

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Cadwallader Colden**

**25Q214**

**31-15 140 STREET  
QUEENS  
NY, 11354**

**Principal: Denise Fuccillo**

**Dates of review: Mar 17-18, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Cadwallader Colden is an elementary school with 475 students from Pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 28% Hispanic, 5% White, 60% Asian, and 1% multi-racial students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and staff are making informed curricula decisions beyond core choices and infusing key standards and the instructional shifts to build coherence impacting student learning outcomes and work products. (1.1)
  - During the past three years, administration and teacher teams have worked closely with a school based coach and network support staff and have developed school wide systems to continuously monitor and refine curriculum maps and tasks to ensure coherence and alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. During teacher team meetings, student work and assessment outcomes are analyzed, compared and aligned to the standards. Modifications are made to units of study to address gaps in student understanding. All curricula maps and supporting resources are held in a drop box account for teachers to reference and many communicated that they use multi grade maps to monitor coherence and to ensure scaffolding and rigorous expectations for each grade level. Curricula design in English language arts includes unit goals, content area academic language, multiple entry points and aligned formative and summative assessments. Additionally, teachers research supplementary resources and include specific references in the maps to deepen connections. This year teachers have reformulated essential and enduring questions embedded within each unit to promote higher-level thinking and address college and career readiness skills which are evident in the discussion practices that occur throughout classrooms. In math, curriculum maps include; plans to activate prior knowledge, connections to real world math experiences, multiple entry points, tools for self-evaluation and essential questions that include overarching understandings and related misconceptions for teachers to plan lessons with these concepts in mind. Science and social studies curriculum maps have been blended with Ready Gen units to incorporate literacy and interdisciplinary learning. As a result of this multi-year focus on curricula monitoring and modification, the school is exposing students to the expectations of the CCLS and targeting the specific needs of learners leading to increased progress for all students, including student sub groups, as evidenced in the school progress report, as well as on post unit assessments this year.
- The principal's thoughtful use of staff and student time supports instructional goals and meets the learning needs of all students. (1.3)
  - Both the principal and faculty value teacher collaboration and therefore the school schedule allows time for the staff to work in a variety of configurations and disciplines. Regularly scheduled meetings engage staff members in weekly teacher inquiry team meetings, professional development and common planning time. During common planning and inquiry time, teams are looking at student work, examining student data and developing various effective strategies to support students. Teachers are also collaborating to build a consistent understanding of the schools two new curriculum options and spend time revising gaps and enhancing assessments based on what they learn from data and through a deep study of the standards. Professional development opportunities aligned to this work supports teachers in their understanding as to how to implement their curricular and assessment

work. This triangulated system of planning, study of student impact, and aligned professional development supports the school's instructional goals and has increased teacher ability to design more challenging tasks and implement common core aligned curriculum that best meets the learning needs of their students.

- School wide hiring practices, teacher assignments and class configurations are purposefully organized to provide optimal learning opportunities for students. In order to target both struggling and advanced learners in a small group environment, extended day is offered to all students in grades three through five and students are organized based on area of need as revealed by teacher data in each content area. Additionally, the principal has hired a part time special education teacher and two literacy paraprofessionals to deliver small group interventions to students in every grade. A change in class configurations this year has an integrated co teaching class on every grade to allow for flexible programming for least restrictive environments and to better support students at-risk and allows for flexibility for push in and pull out English language learners supports. Finally, through working with a strong partnership with Queens College, teacher leaders work closely with the college education department to develop student teachers. These students are trained along with the teachers at the school; attend the same professional development and collaborative meetings, and contribute to reduction of class size ratio through active involvement in classroom practice. This allows the school to make informed hiring decisions from a pool of candidates based on months of observation knowledge and analysis of educational philosophy to ensure alignment to school goals. As a result of this intentional organization, teachers share responsibility of student progress and the most recent analysis of student assessments demonstrates that this focus is leading to accelerated student growth and learning outcomes as evidenced by improvements in student writing and student communication and collaboration skills throughout the school.
- Across all classrooms, teachers and students use assessments, rubrics and checklists aligned to the curricula that provide feedback regarding student achievement and instructional choices. (2.2)
  - As part of the school wide curricular model, teachers have developed pre and post assessment tasks and use program-based assessments within each unit of study as well as running records and on line assessment programs to monitor individual student and whole class learning outcomes. Additionally, both teachers and students use checklists and rubrics directly aligned to the curriculum and key standards that allow for both teacher feedback and student self-assessment. Teachers use checklists to guide students in setting interim goals within each unit of study and teachers use these tools for conferencing in small groups or with individual students; provide specific targets for improvements and track progress or lack of it over time. During this process, students engage in intentionally planned activities and assess their progress along the way. End point rubrics are used to inform students' final outcomes within the expectations of the standards addressed in each unit of study. This system is aligned to school wide grading policies which highlight curricula expectations, student outcomes and alignment to the standards and both parents and students say they understand the assessment tools and how they measure student performance, progress and next learning steps and can identify areas where students have

shown improvements or mastery of the standards, thus guiding students to improvements in their work products.

