



**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 Bronx School of Cultured Pearls

09X073

**1020 Anderson Avenue
Bronx NY 10452**

Principal: Vivian Bueno

Dates of review: February 11-12, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bronx School of Cultured Pearls is an elementary school with 842 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 73% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers engage in professional collaborations to analyze data and make instructional adjustments that improve student learning across the grades. (2.2)
 - PS 73 has structures in place to allow for multiple opportunities for staff to discuss current data using common rubrics and protocols. As a vertical team, the grades meet and analyze the individual goals per grade within each discipline against common rubrics across content areas to target key areas and meet to collaboratively address learning standards. The vertical team meetings inform the grade team meetings where teachers delve deeply into patterns and trends from student work. For example, teachers are using practices of mathematical talk to guide student discussions during math lessons to engage all learners. In some classrooms, students use checklists and rubrics to assess their work with their peers. Lessons are created collaboratively with strategies to address the learning gaps that surface in the conversations from data analyses. Consequently, grade meetings are thereby a beneficial time for all team members to refine rubrics in math, writing, co-construct the curriculum units to ensure alignment with grading policies and discuss best practices that strengthen student learning.
 - The school collects and analyzes monthly reading levels using Teachers College (TC) reviews running records, performance based assessments in math and end of unit tests to track student progress and inform instructional plans. The school uses TC leveling and conferencing to measure progress in literacy. For example, teachers analyze running records and develop strategies that target student needs based on the reading continuum and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Students who are at risk are identified for additional guided reading, interventions and support. Action plans are also developed and shared with administration. For math, the assessment information has been tracked using the Student Needs Assessment Plan (SNAP). The SNAP provides at a glance what each individual student has and has not mastered according to the CCLS and the math strands of study. Additionally, it enables teachers to analyze data patterns across the grades and develop appropriate interventions and supports for students that informs curricular adjustments. Similarly, the SNAP will be used in the future for tracking literacy gains. Thus, these practices ensure a consistent approach across all classrooms to evaluate each unit or strategy, and make purposeful adjustments to support student learning.
- The leadership effectively aligns the school's instructional goals with resources to improve the quality of teaching practices in the school so that all students engage in challenging tasks and produce meaningful work products. (1.3)
 - The Principal cultivates learning by providing multiple venues for teachers to access support and training with lead teachers, network personnel, bilingual education consultants, partnerships with Fordham

University, and training offered by external vendors. In the early grades, teachers have been working with consultants and network staff on guided reading strategies that support students with reading comprehension, fluency and expression using an inquiry approach. Grade meetings provide a risk-free venue for teachers to share best practices and explore new strategies for improvement. As a result, teachers have developed a toolkit of resources and strategies to aid them during instruction. Teaching practices support students with comprehension strategies to self-monitor, self-correct and cross reference information.

- Teachers have embedded scheduled time in their weekly schedules to develop their teaching repertoires, look at student work and unpack the new curriculum as a team, evidenced in professional development binders and stated during teacher meetings. PS 73 has made raising English language learner's achievement a school-wide goal. They offer the teachers professional development through the English language learners Academy, a five to six week after school professional development. During that time, the teachers engage in learning about a Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding Vocabulary (CAFÉ) menu. Teachers who attended the academy then turn-keyed the information and the use of CAFÉ to other team members. The use of CAFÉ has focused on vocabulary building, resulting in greater comprehension for all students including English language learners and special education students. For example, students are encouraged to discuss their books with partners and use academic vocabulary. This is also evident in samples of student math work that were shared during team meetings indicating that students make better use of transition words to explain their solutions as well as math language relevant to the current unit.
- The school provides various opportunities for teachers to engage in professional discourse to strengthen the instructional capacity of staff and progress of goals for student groups they share. (4.2)
 - Teacher teams meet regularly for literacy and math with norms and structured protocols set for time-keeping, note-taking and working collaboratively. Lead teachers guide the discussions with agenda items that have been previously agreed upon. During the meetings, teachers discuss curriculum, instructional shifts and CCLS implementation; analyze performance assessment trends and patterns from data analysis, plan next steps and share best practices from their individual planning. Discussions promote the focus of supporting the workshop model through effective planning and questioning and discussions that deepen conceptual knowledge and understanding across the school. To that end, teachers have been trained in the Depth of Knowledge wheel and essential questions through the use of the Understanding by Design Framework. Due to frequency and quality of these meetings, teachers express confidence in their ability to teach using the new curriculum. Additionally, they feel that they have the freedom to "tweak the curriculum in accordance with their students' needs". As a result, teachers glean from one another's contributions to the data analysis. Further, teachers collaboratively scaffold the curriculum units for special education students by using the Depth of Knowledge wheel and accountable talk stems in math. Subsequently, in reviewing the

math responses and explanations throughout the school, teachers show the ability to positively impact and improve student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop academic tasks to align to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills across the grades for all students. (1.1)
 - Although teachers have worked on correlating the units from the scope and sequence in Social Studies with the units in ReadyGen for a more interdisciplinary approach for students to make greater connections and deepen understanding, social studies and science units have not been fully developed. The school uses the New York State Common Core Social Studies Framework, but they have not yet included units and tasks that include the instructional shifts or the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) methodology. As a result, social studies and science remain as minor subjects instead of core subjects aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards, which limits the opportunities for students to have access to rich, quality curriculum in all content areas.
 - Teams of teachers discuss student work and outcomes on a regular basis, as well as the delivery of curriculum, adjusting tasks, sequencing and strategies to accommodate student needs. Modifications to curriculum for English language learners and special education students are evident in the lesson planning development via modeling, use of graphic organizers, glossaries, accountable talk sentence starters, frames, paired activities, tiered lessons, modified test questions and scaffolded tasks. These modifications have resulted in greater access to the information and successful completion of learning opportunities mainly in literacy and math. However, since these practices are new this year, they have not been consistently implemented with depth and understanding across all grades and subjects. Therefore, all students do not yet have access to a rigorous curriculum in all content areas.
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching practices that include the instructional shifts to promote academic rigor and improve student outcomes for all students. (1.2)
 - Teams of teachers meet weekly to analyze curriculum units and analyze assessments that inform teaching and learning. While teachers have actively begun these discussions and work necessary to start differentiating tasks and raise the rigor of instruction, the actual implementation was not consistently evident in classroom instructional practices. Teachers encourage students to engage in discussions and reflection. However, since these practices are new this year, they are not habits of practice that have been internalized by teachers and students. Although there is a common framework for teaching through the workshop model, teachers unevenly utilize tiered tasks daily in classrooms to ensure that there is a meaningful purpose for expected outcomes. Some teachers utilize small group instruction, but the level

of work does not always match the instructional level of students with sufficient supports or extensions for learning. Consequently, there exists a disparity in the level of rigor and lack of clarity to effectively address the spectrum of student learners. As a result, there are varying levels of progress and gaps in student learning noted in classroom data profiles.

- Provide teachers with consistent actionable feedback to elevate the instructional practices and professional development across the school.(4.1)
 - The school has an observation process that supports teacher growth and empowerment. Currently, teachers have been observed using the Danielson Framework by various administrators without sufficient alignment to teacher's individual professional growth plans. For example, some have been observed by three different administrators over several months without specific focus or next steps to guide their teaching practices effectively. A review of observations by administrators reveals that they do not provide consistent feedback that is specific, actionable, and time-bound which differentiates the range of needs across experienced and new staff. As a result of limited and targeted feedback, teacher growth is not maximized impacting the quality of instructional practices and progress across the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Bronx School of Cultured Pearls	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