



# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Dr. Roland N. Patterson School**

**Middle School 229**

**275 Harlem River Park Bridge  
Bronx  
NY 10453**

**Principal: Dr. Ezra B. Matthias**

**Dates of review: January 23 - 24, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Dr. Roland N. Patterson is a middle school with 208 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 45% Black, 55% Hispanic, 0% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 34% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 90.20%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders create a supportive learning environment that involves all stakeholders in supporting students' education to ensure the academic and personal growth of all learners. (1.4)
  - Students interact with the school's guidance counselors for child-youth services and social-emotional support through counseling that includes guidance intervention conferences, and with parents as necessary. In addition, support staff follows up with individual students regarding their attendance, behavior, and academic performance. For instance, the Pathway to Success program for at-risk eighth graders pair staff mentors with students to monitor their behavior and academic progress, hence providing targeted supports to increase students' academic performance. Additionally, a multiple holdover initiative provides additional academic and guidance support for students who have repeated a grade, thus ensuring that students' individual academic needs are met. Students also reported feeling safe at school. As a result, students feel well-known and supported both emotionally and academically.
  - Parents appreciate the school's open-door policy, and welcomed the new uniform policy because it "boosted students' expectations and raised respect levels within the school." Family outreach is further strengthened through mid-marking period progress reports, school flyers, parent coordinator phone calls, and school messenger automated announcements. A Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) parent guide was distributed to all parents to ensure that parents who are unable to attend the Parent Association workshops are kept informed. Furthermore, professional development is aligned with the Danielson framework and designed according to the needs of teachers. In addition, the school supports culture-building through after-school programs that includes drama, art, and yoga to teach tolerance and celebrate success, thereby promoting effective personal and academic behaviors. Consequently, parental involvement has increased as parents have become more involved in school's initiatives such as renaming the school, selecting new school colors, and adopting new graduation attire and venues. As a result, occurrence reporting indicates decreases in student removal and suspension rates as compared to this time last year.
- Teachers collaborate to examine student work, plan curricula, and share best instructional practice to improve student outcomes. (4.2)
  - Teachers collaborate in vertical content area teams including respective special education and English as second language (ESL) teachers to adjust units of study, and implement Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and citywide instructional shifts in the curricula during scheduled administrative period once a week. Additionally, teacher teams across grades share strategies to impact student learning school wide. For example, the math team made curricula and lessons adjustments that include color coding and number lines to assist students who are unable to compute fractions, decimals, and place value. Teacher further agreed

to use various manipulative tools to increase math achievement for all learners, thus strengthening instructional capacity and supporting attainment of school's goals to improve students' abilities to use fractions and decimals effectively. In addition to all teams meeting on a weekly basis, part of a School-based option (SBO) was to use 37.5 minutes of extended day time to further engage in inquiry work, and using protocols to look at student work. The English language arts team, for example, focuses their inquiry work on English language learners (ELL's) to identify language needs, fluency, decoding, and comprehension. A rotating facilitator charts responses as team members discuss low inference observations of presented student work and implications for adjustments in planning and preparation. This ongoing practice enables the team to select numerous strategies to address gaps in students' academic performance. For example, teachers use thinking maps to engage students in vocabulary development, visual representation to augment association, kinesthetic arm tapping to improve syllabication, and numerous writing strategies to increase academic outcomes. As a result, English language learners in the target population are now producing more meaningful written work.