- During instruction, teachers are engaging in consistent monitoring points and checks for understanding and take real time data that allow for immediate targeting of student performance. Following mini lessons, teachers use checklists and monitor student work related to the lesson and form targeted groups to address student misconceptions in content or weakness in specific skills and strategies. As a result, teachers provide appropriate supports that ensure the current needs of students are immediately addressed leading to improvements in learning outcomes as evidenced by growth in student writing that require deeper understanding of content and explanation of claims using text based evidence in both English language arts and math and increased use of text based evidence to support claims in discussion practices throughout the school.
- The principal and faculty use a wide range of data to build clear instructional goals aligned with benchmark phases that target the learning needs of students and staff and the implementation of the common core standards. (3.1)
  - The principal is a strong manager of data within her school and has developed and deepened comprehensive systems that allow her to accurately benchmark student and teacher outcomes throughout the school in order to develop appropriate school level goals. The school engages in a yearly comprehensive needs assessment with teachers and the school leadership team and summative data is used to inform the school's instructional focus, professional development calendar and decisions around teacher assignments, student groupings and the school wide schedule. This data is also used to ensure that the school's overarching goals are directly aligned to staff and student needs. The principal effectively communicates the school wide goals as well as the data streams used to establish them to the school community. Twice a year, the principal benchmarks and monitors school wide progress and targets and adjusts areas where teachers and students need more support to effectively move forward in professional and academic growth. This year, tools such as, item skills analysis, teacher growth charts aligned to Danielson domains that have progressed to Advance reports, independent reading level growth charts, writing monitoring trackers, Go Math assessment data and both student and teacher usage of on-line tools have guided the school towards analysis and adjustments of goals. For example, at this point in the school year interim benchmarks such as analysis of Teachers College assessment pro demonstrates an increase of 56 percent of English language learners improving two or more independent reading levels, baseline and midyear Go Math assessments demonstrate a 28% increase of student growth in math content and Advance reports at this point in the year indicate the need to increase professional development opportunities for teachers in the areas of questioning and discussion techniques. These strong systems of setting, benchmarks and strategically making adjustments to goals allows the schools to monitor curriculum choices and ensures the needs of students are appropriately addressed.

## What the school needs to improve

- Improve the consistency of teaching strategies and instructional decision making to provide purposeful entry points that offer appropriate support and challenge to maximize student engagement and ownership of learning. (1.2)
  - The school wide expectation of instructional practices to support the means by which students learn best is reinforced across classrooms in all grade levels by affording multiple opportunities for students to engage in discussions and make judgments using text based evidence and real world connections through turn and talk strategies, partnerships and small group tasks. Additionally, both content and high-level vocabulary integration is part of lesson planning and development and students are expected to use interconnected words as part of their discussion practices. For example, in a kindergarten class visited, students were engaged in group discussions around different states of matter. They were working together using picture cues and had to match the type of matter to picture and describe the property of each state. During discussions, students were also referring to prior projects where they were discussing the various types of clouds and how clouds relate to properties of matter. In a fifth grade classroom, the teacher had planned group discussion time where students were engaged in deep conversations around whether or not one character in the story should blame another character for a mistake. Without teacher prompting, students were making claims, quoting from text and then expanding on evidence they presented to their peers. However, although there is evidence of planning to incorporate multiple entry points to provide all students access to the lessons, use of these tools and strategies are not yet strategically used throughout classrooms limiting opportunities for certain students, particularly English language learners and special education students from fully engaging in classroom activities and discussions and their ability to produce meaningful work products.
- Build upon feedback strategies to ensure next steps are supported by aligned professional development to further a culture of professional growth and teacher reflection. (4.1)
  - The principal has an observation and feedback system in place that provides opportunities for conversations around effective pedagogy and teacher self-assessment at certain benchmark points during the school year. This process of teacher reflection began with the initial planning conferences and analysis of trends from self-reflection surveys that informed the school wide instructional focus of improving questioning and discussion techniques. Feedback to teachers accurately aligns teacher and student actions to all domains of the Danielson framework and includes quick fix up strategies a teacher can use to adjust their practice to better align to the expectations within the rating rubric such as examples of effective questions related to the content of the lesson to engage students in deeper thinking or conversations. However, at this time, although feedback trends are monitored and tracked for improvements in instruction at the school level, information revealed during observation and feedback cycles is not yet tactically used to inform and design more rigorous professional development to meet the individual needs of teachers or weaknesses in the areas of school wide focus. As a result, it is not yet clear how teacher development is impacting the quality of student work products.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: <b>Cadwallader Colden</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Instructional Core</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>School Culture</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>				
<b>UD</b> Underdeveloped	<b>D</b> Developing	<b>P</b> Proficient	<b>WD</b> Well Developed	