



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Senator John D. Calandra

**Elementary School 014
3041 Bruckner Boulevard
Bronx
NY 1061**

Principal: Ira Schulman

**Dates of review: February 27 - 28, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Luz T. Cortazzo**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Senator John D. Calandra is an elementary school with 610 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 5% Black, 60% Hispanic, 33% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across the school, teachers refine curricula units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to ensure coherence and increased levels of cognitive engagement for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school uses the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), CCLS Bundles in grades 3 through 5, the Core Knowledge Reading curriculum for English Language Arts for grades kindergarten through grade 2, and the Go Math curriculum to engage all students in rigorous tasks and learning materials. The school consistently incorporates the instructional shifts across all grades by using a balance of informational and literary texts in English language arts. This integration allows students to use evidence from the text to substantiate their opinions. For example, math curriculum artifacts reflected the shifts such as using academic and domain specific words, fluency, providing deep understanding of concepts, developing speed and accuracy, and application of real world problems. Furthermore, teachers utilize a template for English language arts to plan lessons that articulates the learning progression of informational writing resulting in school-wide efforts to develop skills for college and career readiness. Teachers collaborate in reviewing student work and performance data to refine units and ensure that all learners are able to access the school's curricula. School leaders and lead teachers in the area of English language arts and math, support the school staff in unpacking the data to make targeted curricula adjustments across grades. Furthermore, according to individual proficiency levels relative to differentiated tasks and texts, lesson plans include student groupings. Fifth grade teachers adjusted the writing unit to include additional activities for drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to scaffold instruction. For example, in the adjustments, teachers decided to include activities to engage students in deeper thinking for their writing reflections, analysis work, and opinion-based interpretive essays. Adjustments to lesson plans and learning activities with differentiated texts, thus increasing engagement and greater access to curricula for all learners.
- The school has created meaningful structures to foster a positive school culture that is responsive to community needs and results in effective academic and personal growth for adults and students. (1.4)
 - Parents, staff, and students unanimously agreed that the school fosters a safe climate where students' emotional and academic needs are readily addressed and underpins an improved attendance rate. The school's inclusive culture enables every student to be well known by a staff member who assists in supporting students' academic and social growth. The Second Step social-emotional program is one of the many examples of how the staff collaborates to meet the academic and emotional needs of all the students. As such, students and families appreciate that they can turn to teachers and members of the pupil personnel team to help

resolve personal issues and concerns that interfere with learning. Parents state that they are kept “fully informed” about their children’s academic and personal behaviors, resulting in their children prospering in the school’s safe environment. Furthermore, students were eager to report that because there is “no bullying” at the school, they feel “safe” and are able to focus more on their academic achievement. A parent facing a difficult situation with home schooling expressed that “there is more support here than anywhere,” and indicated that teachers collaborated with her to ensure that her child was supported. Another parent stated, “We are a community, we are more than a school, we are a village, and we help each other.” Additionally, the Parent Coordinator and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) collaborate in organizing targeted workshops, activities, and events for students and families. Furthermore, parents stated that the administration and staff attend all meetings to further provide instructional support by offering workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), instructional shifts in English Language Arts and math, and the new Literacy and math programs. In addition, professional development is provided by a school counselor on conflict resolution., The initiation of a fourth grade pilot behavior management program for students and parents, “Classroom Dojo,” is used to further support and monitor students’ behavior, thus resulting in a school environment that respectful and conducive to learning.

- The principal makes key decisions around the budget, assignments, and scheduling that effectively aligns to the school’s instructional goals to increase learning for all students. (1.3)
 - The principal uses staff feedback, students’ performance data, classroom observations, and students’ work to make purposeful decisions for the use of resources that supports school-wide instructional goals decisions. The principal and staff also made the decision to purchase Go Math, a new math program kindergarten through grade 5, continue with Core Knowledge kindergarten through grade 2, and purchase TCRWP and CCLS bundles for grade 3 through grade 5, thus ensuring that students in all grades engage in meaningful work products. Furthermore, additional funds were allocated for lead English language arts and math teachers to attend outside professional development. This decision supports individual teachers and instructional teams to improve their instructional practices while supporting students’ needs. Other initiatives such as technology integration to support students’ learning is evidenced in the use of SMARTboards and ELMO document readers in all classrooms, thus supporting the schools’ instructional goals as evidenced by increased performance in unit assessments. School leadership designs the instructional program based on observable teachers’ strengths, students’ needs, and grade level needs to develop coherence to support the school’s instructional goals. Teacher assignments and student groupings are effective and are evident in the Integrated Co- Teaching (I-CT) classes, academic intervention support in English language arts and math, and services for student subgroups. For example, in the student group meeting, a student stated that, “My teacher takes the time to make sure we understand and are prepared for the task.” Moreover, teachers’ schedules allow for a variety of ways to collaborate in teams and hold weekly meetings to analyze student data, monitor student progress, and look at student work. Teachers examine assessments results at the end

of each unit to refine performance tasks so that individual and groups of students, including students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and English language learners, are challenged and engaged. As a result of these effective decisions, time on task is optimized for the entire school community, thereby resulting in increased students' reading levels in the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

