

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**P.S. 029 Bardwell**

**Elementary 31R029**

**1581 Victory Blvd.  
Staten Island  
NY 10314**

**Principal: Mrs. Linda Manfredi**

**Dates of review: May 6-7, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Teresa Caccavale**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

P.S. 029 Bardwell is an elementary school with 784 students from pre-k through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 17% Hispanic, 59% White, and 14% Asian students. The student body includes 3% 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 95.1%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

### What the school does well

- The school strategically aligns curricula across subjects coherently integrating instructional shifts and higher order thinking skills, thus ensuring that all students have access to demanding tasks and demonstrate their thinking. (1.1)
  - The school community has selected the *Ready Gen* and *EnVision* curricula to cognitively engage students and set them on a path towards college and career readiness. Both programs are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and focus on the instructional shifts including accountable talk and citing text-based evidence to support claims in tasks, as well as solving multi-step problems in math in a variety of ways. Across grades, teachers meet twice weekly with their respective assistant principals and one additional time as a grade team to plan units and lessons together using an agreed upon lesson plan template. The entire unit planning information for the school is located on a Google drive document. Revisions to the English language arts units this year have included an emphasis on both fiction and non-fiction using Understanding by Design planning and includes adaptations and insertions to meet all students' needs. Relying on the school's knowledge of balanced literacy, adjustments have been made to the *Ready Gen* program. For example, the school has adapted the curricula specifically in writing in grades 2 through 5, analyzing the *Ready Gen* writing lessons and incorporating them in a workshop model so that students are able to follow the writing process and create standards-based student work. Kindergarten and first grade teachers have found that without the foundation of invented spelling students had difficulty with writing so they incorporated spelling strategies during writing workshop so that students are able to write independently as well as read back their writing. Additionally, kindergarten and first grade units reflect revisions of additional phonics strategies so students can unlock the message in the print and solve tricky words and pacing calendars were revised to allow for additional lessons on reading strategies. Furthermore, during inquiry team meetings there is a rotation to allow for horizontal teams to collaborate together. For example, third grade teachers will spend inquiry time with fourth grade teachers to address concerns in curricula gaps in math instruction from third to fourth grade. Special education teachers participate in meetings and help teachers to refine curricula and tasks in a coherent way across grades and subjects so that all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities can demonstrate their thinking. As a result, teachers incorporate many different strategies and plans to ensure that all students have access to coherent curricula and can demonstrate their thinking in tasks.
- The school's belief system about how students learn best is informed by the Danielson Framework and aligned to curricula and instructional practices that provide multiple pathways for all students to produce high quality work. (1.2)
  - The school believes that students learn best when they participate in hands-on, engaging activities informed by the instructional shifts, participate in student-to-student discussions and receive clear expectations from their teachers. These practices are evident across the vast majority of classrooms and reinforced during teacher team meetings as teachers share strategies to enhance pedagogy aligned to these instructional shifts and the Danielson rubric. During classroom instruction, students engage in

activities while teachers serve as facilitators. In some classrooms students are grouped homogeneously, allowing teachers to work one-on-one with those who need guided reading practice and additional support, while other students strategically guide one another through group-based activities. For example, in one second grade Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) class students were using picture clues and text evidence to support their understanding of different characters' point of view. Students used text-based evidence (including pictures) to answer questions about the suffrage movement and worked collaboratively in targeted groups to read through the text, *Marching with Aunt Susan*; then selected a character to write about their traits as evidenced in the text. Students captured their thinking on a selection of graphic organizers and shared out in individual groups. Four English language learners worked in a group with the teacher rereading the text with a strong emphasis on picture clues. The teacher supported the students in thinking about the characters in the pictures and the words on the page to make a complete picture of what is happening between the characters in the story. Similarly, Universal Design for Learning techniques and systems are consistently apparent across classrooms as students receive information from a variety of methods and model these methods when re-teaching information to their classmates. For example, in one fifth grade math classroom students were finding the volume of a right rectangle prism by working with cubic units and counting. Groups of students were given differentiated problem sets and checked their work by comparing answers with a partner and then reviewing answers with their table groups. Students who were easily able to grasp the concept were prompted by the teacher to think about the results of the same problem using different sized cubes. Thus, across the vast majority of classrooms students are engaged in rigorous tasks and projects that result in higher order thinking skills demonstrated in student work products of all groups of students.

