



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**PS 100 Isaac Clason**

**Elementary School X100**

**800 Taylor Avenue  
Bronx  
10473 NY**

**Principal: Chad Altman**

**Dates of review: March 4-5, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Holly Reichert**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

PS 100 Isaac Clason is an elementary school with 596 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 36% Black, 61% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 23% 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 92.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school carefully plans and refines its curricula ensuring alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and cognitive engagement through access, supports and extensions for diverse learners. (1.1)
  - Following a school-wide process for piloting and determining pros and cons of possible new curricula, the school adopted ReadyGEN for kindergarten through grade 2 and Expeditionary Learning for grade 3 through grade 5 for literacy and Go Math! for kindergarten through grade 5 math. The administration and teachers stated that they chose new curricula to deepen school-wide instructional, pedagogical and assessment coherence to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts in order to track student mastery and address gaps to keep all students on a path to college and career. The school added that the adoption of two new curricula in literacy requires additional refinement to bridge grade spans and create coherence in protocols and strategies. For example, Expeditionary Learning discussion techniques are being used in the lower grades so that talk strategies are consistent and build across grades. In addition to new curricula, the school continues to use its reading and supplemental math programs to support literacy and numeracy development as well as the scope and sequence in science and social studies. Since the summer of 2013, teachers have been adjusting the curricula to meet learner needs using student work, initial baseline results and unit assessments. Based on school-wide data and focus on writing, teachers adjusted core curricula writing instruction. Writing instruction now starts earlier in the module and scaffolds the writing process providing students with regular opportunities to write short and long pieces. Furthermore, teachers added a strategy called 'written conversation' in which students write back and forth to each other explaining what they are learning. Teachers stated that this strategy has increased stamina and fluency in writing and students are excited to write for longer periods of time. The grade 3 teachers adjusted the math curricula to address the learning gaps in solving multi-step word problems as identified by baseline data. Special education students and English language learners engage in the same curricula as their general education peers in all content subjects. General education, special education and Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) teachers further adjust curricula to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, the first grade ICT planning documents show use of groupings to provide differentiated small-group instruction to four groups with specific visual, written and auditory supports for entry and extension. These adjustments allow all students to actively engage with grade level, complex texts even when they are not able to read the text independently.
- The school's respectful, learning-centered culture provides adults and children with a safe, supportive environment leading to collaboration, positive behavior and contribution to community improvement. (1.4)
  - The school's theory of action for maintaining a culture of learning and collaboration centers on their motto, Partners in Excellence. The tenets that guide their vision and work include: leading by example, sustainable

systems, team structures and distributed leadership, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Described by teachers, parents and students as 'a family', the school's key stakeholders work collaboratively to foster an environment that hears all voices and supports student academic and social-emotional development. Organized in teams, staff members collaborate to meet student academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs. For example, the child study team responds to teacher referrals and addresses issues ranging from attendance to special education evaluation. The staff knows each child well and provides at risk support, such as counseling, with regular follow-up in and outside the classroom. One student who received such support increased in zone cards points from 41 to 79 for PBIS positive behaviors and homework scores from 0 to 4 from November to February. During the team meeting observed, members followed up on one student who used to be in a special education setting and is now progressing well in general education with the support of a paraprofessional. Furthermore, staff follows an open-door policy which provides access and transparency so that communication is reciprocal between staff, students and families. Students also work in teams and collaborate with their peers in classrooms. One student shared, "We are working in groups and I think that's good because we can learn how to work together and how to get along." Students feel comfortable voicing their questions and concerns to adults in the building. One student-initiated program is the community service student volunteers. Wanting an alternative to recess, students and the parent coordinator approached school administration with a proposal to support younger students during this time. The program now has a cadre of twenty grade 5 volunteers overseen by the parent coordinator. Students use their recess to support lower grade teachers and students. As described by one student, "I help a 1<sup>st</sup> grade class. The teacher helps me to be a teacher and I check students' homework." Students stated that they are very interested in serving their community. One student added, "It helps me to be good with kids and it helped me with my fear of speaking. It helped me face my fears." Currently, there are eight students on the waiting list, and students in other grades are seeking to be part of this program. Students also highlighted PBIS as a leadership structure in the school. One student stated that leading by example is a key to PBIS, even with friends, stating, "Be a leader and not a follower. I always show him how to be good and I give him treats like the star bucks in PBIS." The principal attributes a three-year decline in incidents to PBIS. From September to March 2011-12, 181 incidents were reported compared to 147 from September to March 2012-13 and 105 from September to March this year.

