



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Quality Review
Office of School Quality
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2013-2014**

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Luis Lloren Torres

Elementary School X114

1155 Cromwell Avenue

Bronx

NY 10452

Principal: Olivia Francis-Webber

Dates of review: October 24 - 25, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS114X Luis Lloren Torres is an elementary school with 612 students from kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 18% Black, 75% Hispanic, 2% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92.0 %.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal thoughtfully aligns the school's instructional goals with resources to improve the quality of teaching practices in the school. (1.3)
 - The principal makes effective decisions to utilize resources that support the school's goals to improve the teaching practices and student learning opportunities. During the summer, the principal organizes an early childhood academy for kindergarten through grade two in order to address the gaps surfaced in the literacy assessments. This initiative supports the school's goal to improve literacy across the grades by strengthening the early foundation and building on concepts of print for early readers. Through careful scheduling, there are also additional guided reading periods and academic intervention services provided daily for students who are at risk. All support staff, including coaches and lead teachers, instruct students daily, coaching teachers and creating lab-sites that focus on questioning and discussion techniques to build reading comprehension strategies. This staffing model also serves as another opportunity to mentor new teachers to build their instructional practices. There are also programs after school and on Saturdays for English language learners and for students who are not meeting grade level standards. Attendance is high and progress has been noted in formative assessments and in student writing responses that were shared during meetings. In addition, there are structured weekly opportunities for teachers to meet on vertical and horizontal grade level teams across content areas. Teachers also meet during and after school to discuss curricular issues and practices that align to the Danielson Framework. As a result, there is better communication across grades about student needs, interest and abilities, thus improving planning and teaching practices across the school.
- The school thoughtfully and intentionally creates an inclusive and nurturing environment that supports students and enhances their personal and academic development. (1.4)
 - Upon first entering the building, adults and students interact in very positive and nurturing ways. There are inspirational posters around the school such as "Believe-Achieve-Succeed". Children report being happy in this school and are very eager to share their experiences. Parents are equally supportive of the school's initiatives and goals and participate in the school's effective leadership team. They also attend various school and district based workshops throughout the year to develop strategies that support their children with the new curriculum and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Parents also attend workshops on wellness and nutrition, anti-bullying, and college and career awareness. The principal cultivates a very nurturing and inclusive culture that supports all members of the school community by creating opportunities for staff, students and families to come together for school-wide assemblies and celebrations. Students know the principal very well and greet her warmly in hallways and classrooms. The leadership and support staff, which includes three guidance counselors, provide focused interventions for

students with attendance and social-emotional learning issues. For example, the ROCKS program, which focuses on Respect, Organization, Cooperation, Kindness and Safety, has been an important initiative to build positive behaviors that support students in growing their leadership skills and improving their attendance efforts. The school's student government also meets with the principal regularly to discuss issues of concern and guide improvement efforts around nutrition. Student responses about their teachers are very positive and reveal that listening to student voice is an essential value in this school. Previously, students requested healthier choices for lunch and, in response, the cafeteria now includes a salad bar. They also participate in community service in the neighborhood and raise money for food drives during the holidays. As a result, students feel proud of their accomplishments and collaboration skills, which build a strong social-emotional connection to their environment, contributing to attendance rates that are always 92% or higher across the grades. During classroom visits, students participate in meaningful discussions around literature that engage students of all levels, which foster a love of reading. These academic practices further develop a positive tone and culture in classrooms and across the school that builds students' confidence. These impact positively on their academic and personal growth, creating a pathway to build leadership skills and work habits that support college and career readiness.

- Teachers engage in professional discourse and collaborations that strengthen the instructional capacity of the school. (4.2)
 - Teachers benefit from weekly structured grade level meetings to analyze multiple data sources that include running records, baselines, exit slips and student work samples. During this time, they also discuss instructional practices that meet the needs of their students, especially those in the bottom third during inquiry cycles. Teacher teams share instructional strategies using a protocol similar to Instructional Rounds. Teachers incorporate these strategies to support struggling students with academic language development, which strengthens their discussions and writing skills as evidenced in student work in folders and notebooks. As a result, planning structures have improved at the grade and classroom level, which positively impacts student learning opportunities.
 - There are various structures that facilitate frequent conversations between teachers across grade levels and content level teams. These include coaches, grade leaders, and English language learners and special education specialists in the school. These vertical teams review data, curriculum units and lessons and inform curricular school-wide decisions that support the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). As a result, there is a collaborative culture that has influenced the curricular adjustments and enhances teacher leadership skills across the school. These adjustments are shared with the school's leadership team for further review, which strengthens the school's instructional capacity.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop academic tasks that align to the CCLS and consistently emphasize higher order thinking skills across the grades for all students. (1.1)

- The principal has strategically organized curriculum teams that are charged with aligning the school's curriculum to the CCLS in literacy and mathematics. Although a lot of effort and work have started since last spring and through the summer, curriculum maps are still not rigorous and coherent across all content areas. For example, the school has been using Reading Streets in literacy but has not yet expanded the curriculum maps to include formative assessments and higher order thinking skills that align to the units of study and emphasize the instructional shifts. Most tasks do not offer multiple points of entry into the curriculum, thus limiting the participation of students to generally low level tasks. In addition, curricular units, tasks and lessons in other content areas do not consistently include opportunities for analysis, synthesis and reflection in support of instructional shifts. Consequently, the curriculum does not effectively engage nor meet the needs of all learners.
- Further develop teaching practices that include the instructional shifts to promote academic rigor and improve student outcomes for all students. (1.2)
 - During classroom visits, most teachers follow a framework that includes the unit of study, big question, comprehension skills and comprehension strategies. These are sometimes evident in extensive lesson plans. However, teaching practices do not always reflect the intended written goals and plans as mini-lessons extend for long periods of time, leaving students with insufficient opportunities to self-correct, self-monitor and cross reference information. Teacher practices do not always provide scaffolds that enable students to meet school-wide goals as all students are answering the same questions or working on the same problems. These generally focus on basic skills without providing sufficient opportunities to build conceptual knowledge and deeper understanding. Some classrooms promote inquiry-based learning, but most lessons observed were teacher-centered and did not have a clear focus, thus limiting the opportunity to build stamina, rigor and independence across classrooms. In addition, many students have been held over multiple times, including English language learners and students with disabilities, without targeted or mandated supports. Consequently, there is a lack of student cognitive engagement and progress.
- Develop effective systems and structures to evaluate and support teaching practices that improve student outcomes. (5.1)
 - The school has organized extensive resources to support the implementation of the CCLS and enhance the instructional program. There are curriculum teams, inquiry teams and data teams that are charged with evaluating and adjusting instructional practices to meet the needs of staff and students. However, school leaders are not able to effectively evaluate these supports in the school. They are currently developing more strategic processes to evaluate the instructional work but have yet to fully implement these processes. Students in the bottom third have been targeted for support but the systems for monitoring their academic progress have not enabled the school to make timely adjustments, resulting in the high number of students being mandated to attend summer school. School-wide systems to monitor the progress and services for English language learners and students with disabilities are

not yet developed, resulting in challenges with compliance issues. Feedback systems from administration are uneven and do not provide teachers and teams with sufficient instructional feedback to improve teaching practices. Most of the teacher feedback reviewed was general and focuses on classroom environments. Consequently, the school is unable to accurately provide students with a cohesive instructional pathway with benchmarks and timelines for meeting goals that align to the CCLS. Even though the school has invested in a resource called DataCation, there are not yet systems or processes to coordinate, assess and evaluate these resources that expand the coherence of instructional practices in the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Luis Lloren Torres, PS 114X	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