- The principal skillfully aligns resources to instructional goals and long-term plans and uses staff time strategically to maximize teacher capacity to deliver high quality instruction to all students, across grades. (1.3)
  - The use of resources is well aligned to and supports the school's instructional goals and long range action plans. School goals include increase of student performance on the New York State English Language Arts and math assessments. An additional goal states that 50% of all students in grades K-3 will meet the grade-level benchmark on the Teachers College Reading Assessment. Before and after-school programs offer academic and enrichment opportunities to students to support these goals. There is an ARrive In School Early program (ARISE) designed for early drop off to help parents. Students receive a yoga class and breakfast. The second part of ARISE is an academic program for children who showed little or no progress as well as children who were a level 2 or 3 based on data from the 2012-13 State math and ELA scores. There is also Play, Achieve, Work, Succeed (PAWS): an after-school enrichment program which offers extended hours until 6:00 pm for working parents. The program is designed to shape the students academically, socially, physically and culturally. The students complete homework, spend time in the gym, complete arts and crafts as well as other activities. Additionally, Working Independently in a Social Environment (WISE) is a one and a half hour after-school program to assist parents who are in need of a less than a three hour program for homework help for small groups of students. The school also has two academies: Believe, Achieve, Motivate (BAM) for K-2 students and Arts Broadcasting Community Outreach (ABC) for 3-5 students. BAM has a yearly theme that focuses on healthy living. Each grade collaborates and performs a production twice a year for parents. As part of the ABC program

third graders participate in all three academies in order to select a specific academy to focus on for a two-year commitment in fourth and fifth grade. Additionally, students explore questioning and understanding through exploration, science and technology (Quest), the school's adaptation of the Department of Education program for talented and gifted students. This program offers authentic, purposeful and inspirational experiences for students in grades 1 through 5. The school participates in a collaborative project with the Staten Island Zoo to spark an early interest in science and the community. The school has established partnerships with local colleges that provide mentoring opportunities for student teachers, thus tapping into the novice teachers' energy and desire to learn to support students. The school has received ongoing grants from the Staten Island Foundation to support the school in a variety of literacy initiatives. Music and the Brain and the Little Kids Rock music grants support music in the arts. As a result, students benefit from these enrichment activities that promote the school's goals and meet students' learning needs as evident in work products.

- Staff time is strategically structured so that teams consistently meet to look at student work and improve instructional practices. Grade-level teams meet three periods per week for common planning and reflection, two with the assistant principal and one led by the grade leader. During this time, staff review student work and modify units of study and/or lessons as observed during the second and fourth grade teacher team meetings. An additional fifty minutes of inquiry time for all teachers is built into the schedule to support this work. Additionally, administration meets with teachers on a monthly basis to look at school-wide data, organized by individuals, class and grade level. Teachers stated that their teamwork is essential to the successful implementation of the new curricula. Parents agreed that the school's decision and use of resources focus on supporting the staff and students in the effective implementation of the new curricula. As a result of these efforts, the school is implementing the shifts in the Common Core standards and their instructional focus on productive struggle evident in students engaged in rigorous instruction in both literacy and math.
- All stakeholders work diligently to create a respectful and inclusive environment that provides academic and personal supports to promote student success. (1.4)
  - The principal has worked with the school community to align goals that consistently communicate high expectations with a specific focus on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the instructional shifts. The school's theory of action is embedded in a particular focus on productive struggle and engaging students in rigorous work habits and skills that prepare for the next level of learning. For example, this year the school has initiated a perseverance and challenge time (PACT) into the school day to encourage students to continue working through a task even when they find it is difficult. Students are developing a sense of resiliency and persistence, refusing to give up on the problem presented. There is also a student government to ensure that students own their educational experiences. The student government raises community awareness and provides community outreach to Staten Island neighbors and communities around the world. Part of this work includes a "Pay it Forward" campaign that has enhanced the spirit and pride within the school and the greater community. Through this outreach the students learn that they have the power to make a difference as they learn how to help those in need and give thanks to those who help them. The students participate in a multitude of community outreach projects connecting them to a variety of individuals and organizations throughout Staten Island. As a result, there is a strong

culture for learning that provides students with opportunities for community service and engaging learning activities.

