



**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

The Emanuel Kaplan School

Q229

**67-25 51st Road
Woodside
NY 11377**

Principal: Dr. Sibylle Ajwani

Dates of review: February 4-6, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Madelene Chan

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 229 is an elementary school with 1,559 students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 1% Black, 39% Hispanic, 24% White, and 36% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 15% 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 95.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school implements a content rich and performance based curriculum aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), emphasizing rigorous habits and higher order skills for all learners. (1.1)
 - School leaders and staff have a deep commitment of the work to sustain rigorous learning experiences by integrating conceptual shifts and skill-based strategies where students are required to engage in “close” reading of texts, make logical inferences and apply academic vocabulary to word problems to determine real life application embedded in the choice curriculums of *ReadyGen* and *Envisions Math*. The school has a shared understanding of a standards based curriculum that is supported or extended as needed to prepare all learners with college and career readiness skills. Although the school is quite large, there is strong evidence of aligned curricular, pedagogical and assessment practices across the curriculum that allows students to work collaboratively and incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as part of their group work resulting in high levels of student thinking and participation. Analysis of last year’s English Language Arts (ELA) scores showed a need for increased academic readiness and vocabulary improvement. Implementation of the program *Wordly Wise* emphasized the school’s goal towards improvement. As a result, English Language Learners (ELL) advanced 1 to 3 levels since September and Students with Disabilities advanced 1 to 2 levels. Furthermore teachers agree that this program has improved students confidence in writing as they are utilizing above grade vocabulary when they make a claim or create a narrative.
 - Based on successful math practices such as productive struggle in math and writing about problem solving decisions, along with the implementation of *Envisions*, the school’s math curriculum, *the 2013* math state test results were quite impressive. Results showed that PS 229 students improved 12.5% more than other students citywide and 2% more than their peer school averages. In order to continue student growth, several curricular go in depth and allow students to master ideas in order to engage in more rigorous mathematical content have been utilized in each grade. In addition, a problem solving *Toolkit* incorporating Depth of Knowledge strategies, across grades 2-6, to assist in developing stronger problem solving skills was created by staff. This teacher created resource challenges students to think more deeply about math inquiry based on the levels of questions being asked and the procedures students need to follow to find solutions. The outcome of this system has shown positive efforts. For example, Math Gallery Walks are a process the school has adopted to increase math accuracy, fluency and problem solving rigor. During this process, students work in teams to solve a problem and then share out findings as a class. This practice has yielded excellent results as evidenced in students’ work, which demonstrates that students in grades 2 through 6 have improved in being able to write and speak about having a thorough understanding of mathematical thinking and being able to analyze, adjust and reflect on their work individually and in a team.

- Teaching practices across the school reflect a common vision about student learning and consistently provide purposeful supports in order to meet varied student needs and promote progress. (1.2)
 - Well informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the majority of students are engaged in learning and there is a strong belief that students learn best when they are assessed often and take ownership for their success. Classroom visits indicate students working in small groups, participating in peer and team discussions and using tactile and visual materials to deepen their knowledge of content. In one fifth grade classroom, students of varying reading levels were working in triads using a Depth of Knowledge chart to determine the main character's conflict between opposing forces within the theme of the story. In order to support varying reading proficiencies, strategies like aligning a graphic organizer to every level and skill have resulted in improved reading levels in this class. For example, in September 31% of the class was on or above level, as compared to 46% of the students who are currently on or above reading level. Additionally, the school is well aligned to the Common Core standards and is using the ReadyGen Curriculum in grades K thru 5 and Expeditionary Learning in grade 6. Self-contained classes are using Pearson's Reading Street which has yielded positive student results. Students with disabilities have shown gains in Fountas and Pinnell running records since September with more than 50% moving from Level 1 to Level 6. Furthermore, teacher teams have aligned and adapted the new curriculums to the needs of all sub-groups as evidenced in purposeful revised curriculum maps. Based on these revisions results indicate that students can now apply information from one text to another in order to develop a persuasive argument or document a claim.
 - Teachers implement specific instructional strategies through scaffolds, re-reading, self-monitoring and cue systems and strategy prompts that address students' current levels based on assessments, teacher observations and student reflections. In a significant number of classrooms across the school teachers engage all student sub-groups in high level task assignments aligned to the CCLS and provide a range of entry points using prompts, benchmark goals and scaffolds in all content areas to meet the various needs of students. For example, in one classroom the teacher accommodated different levels of learners with small group instruction supported by learning tools that demonstrated fluency by re-phrasing larger reading passages that were aligned to students' most recent baseline data. In a second class, students were grouped based on Quick Check assessments and supported by paraprofessionals. In a third classroom, students were given the task of simplifying a math problem by breaking it down using manipulatives and charted previously discussed strategies. Teachers posit that differentiation in the form of visual grapho-phonics, student self-corrections and the use of math manipulative has yielded positive results. Accelerated students have opportunities to work in pairs or groups to grapple with project based tasks that require research and inquiry skills. Students across the grades are more engaged in challenging tasks. In grade 3 a minimum of 30% of each class is on grade level in writing, with 3 classes having over 43% or more of its students on or above grade level work.

