



# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Silas B. Dutcher**

**Elementary School K124**

**515 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11215**

**Principal: Annabell Burrell**

**Date of review: March 13, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

## The School Context

P.S. 124 Silas B. Dutcher is an elementary school with 342 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 54% Hispanic, 15% White, and 21% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations (professionalism, instruction, communication, and other elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching) to the entire staff, and provide training, and teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for all students.

### Impact

High expectations of all staff has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability for those expectations and teacher teams and staff are able to provide clear, focused, and effective feedback and guidance supports to ensure that students, including high-need subgroups, own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Administrators share expectations in feedback to teachers. They provide clarity of alignment to the Common Core with specific examples of what should have been done differently and specific feedback with follow-up actions. Teachers have built-in accountability knowing that the observation feedback is immediate and targets lesson needs and the check-ins by administrators are focused. Administrators are also present at team meetings. In order for students to demonstrate growth to the next level, teachers plan small group supports for high, medium, and lower level groups based on benchmark pre-unit assessments. English language learner students get substantial vocabulary support with pictures and translations. As a result of these efforts, students have moved up in Fountas and Pinnell reading levels, demonstrating growth in literacy.
- Teachers give feedback to students about their progress and review progress reports with each student prior to sending it home. The progress reports are distributed between report cards. Families attend the Principal's Tea to share standards for the next grade that students are working towards and the progress they are making.
- Teachers are now focusing on mathematical practices and the quality of reading notebooks. They are working to raise the level of relevance of student work with daily notes to students and feedback on collecting student work. Teachers in the upper grades are working with planners with their students to foster ownership of their own learning through time and assignment management.

## Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies (including questioning, scaffolds in English or native language, and routines) inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

### Impact

Inconsistent teaching strategies has led to uneven engagement in appropriately challenging tasks and uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

### Supporting Evidence

- Based on feedback from observations, teachers looked at the quality of questions being asked of students and support students in developing their own questions so that they take ownership of their learning. Teachers are now modeling a range of questions and students are more comfortable asking questions. Though in some cases questioning is more literal, teachers are making an effort to go deeper and using wait time to allow students time to generate more discussion. This is not fully codified school-wide as yet. In one social studies segment, for example, the teacher selected topics for the students and gave them a question sheet. The children were not clear as to the task to be completed. In another class, the teacher read aloud to students and asked “What kind of problem would you go to Strega Nona for?” “Would you like to fly somewhere? Where would you go?”
- There are more visuals for English language learners and clear expectations in terms of description of the learning focus with a final summary aligned to that focus. In a social studies class, an English language learner with weak language use received check marks as feedback. All classes have English language learners or former English language learners. In a bridge self-contained class, students were doing the same assignment with the same book and given the same questions. There was no differentiation for a complex text.
- In one class, the teacher circulated among students and directed those who were done to get another rubric and grade each other. One student was confused while the strongest student reference language in the workbook. In one class students used writing checklists for their opinion piece planning. Students explained that it tells them if they did the “right stuff in writing.”

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core, integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students, and planning and refining using student work and data.

### Impact

Purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students lead to curricula with skills and learning activities allowing for a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, to have access to the curricula and tasks and be cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are ensuring that the curriculum is aligned with the Common Core and they plan with the standards in mind. The curriculum includes opportunities for student to revisit errors and make corrections before the teacher gives the final grade so that students can learn from mistakes and deepen their thinking. Though the school has adopted Pearson's ReadyGEN they have noticed some challenges. Teachers are now going to modify the literacy curriculum to include more writing through questioning and responses in reading notebooks. The grade 1 teacher team took out two units and included a social studies unit and a science unit from previous years.
- The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test data has led to addition of more writing for English Language Learners and providing differentiated support by front-loading vocabulary and previewing the text prior to a whole class lesson. For example: Teachers have seen growth in English language learners' literacy levels.
- The principal has modified teacher review of student work with a protocol to record the review of student work so that teachers are surfacing learning gaps in units and addressing them. An example was that the kindergarten performance task language is different with more academic language and "corner for vertices." Teachers decided to research kindergarten math Common Core vocabulary and shared the findings that included implementing the vocabulary into instruction as a grade.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas. Teachers' assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

### **Impact**

Results from common assessments, checks for understanding and student self-assessment are used to adjust curricula and instruction to make effective adjustments to meet all students' learning needs.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The alignment to the Common Core is evidenced by the enhanced writing expectations seen in classes based on the benchmark and pre-unit assessments. Reading level progress is set with a benchmark and three additional assessments throughout the year to monitor student progress. Student writing in student notebooks are reviewed in team meetings for day-to-day learning and teachers use the data to map instruction accordingly. A significant number of students have shown reading progress.
- Checks for understanding were visible in classroom visits, and teachers responded instantly to student confusion. Students were seen self-assess using rubrics and peer assessments. Students are comfortable with use of rubric daily in problem-solving.
- When teachers noticed in summative assessments that students were challenged with number and operations they created math fluency supports for targeted students using technology during library free time. Teachers are reviewing changes to ReadyGEN writing performance tasks for next year to replace periodic assessments.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core (including the instructional shifts), and teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

**Impact**

Engaging in inquiry-based professional collaborations has strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers allowing them to improve teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teacher teams meet once a week during two common preps by grade and vertically. In their planning teachers review student work and group the work by middle, high and low based on benchmark and pre-unit assessments. Teachers looked for evidence of writing as their focus and it surfaced grammar and usage learning needs. Teachers identified the need to have direct instruction and extension by self-selecting a project and then writing about it. .
- The principal leads the professional development on Mondays with a focus on writing and questioning, how to have students formulate questions, and teacher-chosen book clubs with an array of selection. The principal supported teachers of new comers with one-to-one professional development. Teachers attended the ReadyGEN summer professional development which made the curriculum more relevant. They are supported with common planning preps and are given flexibility by the principal. Teachers feel very supported and they have a collaborative culture.
- Teachers noted that the shift to the Common Core has meant that the reading is more difficult, especially for English language learners. They further noted, however, that students in grade 5 have already had exposure to non-fiction due to the previous social studies tests that explored primary sources. Teachers also described their use of Bloom’s Taxonomy to support English language learners and commented on how they work collaboratively, utilizing each other as resources. Additionally, they spoke to the collaborative use of paraprofessional support for English language learners as a phenomenal resource in PreK through grade 1.