- The school's motto is to "Work Together, Learn Together, Succeed Together" for the benefit of the entire community. The staff proactively reaches out to families regarding the importance of school attendance. Each student is known well by classroom teachers and support staff. The guidance counselor lends support through actively counseling both parents and students as needed. Administration meets with individual classroom teachers on a monthly basis to review student tracker sheet and identify strengths and areas for improvement. When a student is not making progress in reading or math according to the monthly tracker the student may be referred to tiered Response To Intervention groups (RTI) to target their individual needs. To ensure that all students remain motivated and develop the necessary work habits and skills for success, there is a morning rise, afternoon rise and vacation program. This support is communicated to parents through monthly progress reports, pupil intervention plans (PIP), remind 101, a system where important reminders are automatically texted to parents' cell phones and face-to-face conference, thereby offering consistent and ongoing feedback to help families understand students' progress towards the CCLS expectations and instructional shifts resulting in the adoption of effective and personal behaviors. These efforts also sustain the high attendance rate of over 95%.
- School leaders support a high level of pedagogy through effective teacher evaluation resulting in strong professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
  - During the past three school years, the staff has focused on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and how it supports effective instruction with particular attention to questioning and discussion, engaging students in learning and using assessment in instruction. Teachers and administrators have normed and refined their understanding of each domain through collaborative discussions and model videos. School leaders conduct frequent cycles of observations based upon the teachers' choices of option 1 or 2. Both oral and written feedback includes effective elements of lessons and next steps that are time-bound and actionable. Administration created a graphic organizer as a feedback form that includes areas for development, plans of action and a follow-up calendar for individual and group professional development. Furthermore, during cabinet meetings, the administration reviews observation reports and note trends of strengths and areas for improvement to make informed professional development decisions for both individual and groups of teachers. For example, during the first round of observations administration noted that students give up when presented with a challenging problem. Professional development (PD) for teachers included reading articles and having school-wide conversations to initiate a "don't give up" mindset that became embedded in the school culture this year as productive struggle. The work challenged teachers to challenge the students and encourage them to work as hard as they can without giving up. An outcome of the PD is the PACT program (perseverance and challenge time). During PACT students are provided with a challenging task to be worked on independently or in a group. Teachers provide "wait time" for the students to think and also give timely and effective feedback to encourage them to persist in problem solving. PACT time encourages the students to understand the problem, find a way to attack it and persist until the problem is completed. To encourage independence in early childhood classes teachers observed a peer's exemplary class engaged in the daily-five routine and attempt to implement some of the ideas in their classes while also participate in a book study on

the daily-five. Teachers also meet with colleagues to discuss methods of data collection assessment and planning for instruction. Based on evidence collected during walkthroughs teachers benefit from support in developing higher order questioning for groups of students. Review of written feedback from spring 2013 to present shows growth in questioning/discussion and student engagement as well as adherence to school-wide practices which are focus areas for the school. This has led to improved student work products as evident on displays and in folders. The administration shared that the support provided to teachers through coaching and professional development connects to what they see happening in the classrooms and on which they provide feedback and next steps. In addition, many of the student teachers are hired and acquire full-time positions at the school.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Continue to align assessment practices to curricula, to generate data that further supports instructional and pedagogical changes on the grade and individual student level in order to maximize learning for all students. (2.2)
  - Teachers are using a variety of assessment practices throughout the school to inform instruction. Teachers are conferring with students, using checklists and questioning and are employing E-slips (entry-exit slips) to gain a deeper understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses. Using this data staff are also able to assess student progress and to group students for targeted instruction. Furthermore, student progress is tracked by comparing results of interim assessments with beginning of the year baseline assessments. Teachers use common grade level rubrics to assess student work, gauge progress, revise curricula units and develop student mastery of key concepts. Student work reviewed demonstrates that most feedback to students is aligned to grade level rubrics, detailing students' accomplishments and next steps. However, review of teacher feedback and interviews with students demonstrates that language used to provide feedback to students is not always actionable and written in a manner that is comprehensible to students in order to provide clear next steps for improvement. As a result, for some students the ability to use feedback to improve their work is hindered.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: P.S. 029 Bardwell	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score				X			
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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			
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>