

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**School of Leadership Development**

**IS 313**

**1600 Webster Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: Lauren Wilkins**

**Dates of review: April 9-10, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

School of Leadership Development is a middle school with 380 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 28% Black, 70% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 42% English language learners and 43% 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 87%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The leadership and faculty continue to ensure that curriculum is aligned to the CCLS promoting coherence of practices across the school. (1.1)
  - The administrative team and staff align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and utilize Expeditionary Learning for literacy and Connected Math for math. The school is beginning to use Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK) to meet the varied needs of students. Additionally, they have embedded a program to build vocabulary called, Word Generation in social studies. As a result, students utilize this vocabulary during discussions, peer reviews and presentations observed in bilingual classes and across the grades. Additionally, the school has incorporated formative assessments that align to the CCLS and promote critical thinking skills evidenced in some of the classrooms with English language learners and special education students. These efforts lead to common language and have built the foundation for the work with the instructional shifts in the school as evidenced by the additional writing opportunities that have been embedded across content areas.
  - Teacher teams meet on a regular basis to revise curricula maps, units of study and lessons. Math teachers meet in vertical teams to review data and are beginning to make effective use of this information to identify patterns, trends and instructional gaps. In one special education classroom, students are supported by well-designed lessons that provide differentiated support that effectively engages students in learning, such as with problem solving in math classrooms and research skills evident in social studies through student presentations. Teachers are using DOK to scaffold learning and engage students through choice in projects. As a result, the school is beginning to develop common language around expectations that promote instructional coherence for all students including relevant subgroups.
- The principal uses resources creatively to support teachers with instructional initiatives that enhance academic tasks. (1.3)
  - Resources have been allocated to support the school's instructional goals to improve teaching practices. The school has invested in consultants that support teachers with literacy and mathematics content and pedagogy. For instance, during weekly teacher meetings, there is always a coach or consultant to guide teachers with collaborative planning structures to support teachers with questioning techniques and the use of the Danielson Framework tool as a guide for planning. Staff also makes use of technology in classrooms to better engage students with research based projects, evident in a bilingual social studies classroom. This use of resources and partnerships, such as the project based learning presentations across the grades enhances progress towards the school's instructional goals that provides students with rich learning experiences and meaningful work products.

- The leadership organizes teaching assignments that enable teachers to meet weekly with coaches, consultants and their peers. During these sessions, there are coaching and mentoring opportunities for teachers to improve pedagogy and content knowledge. The principal has also assigned two counselors and interns from the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) to support the social emotional needs of students through mentorship programs. Students also benefit from afterschool academic programs, and extra-curricular activities, such as cheerleading, step and flag football. Thus, the use of resources allows for practices and programs that provide students with interventions to support their academic and personal behaviors in preparation for college and careers.
- Teacher teams engage in positive collaborations that are beginning to strengthen the use of common assessments to make effective adjustments and meet student needs across the school. (2.2)
  - The school administers a variety of assessments from Expeditionary Learning, CMP3 and other school based assessments to assess student progress. Teacher teams meet weekly to plan lessons and make instructional adjustments to improve student learning opportunities. During math vertical meetings, teachers meet with the coach to analyze a variety of assessments to track student progress and provide students with meaningful feedback for improvement. Teachers use end of unit assessment data to revise the upcoming units in math. As a result, teachers are able to target skills that need to be mastered based on the instructional shifts to build fluency and problem solving. One special education classroom effectively utilizes data to monitor student progress and plans lessons that target specific skills that promote critical thinking skills. Teachers also use weekly quizzes, end of unit assessments and some student self-assessments that align to the CCLS along with writing assessments that have been refined this year to align to the new curricula in literacy and math. This type of lab-site is an example of the school's efforts to improve assessment practices in order to elevate teaching and learning across the school. As a result, student work samples reflect a balance between procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding with clear next steps for improvement.

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

- Expand teaching practices that foster cognitive engagement and inquiry for all learners resulting in deep levels of understanding and meaningful work products. (1.2)
  - The use of effective instructional supports is not consistently evident across classrooms. Although teachers plan lessons that aim to engage students, there is a limited use of questioning and discussion techniques that appropriately challenges student thinking and promotes understanding and student ownership. During classroom visits, teachers use curricula that align to the CCLS, but do not provide sufficient supports or choices for students to meet their needs effectively. Some teachers group students and provide graphic organizers to scaffold the work without appropriate interventions and extensions that consistently target specific skills, based on formative assessments. In some classrooms,

there is student participation and thinking that enables students to assess their work and that of their peers, using a rubric. However, this practice was not consistently evident across the school. As a result, there is an uneven level of student engagement and discussions that limit the ability of students to demonstrate understanding of learning objectives. This gap is also reflected in student work samples that lack the volume and depth of understanding of concepts across curricular subjects.

- Implement a consistent observation process that provides teachers with strategic feedback that is timely with appropriate support and follow-up to improve teaching and learning.(4.1)
  - School leaders support teacher development with feedback that is beginning to align to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. A review of observations from the administrative team and conversations with teachers reveals inconsistencies in terms of feedback and support. For example, the language in teacher observations does not always align to the Danielson Framework and lacks specificity for next steps for improvement. Some observations provide clear next steps and sometimes make reference to the school-wide instructional goals. Additionally, there is limited evidence that observations are followed up with consistent support using data and analysis of student work samples. The school is currently working with the network to align expectations and supports for teacher development and growth. As a result, there is a lack of alignment to the rubric and limited impact on improvement of student learning.
- Develop cohesive structures to effectively assess, evaluate and monitor instructional practices and school culture to advance student achievement and meet the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). (5.1)
  - School leaders and faculty meet during cabinet meetings, school leadership team meetings and grade level meetings throughout the year to review student progress. Data is collected but not consistently analyzed or shared across the administrative team therefore, limiting the opportunity to follow up and make timely adjustments to improve tone and culture, teaching practices and student learning. Assistant principals are currently unable to share evidence of how they work together towards the school's vision and mission to support student outcomes in a cohesive manner. There is no clear evidence of systems and structures that enable school leaders to effectively assess, evaluate, monitor and make timely curricular adjustments that positively impact student outcomes. Consequently, the leadership team is beginning to establish norms and expectations that create a responsive culture to develop the academic and personal behaviors of students in support of the CCLS. As a result, student progress is moving slowly in the school.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: School of Leadership and Development					UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>						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	