- School leaders make purposeful organizational decisions regarding resources and the use of time in alignment with instructional goals that consistently meet a diversity of students' needs. (1.3)
 - The principal makes pointed decisions about the use of teacher and student time and the school's budget that reflects the school's core values and instructional foci. Students have been given multiple opportunities to engage in academic vocabulary, difficult text and multi-layered problem solving skills which have been supported by electronically linked SMARTboards in every classroom. The school's usage of advanced technology has yielded greater student engagement as evidenced in science results. Base-line assessments indicated that more than 75% of students scored on or above level on their science lab reports as compared to the post-assessment which showed 55% on level. Challenging student work products adorn the halls of this school with evidence of students writing about the "big ideas" in social studies and multiple step math problems aligned to literacy skills. The principal invested in an on-line reading program called *MimioSprout*. This program assists younger grade students with phonics and decoding skills. Students as young as kindergarten impressively track their growth on a master chart and are able to explain their progress and next steps. Results of this program have indicated that all students have advanced from 1-5 reading levels since September.
 - Teacher teams meet multiple times during the week with the support of a coach and lead teacher to collaborate and design academic tasks, rubrics, quick checks, units of study and lesson plans that link to the school's instructional goals. For example, the third grade team refined writing prompts to better depict the standards for student clarity and created a rubric to better understand the criteria for a Performance based Assessment. Teacher and student assignments provide intentionally targeted supports and team meeting artifacts illustrate how school leadership thoughtfully consider individual learner profiles when making teacher assignments to create collective ownership for student progress. Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETSS) and the school's Response To Intervention (RTI) program monitors students' progress on a consistent basis. Results from these two programs indicate that 55% of the students have moved 2-6 levels in key math assessments and approximately 50% of students have shown growth on baseline reading assessments since September of this school year.
- Teachers utilize assessments, including performance tasks embedded in curricula, to analyze learning outcomes and make purposeful instructional decisions that support effective modifications to classroom practices. (2.2)
 - Teachers on each grade are extremely articulate in their assessment process in order to capture ongoing summative and formative data to measure student progress at a glance. Across classrooms data binders are used to gather and evaluate a range of assessments that include baseline data to determine measures of student learning (MOSL), on unit tests in all content areas, rubrics and teacher designed assessments. This information is consistently used to determine student progress at the classroom and team level, in order to inform next steps and identify

students in need of enrichment and remediation. A physical education class was observed offering students' activities specifically aligned as an outgrowth of the teacher's assessments during former classes. Based on agility and precision students were coupled with classmates of similar skills. The teacher explained that by citing specific skills students are better prepared to meet their goals and next steps. In a fourth grade class students were working in teams using a rubric to determine the point system for their related task. Students stated, "We can work towards achieving our goals and next steps and it all makes sense because we just follow the criteria of the rubric. It is easy to know how to get a rating of 4, 3, 2, or 1."