- The school's assessment practices are aligned to the school's curricula and the CCLS to effectively adjust instruction to increase students' achievement. (2.2)
 - The school's pre and post assessments in literacy and math are disaggregated and analyzed by teacher teams to form student groupings, adjust curricula, monitor and increase students' academic performance. Students create and reflect upon goals individually and during student-teacher conferences, and refine their goals by also addressing their learning steps. Post-it notes with specific teacher feedback are evidenced on student writing pieces and on work posted on bulletin boards inside and outside of classrooms. Teacher' feedback informs students about their strengths and areas for improvement aligned to rubrics, thereby mirroring the school-wide focus on developing capacity to reflect on their learning. A work sample of fourth graders included feedback such as "clear purposeful organization, use of relevant evidence, and a goal to write stronger conclusions." Additionally, the school re-designed their report card to align to the CCLS in order to provide a well-defined picture of students' progress toward grade level academic expectations and achievement.
 - The school administers common assessments and teachers use the results to measure students' progress toward specific goals. They also use the results to provide relevant written feedback to students to increase their achievement levels, as well as to evaluate and revise units of study and individual lessons. As a result, teachers use common measurements to inform their decisions for appropriate academic interventions during class, instructional services during push-in programs, in order to implement strategies to support students' progress. For example, third grade teachers agreed to adjust their Non-fiction Narrative Writing unit based on their Writing tracker benchmark results in order to decide on the next writing focus. Teachers also brainstormed on possible lessons activities and ideas in order to support students in mastering identified skills, and set timely learning goals aligned to school wide initiatives and the CCLS in literacy. Accordingly, teachers are able to monitor student learning from one unit to another through classroom observations, verbal and written responses, student work samples, lesson summaries, and assessment data. As a result, teachers' curricula and unit adjustments proved gains as evidenced by students' progress on unit assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance instruction to ensure that teachers strategically provide multiple entry points in lessons to engage all students in discussions that promote critical thinking and ownership of their learning. (1.2)
 - Across classrooms, lessons were consistently informed by the Danielson Framework, are organized according to the workshop model, and include clear mini-lessons that are connected to previous concepts to provide multiple entry points and increase engagement. For example, Accountable Talk is used in addition to hands on activities, teacher modeling, and the use of technology to monitor learning and students' work products. Differentiation was noted in various forms including differentiated graphic organizers, leveled texts, various rubrics, and learning tasks to ensure that all learners engage in cognitively challenging learning activities. This was evidenced in a fifth grade reading workshop where students utilized The 4-Point Reading Response that included points for clear and direct answer to a question, thoughtful explanation, evidence taken directly from the text and use of quotation marks, and organization. In a fourth grade math class, students were observed working with factors and multiples to determine if the numbers can be categorized as either "prime" or "composite." Although teachers provided multiple entry points and engaged students in high level discussions, supports and extension for higher achievers was not evident, thus impeding learning opportunities to purposefully engage all learners in high levels of thinking and participation.

- Strengthen systems of using observation data, student work, and focused feedback aligned to the Danielson's Framework to communicate expectations and develop teachers' instructional practice. (4.1)
 - School leaders have developed a schedule to observe teachers on a frequent basis and provide timely low inference feedback. In addition, the English language arts and math lead teachers, mentor teachers, and teacher team collaborations support new teachers' instructional practice and growth. Furthermore, professional development at the beginning of the school year was focused on norming activities for teachers to deepen their understanding of the school's instructional expectations and competencies of the Danielson Framework. However, classroom observation reports demonstrate how some teachers received uneven feedback aligned to the Danielson competencies, or comments lacked strengths and next steps associated with their professional goals and student work. For example, some teacher feedback after observations read: "Provide activities that permit student choice and opportunity for students to take leadership roles in their learning," and "Lesson plans should include a teacher reflection, looking back on what worked and what did not will aid in future planning." Hence, observation reports do not always provide teachers with clear and time-bound implementation for recommendations based on classroom practices, thus resulting in missed opportunities to strengthen teachers' instructional practice and growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Senator John D. Calandra	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