- The school's common assessment practices allow teachers to provide feedback to students and grade teams to analyze student work and data so that curricular adjustments address learning gaps and extensions. (2.2)
  - Teachers utilize the core curricula's common rubrics and assessments to provide students with consistent feedback across a grade and aligned within grade bands in literacy. Additionally, the school uses the Measures of Student Learning seven writing traits for writing across the school. Recent kindergarten through grade 2 data shows an 80% increase in student writing performance across the seven traits comparing baseline and mid-year benchmark assessment results. To support individual progress in writing, teachers regularly conference with students. For example, in a

grade 2 Integrated Co-Teaching class, a sample of student work showed the use of quoting from the text to support his point of view; however, there was no citation from where the quote came. The teacher shared that in her next writing conference with this student she would support him with citation. In grades 3 through 5, students engage in peer review using a peer checklist during the writing process and providing feedback aligned to the rubric on the peer, teacher, me (PTM) feedback form at the end of the process. Students self-assess using the rubric and completing the 'me' section of the PTM form. Teacher feedback to students highlights strengths and next steps. Students shared how the rubric helps them know what is expected and what their next steps are based on written teacher feedback and rubric scoring by criteria. Teachers use core curricula assessments in math to measure student mastery of the standards. Baseline data in math highlighted problem solving as an area of need. Adjustments to curricula in math focus on supporting students explaining their process orally and in writing. The results of grade 4 math assessments show 88% growth from test 1 in January 2014 to test 2 in February 2014 in one teacher's class. The teacher attributes these gains to adjustments made to the curricula including the integration of daily problem solving and writing with the use of math journals. Grade level teams conduct regular inquiry cycles using student progress data to address learning gaps and the specific needs of the bottom third of students. During the grade 4 team meeting, teachers looked at samples of student work from an adapted lesson that was designed using data from the previous task. The analysis showed that some students are still having difficulty, and the team will plan another adjusted lesson to address the specific learning gaps still present in student work. Similarly, the grade 2 team observed shared results from a recent post-test following a cycle of six adjusted lessons addressing the learning gaps of the bottom third on the grade. The teachers identified that students are still struggling with word problems and agreed to continue with strategies in place as well as creating math buddies. Such assessment practices ensure that student learning needs are continually addressed with feedback and data-driven instructional adjustments.

- The school's culture for learning communicates high expectations to staff and for all students and successfully partners with families to support a path for college and career readiness. (3.4)
  - The school is implementing new curricula in literacy and math as well as a new teacher evaluation system this year. Knowing this, the school provided summer professional development to staff in both areas. Professional development planned for the year covers what teachers are expected to know and be able to do. One teacher created a team building team so that the teachers can support one another collaboratively and collegially while maintaining morale. Furthermore, the team structure utilized by the school allows for multiple levels of support and accountability. For example, the vertical grade team, made up of grade team leaders, works with the instructional coach on curricular coherence and elements of the Danielson Framework following peer intervisitations. Grade leaders then take the information back to grade team meetings. Furthermore, the school's network achievement coach provides professional development on instructional strategies connected to the core curricula which is then used and adapted by grade teams. For example, following professional development on engagement connected to the school's instructional goals, one teacher tried out the strategy and shared her planning materials with

