

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**P.S. 159 Luis Munoz Marin Building**

**Elementary 10X159**

**2315 WASHINGTON AVENUE  
BRONX, NY  
10458**

**Principal: LUIS LIZ**

**Dates of review: December 17-18, 2013  
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 159 Luis Munoz Marin Building is a/an Elementary school with 195 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 92% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 50% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Principal has makes strategic decisions in the utilization of resources to support school goals to meet student learning needs resulting in gains in student progress (1.3)
  - The principal accesses internal and external resources and strategically aligns them to support school improvement goals. The school participated in the Teacher Effectiveness Program pilot to support teacher development and build common understanding around the Danielson Framework. The school uses Center for Integrated Teacher Education (CITE) to support the continuation of this work along with supporting related aspects around assessment and Common Core Learning Standards. The school hires many teachers who are dually certified in either bi-lingual or special education to work in co-teaching arrangements to reduce class size and increase student supports. The previous foci for the school were assessments and questioning. Across classrooms there is strong evidence of the incorporation of questions in lesson plans and rubrics and/or checklists accompanying work products. As a result, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and benchmark assessments show consistent progress. NYSESLAT proficiency has risen from 6% to 27%. Performance task data shows 100% of students making progress from baseline to end-line assessments with an average of 40%age point increase.
  - Teachers are scheduled for two common preps a week where they analyze student work, monitor performance data and review instructional planning and curricula. Meetings are driven by agendas that are in support of school goals to strengthen teacher practice through the Danielson Framework for teaching, strengthen curricula through the incorporation of instructional shifts and improve school culture. Protocols are used to maintain focus and deepen discussions around identified topics. The coach and assistant principal attend the meetings monthly in order to support and monitor effectiveness. The work of these teams is noted in curricula modifications including the incorporation of increased multi-step problem solving opportunities for students in mathematics, a shift from the previous focus on computational skills. As a result, an increased number of teachers have received effective ratings in planning and preparation and student engagement, two domains within the Danielson framework. In addition, teacher team work is evident in performance tasks in English language art and math that now focus on students creating viable arguments supported with text based evidence and/or data.
- Across classrooms and throughout the school, teachers administer common assessments, and consistently use checks for understanding resulting in improved teacher decision making and student progress. (2.2)
  - School consistently administers and tracks common assessments including Fountas and Pinnell Reading Inventories and curricula benchmark assessments. Rubrics attached to tasks to establish clear expectations and for student self-monitoring. Students receive specific feedback from teachers in the form of next steps for improving their work products. Teachers use performance task data to make curricula

adjustments, plan for students groups and plan next steps in instruction. Benchmark assessments and performance task data show performance gains in English language arts and math, averaging forty percentage points.

- Across a vast majority of classrooms teachers use questioning and conferencing to monitor student understanding. In meetings, students consistently spoke to rubrics and checklist used in self and peer assessment. Students also spoke to pairings and flexible groupings based on assignment performance levels. Work products in folders demonstrate that students now demonstrate a comprehensive awareness of tasks, standards and academic language that ensures increased levels of achievement.
- School leaders have developed a culture learning that supports the school community in continuous improvement resulting in a shared commitments and expectations for student success. (3.4)
  - School leaders have established expectations for instruction through the Danielson framework and Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Through frequent cycles of observation and feedback coupled with professional supports the school demonstrates that it places a high value on professional practice and holds teachers accountable for strengthening their practice. School leaders also set expectations for communication around student progress. All students receive monthly reports on their academic progress as well as a Class Dojo report from a computerized program that tracks student behavior, which informs parents of students' personal behaviors and growth. As a result, information from this source strongly demonstrates more on-task behavior and the school has seen a reduction in behavioral infractions as indicated by the Online Occurrence Reporting System.
  - The school provides multiple opportunities for parents and teachers to unpack the Common Core Learning Standards. Workshops occur during the school day, on evening and weekends and often are shared workshops for both staff and families. Students receive monthly progress reports and parents report that they meet with teachers regularly around their child's progress and performance. Upper grade teachers recently worked with students on a project that asked them to think about what they wanted to be when they grow up. Students then had to research required skills for their chosen profession and link them to CCLS skills. The outcome, teachers report, was that students learned all skills at this level that are necessary in making progress towards the achievement of their goals. This work has led to a collective awareness and accountability across the school community for student success at next levels, expressed consistently by parents, students and staff.
- School leaders support teacher development through frequent cycles of observation and feedback aligned with professional supports that lead to improved teacher practice. (4.1)
  - The school participated in the Teacher Effectiveness Program pilot. Through a partnership with a talent coach the school participated in professional development around norming their understanding of the Danielson Framework through video observation and peer and administrative classroom visits. This work is extended by administration this year as they conduct formal and informal observations and provide

professional development in the competencies with CITE and network support. This work has led to improved practices for analyzing student work, increased curricula and task alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and stronger instructional practices in targeted competencies that included assessment and engagement.

- Through regular cycles of observation and feedback within the Danielson Framework, administration provides regular written feedback to teachers around practice. Administration also has 1 to 1 meetings with teachers around practice and student performance. Administration has accessed external professional development to support teachers in identified areas of need that have included assessment and increasing student engagement through questioning and discussion. They have created internal support for this work through cross functional assignments and collaborative structures. The school has made notable progress in both areas as evidence through classroom observations and team meetings. Team meetings agendas are focused grounded in school goals and make effective use of protocols to deepen conversations around the work. Student performance data is tracked and monitored leading to flexible grouping and targeted student supports. The school continues to work on engaging students in discussion in order to increase cognitive engagement for all students.

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

- Continue to modify curricula based tasks to consistently increase cognitive engagement around higher order thinking for a diversity of learners. (1.1)
  - The school has adopted new curriculum this year and has made thoughtful shifts in their transition. Teacher teams review tasks and standards and modify curricula accordingly. Lesson plans reflect students being asked to construct viable arguments when solving math problems and to support claims with text based evidence in English language arts. Lesson plans include essential questions but rigorous lessons within unit frameworks and vertical coherence are being developed, thus limiting college and career readiness for all students.
  - A review of lesson plans evidenced that students are being asked to complete rigorous tasks but are provided with more broad and universal scaffolds to engage learners. While lesson plans show attention to differentiation they state, “assist students who need extra help” and “define nutrient”. This limits students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, access to cognitively engaging tasks.
- Strengthen inconsistent use of multiple entry points in learning experiences in order to increase levels of student participation in discussions and resulting work products. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms students participated in like tasks. In some classrooms students had access to technology through tablets and desk tops, although their use was limited. The school has focused on questioning through the Danielson framework and essential questions are built into lesson plans. In classroom practice, the level of questioning is inconsistent and multiple entry points are not used

consistently. Students are provided more assistance as needed as opposed to strategic extensions and supports within lessons. Teachers are working to build student discussion through the use of prompts with uneven results in student participation. This prevents students from being consistently engaged in higher order thinking tasks and discussions.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

<b>School name: P.S. 159 Luis Munoz Marin Building</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?				<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<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>