next steps. Students clearly articulated the task’s expectations, and worked in pairs to support one another. A small group of students used the Smart board and discussed the rationale for their answers. The teacher’s lesson plans identified student groups, and the teacher shared with me the justification for each group. However, while the school has made significant strides towards improving many aspects of teaching practices that include instructional student groups that are thoughtfully organized and connected to data, strategic scaffolding techniques are not yet apparent in the majority of classrooms. As a result, extensions into the curricula and high quality supports so that all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products is hindered.
- Refine the school’s assessment process to include the isolation of patterns and trends in student progress to enable additional adjustments to teacher pedagogy in support of meeting the needs of all students. (2.2)
 - The school has embedded assessments into its instructional program that are reflected in key planning documents such as curriculum maps. Weekly skill-based quizzes are administered in all grades and classes and enable classroom teachers and the school to immediately focus on deficits in student learning that is used to adjust curricula and/or lesson planning for all students. One such adjustment included the elimination of a math test prep program, substituting another as the newer program’s language aligned to the CCLS. Teachers collaborate to create and use common assessments across all grades and classes. Results from weekly quizzes, and other school-wide assessments, such as benchmark, baseline assessments, and performance tasks, support student groupings, and academic intervention considerations for challenged learners. The leadership, working in concert with teachers effectively use assessment information to determine next steps for students attending extended day and Saturday programs. However, at this time, the school does not strategically identify trends in student progress that reflect the alignment between assessments and pedagogy, so that goals can be modified during the year, and all learners, including English language learners, and students with disabilities are able to demonstrate mastery.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Public School 123	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