- The school uses a plethora of common assessments such as unit and topic tests, performance tasks, formative and summative results and baseline resources to track trends and patterns. These measures are also used to identify students' strengths and weaknesses to monitor progress toward CCLS standards and the school's instructional goals. The administration routinely examines students' work and uses classroom observations to inform pedagogical and instructional modifications. Ongoing classroom evaluations of students' performance lead to adjustments in the pacing of lessons. For example, teachers conduct assessments of students' skills throughout a lesson and then modify the lesson using small group strategies. As a practice of tracking student growth in adjusted skills areas, results indicate that PS 229 students scored higher on the ELA state exam than the average overall citywide test score for elementary schools in 2013. Furthermore, based on Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, 64% of first graders who were on level in reading in September are now above level. In addition, the use of data to inform modifying lessons to meet the needs of students with disabilities has resulted in an improved special education declassification rate from last year and is higher than public schools, citywide. (b)
- School leaders strategically use the Danielson Framework for Teaching to deliver actionable observation feedback aligned to teacher goals which results in increased student engagement and improved teacher practice. (4.1)
 - Administrators' strategic collaboration with the Network and internal lead staff enables the school to mentor new teachers and support all staff with frequent rounds of classroom observations in alignment with student work. Furthermore, the administration strategically looks at students' data in ELA, math and writing to provide targeted feedback and next steps for teachers' professional growth. One teacher stated that the feedback she received on developing questions that allowed students to think "out of the box" has yielded results in student discussions and increased the range of students' creative writing styles. As a result of reflective feedback to teachers, considerable improvement has been made in grades five and six in creating and executing coherent instruction and engaging the whole class in discussion through questioning strategy prompts.
 - School leaders provide teachers with frequent classroom observation feedback aligned to the Danielson Framework, to support professional growth and provide targeted professional development opportunities to support them in attaining their professional goals. These include visits to other schools and in-house visitations to colleagues' classrooms with a

focus on evidence from classroom observations, teacher input and review of student data results. Additionally, specific analysis of individual components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the CCLS are incorporated into discussions at inquiry and vertical team meetings in conjunction with an analysis of ongoing student work and assessment results to determine students' next steps. Teachers were noted for saying that this practice is "collegial and supportive" and has assisted in improving teachers' abilities to set instructional outcomes, establish a culture for learning and use effective questions and the Depth of Knowledge resource to help improve student engagement and writing. According to school leaders' tracking analysis on teacher development of improved practice, over 70% of teachers in grades kindergarten through three have met their goals so far this year.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all systems are monitored and evaluated, reflecting cultural expectations and school goals, and consistently surfacing long and short term success for teams. (5.1)
 - The school culture is extremely cohesive with all stakeholders having a voice in decisions that affect the students and their progress. Albeit the fact that PS 229 has over 1,500 students, there is a small, family-like feeling throughout the classrooms and hallways due to the culture that has been established. Adults are deeply committed to the systems that are securely in place, so that all students can learn and thrive. Although the quality of school culture is often discussed and adjustments are made to support the expectations of the CCLS not all constituency groups can discuss the evaluation process fluidly with data to support results. Consequently, purposeful adjustments to enhance systems in place that reflect input from all stockholders are difficult to determine.
 - The administration regularly monitors and reflects with teacher teams by reviewing protocols to analyze student work. Coaches and lead teachers oversee this work and create a cohesive balance around the work completed by all teams. However, at this time there is no formal process in place to purposefully review the impact of the work of teacher teams on students' work and teacher practices with a close lens on their goals. Teams are very humble in their accomplishments, even though student progress is evident through students' scores and assessments. However, the lack of embedded systems to provide ongoing feedback on the work of teams, limits opportunities to target specific improvements in their work to support all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Emanuel Kaplan School	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