- School leaders use classroom observation visits to provide feedback and next steps to teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to develop instructional practices and promote professional growth. (4.1)
  - School leaders have observed all the teachers multiple times and track cycles of formal and informal observations using spreadsheets to ensure the expectations for the observation process are met, observe school wide instructional trends, and measure teachers' progress. In addition, administrators gather information from students' discussions during classroom observations and look at the work students are producing as part of the observation and feedback process. Explicit next steps are then provided to ensure positive movement within the Danielson Framework for Teaching, thus further supporting the school wide instructional goals. For instance, an observation artifact for a new teacher suggests that the teacher circulates around the room and recommends more use of "turn and talk" strategies to increase the levels of student engagement. Recommendations also included viewing a particular video on ARIS Learn and schedule a visit with another teacher to observe effective student engagement techniques. Furthermore, administration also conducts data meetings with teachers to analyze students' academic progress or lack thereof to formulate academic intervention plans to ensure that students are making the level of progress necessary. The Advance observation tool is used to provide low-inference evidence to evaluate the various Danielson Framework for Teaching competencies. While many teachers exhibit effective management practices, identified challenge areas include differentiation practices and student engagement strategies. These findings have prompted in-house instructional coaches, the network achievement coach, and the Teacher Effectiveness talent coach to design and conduct professional development, including one-on-one class visits with targeted teachers to develop capacity in these areas. Additionally, teachers work together in department teams, co-teaching classrooms, and during class inter-visitations to achieve the framework expectations, thus improving school-wide instructional practices.

## What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the rigor of the school's curricula by emphasizing higher order thinking across all subjects and grades while providing access to all learners to ensure increased student achievement. (1.1)
  - Academic tasks do not consistently engage students in rigorous activities across grades and subjects as evidenced by project tasks that do not require inferential thinking or the application of information. In addition, summative performance tasks inconsistently provide accommodations to challenge students' thinking and provide access to all learners. For example, an eighth grade math transformation portfolio piece shows how students worked in teams to investigate congruence by using reflection, rotation, and translation to create symmetric designs on graph paper utilizing various coordinates and line segments. Moreover, curricular adjustments for students having difficulties matching corresponding sides and angles included the use of tracing paper, transparent sheets and Geometer's Sketchpad software. On the other hand, a sixth grade social studies culminating task had students identify facts associated with three different Middle East religions without asking students to make inferences or connect their research to the essential questions or big ideas associated with the unit of study. Consequently, the school's curricula inconsistently demonstrate revisions or adjustments to ensure that all learners have access to cognitively challenging summative tasks, thereby impeding efforts to engage all students across grades and subjects in higher-order thinking and learning.
- Strengthen school-wide instructional practices that accommodate pupils of different ability levels and learning styles to maximize learning outcomes for all students. (1.2)
  - Half of the classrooms visited demonstrated student-centered environments where students worked collaboratively in groups and teachers moved around the room facilitating student learning. For instance, a seventh grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class grouped students homogeneously and used vocabulary supports, translations, and video presentations to provide scaffolds to meet the needs of all students. Similarly, in other classes students were provided with scaffolds and groupings that resulted in high levels of student engagement. However, other classroom visits revealed teacher-directed lessons that involved students in little or no discussion resulting in low levels of student engagement and limited differentiated supports, thus there are missed opportunities to engage all students in high levels of thinking and participation.
- Refine school practices so that teachers consistently use common assessments and on-going checks for understanding to adjust instruction leading to meeting all students' learning needs. (2.2)
  - While the school's selected math curriculum includes on-going unit assessments to monitor students' progress and make instructional adjustments, other departments are starting the process of developing common assessments for their respective subject areas. For example, the English language arts (ELA) team decided to adopt a mid-term exam

format consisting of 10 questions and two constructed responses utilizing two informational texts to support their work for tracking students' learning. Teachers agreed to increase text complexity for each respective grade level while keeping the same content and format of the English language arts exams. Also, the science and social studies departments added essential questions to their curricula, which will eventually be used as part of a mid-term assessment, and includes both multiple choice and short constructed responses to align with English language arts (ELA) department practices. However, although individual departments are working toward developing common assessment practices, results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction across grades and subjects.

- Teachers' assessment practices lack consistency across classrooms regarding their use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment practices. For example, students in an English language arts (ELA) class used a work-time station rotation model to demonstrate effective use of a writing strategy, cite relevant textual evidence to support a claim, provide feedback on student writing based on a rubric, and collaborate with peers. Also, students had the opportunity to share their writing reflections during the lesson summary referencing how this strategy helped them create more effective essays. However, in other classrooms visited, teachers dominated the lesson and stayed in front of the room using teacher-to-student questioning. Consequently, inconsistent practice of using checks for understanding impede teachers from making adjustments to the lesson, thus hindering the ability to address individual students' learning needs.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Dr. Roland N. Patterson	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>