



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Port Richmond

Elementary School 020

**161 PARK AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND, NY10302**

Principal: MARIE MUNOZ

**Dates of review: Dec 10 - 11, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Port Richmond is an elementary school with 531 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 75% Hispanic, 6% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 32% English language learners and 21% 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 94.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) emphasizing reading and writing in all subject areas, fostering a culture of college and career readiness on all grades. (1.1)
 - Introducing the Common Core Standards aligned programs Ready GEN, and continuing with Go Math, allows for a common approach to curriculum, providing continuity across grade levels in protocols, assessment systems, and learning standards. Lesson planning and preparation, as expressed in Domain 1 of Danielson, is being enhanced by having supports allowing teachers to determine how to adapt and differentiate according to their student needs and include supplemental work as needed. For example the curriculum around writing is being supplemented by a focus on argumentative writing as the staff realized that Ready GEN does not have a strong development in this area. Additionally lower grade teachers in particular have to plan, modify, and adapt the program to accommodate students who are not yet reading on grade level.
 - Teachers collaborate to adjust the curriculum to meet students' learning needs. For example the Kindergarten and first grade teachers analyzed performance tasks and adjusted and re-taught grade level concepts to English Language Learners (Ells) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs). For example after the first unit teachers realized that some of the academic language and vocabulary concepts needed additional scaffolding and teachers designed targeted small group instruction.. Additionally teachers incorporate skills not yet mastered into ensuing units in order to keep up with pacing calendars as well as have students repeat and revisit concepts to achieve mastery. Similarly, for the third and fourth grades teachers created a writing rubric and exemplar writing models in order to make the task more rigorous for a variety of learners. Teachers also modify curricula with additional fiction and non-fiction libraries that reflect student-reading levels according to Fountis and Pinnell benchmark reading levels. As a result a diversity of learners, including ELLs and SWDs, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.
- The school is a safe place which cultivates effective partnerships and students appreciate the level of support they receive, thus fostering personal and academic behaviors. (1.4)
 - The school's approach encompasses ways in which the whole child is developed emotional, social, and intellectually by strategically aligning professional development around student behavior, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports, resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors. Cross grade collaboration among service providers ensures that all students are known well by faculty. School structures ensure that the students have positive experiences both inside and outside school. For example students participate in a theater/drama program in school and are members of the Metropolitan Opera Urban Voices program outside of school. The school hosts a variety of monthly literacy celebrations that include a Literacy Parade, Holiday Decorating events, Dr. Seuss Month, scheduled assemblies, field day and classroom writing celebrations and monthly celebrations highlight Student of the Month and positive attendance. There is also a yearly Family Art Night, a Literacy Night, and a Math Night, thus contributing to a safe environment and inclusive culture conducive to student and adult learning. Additionally the school has received a Parent as Art Partners Grant that has increased parent involvement in the school and families are engaged through a variety of after school and Community Youth Organization (CYO) Programs, El Centro and Project Hospitality. As a result parents feel welcomed and are

appreciative of the care the school gives their children, students enjoy learning, feel safe, and are known well by faculty members, thus contributing to their academic and personal growth.

- Across classrooms teachers use ongoing assessments and grading practices and analyze information on student learning to access data used for planning and adjusting instruction, resulting in purposeful support for students. (2.2)
 - All teachers administer a performance task at the end of every literacy and math unit. Students in grades Kindergarten through grade 2 are also assessed regarding their progress in phonics, sight words, letter and sound recognition, and Fountis and Pinnell reading levels. Current assessment trends have shown that in lower grades students need more individualized support with letter and sound recognition and groups have been formed accordingly to give additional support in word work two to three times per week. Additionally across classrooms, teachers use the school grading policy as well as refine rubrics from Ready Gen to provide actionable feedback to students around their performance and progress.
 - The principal meets with grades 3 to 5 on a monthly basis to check for student growth and determine student progress. For example during one meeting it was determined that there was not a persuasive writing unit in the fourth grade Ready-Gen curriculum and as this an important genre of writing according to the Common Core Learning Standards the teachers adjusted the unit to include a persuasive writing task. In addition, data analyses facilitated by the instructional coach and teacher leaders determined that a second group of Academic Intervention Specialist (AIS) students needed to be formed. The school also has a Tiered Response to Intervention Program to adjust instruction for targeted students. As a result the school uses common assessments to track student progress towards school goals across grades and subjects and adjust curricula and instruction to meet individual students' learning needs.
- The school uses the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - The school community has embraced the Danielson Framework as an evaluation tool enabling them to have a shared and common language to discuss effective instruction and practices. Feedback to teachers that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching articulates clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development. Based on feedback to teachers the role of questioning as a tool to allow for student learning taking place has become an area of discussion and teachers have increased their own repertoires to allow for higher order thinking by their students. Additionally, school wide teaching practice is now focused on modeling and demonstration by teachers to allow students to see clearly and explicitly what is expected of them. As a result teachers are gradually releasing the responsibility of learning to students who are becoming independent learners.
 - In order to support lesson planning and preparation as expressed in Domain 1 of Danielson professional development (PD) has been provided by Pearson Education and will continue throughout the year to support teacher development in implementing the Ready Gen curriculum. The school's instructional team is monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and providing support at grade level meetings, faculty conferences, and during the citywide professional development days. Teachers also discuss their personal goals and reflections on their performance across the domains during PD sessions. As a result school leaders have an effective system for managing professional development and this system leads to improved quality of student work products and teacher practice.

What the school needs to improve

- Sharpen depth of questioning, student discussion, and use of varied activities, in order to enrich and promote students' participation and their developing critical thinking skills. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms teachers' beliefs are becoming aligned to the Danielson Framework for teaching by establishing cultures for learning and promoting high expectations so that students take pride in their work. In all classrooms visited, teachers' lesson plans across content areas reflected rigorous writing tasks. In addition teachers demonstrated knowledge of their students with attention to special needs students, and lessons incorporated cultural awareness when appropriate. However, many lessons are teacher directed with limited opportunities for students to turn-and-talk and work with partners and/or in groups. Furthermore, high quality questions during whole group instruction that would probe students to think were not sufficiently evident. Questions were often superficial or required only one word responses. Additionally, even in classes where students were working in groups the groups were not able to fully articulate the independent work they were doing. As a result teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula leading to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks, and work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.
- Strengthen teacher team work to ensure a deep analysis of student work using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and foci to adjust instructional practices and increase student achievement. (4.2)
 - The majority of teachers are engaged in structured professional team collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of CCLS, (including the instructional shifts), and regular planning sessions focus on the impact on instruction and school wide curricula alignment. However, the use of an inquiry approach is still developing. During both teacher teams observed teachers were using common data tools including rubrics, and summative and formative assessments, to identify strengths and needs of the grade level classes and to modify and scaffold instruction and the curriculum. Academic Intervention Specialist teachers who are members of teacher teams, while adding to the discussion, do not yet fully add in their expertise around the specific needs of the students for whom they are responsible. Thus, the work of the teacher teams is not yet addressing the needs of all students, limiting their impact towards implementing needed strategies in classroom instruction.
 - Distributed structures are developing to support teachers in building their leadership capacity and to include them in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. For example, a team of teachers and a newly hired coach have attended ongoing professional development on implementing the Ready Gen and Go Math curricula, and they act as turnkey agents for all staff. Currently, however, while leadership structures are developing, the coach is still in the beginning stages of building trust and support, thus impacting her work around supporting teachers' growth and moving instruction to the next level.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Port Richmond	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	