her grade team colleagues. This led to the grade adopting and adapting the strategy as a result of observed positive academic and social-emotional learning outcomes. Staff and families highlighted communication and follow-up focused on student progress and needs. Staff and families regularly communicate in person, by phone, email and written notes about academic, behavioral and social-emotional expectations. This year, staff, students and families engaged in college and career readiness events including choosing a mascot for the school, a community pep rally, and activities to determine possible career choices and colleges to attend. In addition to being focused on college and careers, students stated that they know and understood the expectations for learning and behavior. One student added that they have learning targets explaining that a learning target is like a goal. Reading goals are posted on student desks, and students with behavioral supports set goals for their behavior and learning. The PBIS program provides students and classes with incentives and rewards for behavior, attendance and collaboration with peers. During classes observed, students and classes received star bucks and compliment cards for positive behavior that supported learning in the classroom. Students also shared how the use of rubrics helps them stay focused on expectations and what they need to do to do well on a task. A student stated, "The rubric is on the wall and I look at it before I start writing to know what I need to do." Another student added that teacher feedback, "tells me what I need to work on and what to do while writing independently." During a student meeting, a student shared that, "The teachers make sure we learn a lot and we are ready for middle school." As indicated in the 2012-13 Progress Report, the school's Middle School Readiness is 90.4%, nearly 1% higher than their peer average.

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

- Deepen teacher capacity to fully engage all students in cognitively challenging tasks during whole class activities through the use of talk strategies and differentiated supports leading to student ownership. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, teachers provide students with expectations for academic tasks and behavior. During classroom visits, consistent routines, transitions between activities, and structures for whole class, collaborative groups, partner talk, group discussion and share were observed. In general education, Integrated Co-Teaching and special education classrooms, teachers group students by learning needs and provide various differentiated supports during individual and group activities. Teachers provide supports such as visuals, procedural and informational reference charts, manipulatives, color coded sentence strips, and tiered handouts. Teachers also use a variety of engagement techniques including collaborative groups in which students work together each with an assigned role; station work where students rotate and complete different tasks aligned to the same content; and accountable talk during discussion. Aligned to instructional shifts, students are expected to use evidence from text to support their thinking in oral and written responses. During whole class shares in literacy, teachers asked students text-based questions. Some teachers prompted students to justify their response with evidence from the text then asked if other students agreed or disagreed. While students actively engage with their peers by pushing each other's thinking and questioning information during structured pair and group tasks observed, this process was not fully evident during whole class discussion

and shares. In a number of classrooms, the teacher missed opportunities to deepen student thinking and extend the conversation among peers. Additionally, when asked, a number of students stated that they could not hear each other or what the student speaking said. In one classroom, students did not share out following the turn and talk. As a result, students did not hear the thinking of their classmates and connect it to their own. In another class, the teacher asked questions after reading sections of text. Students were not given an opportunity to process their thinking individually or with each other. Not all students raised their hands or shared information from the text in response to the teacher's questions. During whole class talk, most teachers did not provide a visual for or of student responses connecting responses to discussion topics. While the school provides students with challenging and differentiated individual and group tasks, not all students were observed sharing their thinking, building on the ideas of others or critiquing the reasoning of others during whole class discussion. This limits the school's ability to deepen student ownership of learning.

- Deepen teacher support practices by expanding the observation process to include regular cycles of peer visitation, feedback and next steps aligned to goals to accelerate pedagogical growth in targeted areas. (4.1)
  - The administration observes classroom practice and provides teachers with feedback and next steps. Teachers receive oral and written feedback from administrators following classroom observations. The school aligns feedback to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, provides a rating for each competency observed and lists next steps. In an observation report reviewed, the administrator provided details from the lesson observed and connected next steps to specific competencies aligned to the school's instructional goals. The principal explained that the school's process for supporting teachers involves on-going conversations about best practice, professional development and support, and teacher team work. As part of this process, the administration holds initial conversations with teachers at the start of the year to set goals and create a professional development plan for the year. In two documents reviewed, teachers chose Danielson competencies connected to the school's goals. During previous years, the school engaged teachers in rounds of peer visitations using the Danielson Framework and focusing on specific competencies aimed at creating a common understanding of effective instruction. This year, members of the vertical team visited peer classrooms in February 2014 to identify trends and address growth areas for cross grade collaboration and support. Teachers collected observational data on eleven elements of instruction including classroom management, learning targets, questioning and discussion, differentiated activities and student groupings. However, the eleven elements and observation notes were not aligned to the Danielson Framework competencies and rubric language. While the school has a system in place for providing teachers with feedback and has engaged some teachers in intervisitation this year, the school does not strategically align next steps to goals and does not have a normed peer process for intervisitation. This limits opportunities to deepen teacher practice and accelerate growth in targeted areas through systematic teacher peer support and high leverage next steps aligned with goals.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name:	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			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>