

Quality Review **Report**

2008-2009

Community School 092

Elementary School 092

700 East 179 Street
Bronx
NY 10457

Principal: Anthony Warn

Dates of review: April 6 - 7, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Community School 92 is an elementary school with 560 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 71% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 88% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.

Community School 92, under the helm of a new forward-thinking principal has, in a short period of time, introduced procedures that show great promise for producing improved achievement results for its students. In just one and one-half years the school has undergone various large-scale changes and the faculty is on a fast-track trajectory to implement practices and analyze and self-reflect on their progress. Teachers plan collaboratively and pay close attention to data and student outcomes.

The school looks at informal student data from various viewpoints. This year, for the first time, it has focused on students who have been retained at some point in their academic histories. This has alerted the school staff to address these students' needs as a priority. The school is also viewing student achievement in the lowest third performance levels and ethnic and gender subgroups. However, teachers are not provided with disaggregated data for these and there is not an expectation that these students' ongoing progress is to be monitored for the time being. The principal is comfortable presenting data and information through the use of technology and a further major change is in the use of electronic curriculum maps accessed through an online mapping service. This facility has presented teachers with the opportunity to structure their collaboratively designed lessons around a standardized template to allow a vertical view of the curriculum, especially in English language arts. The school is now reflecting on its units of study from grade to grade and questioning not only areas of duplication but also that which will best serve the individual needs of students by deepening and differentiating the units that are repeated in subsequent grades. Technology has likewise been usefully employed in the development of spreadsheets that provide summaries of teacher meetings, informal and formal observations and walkthroughs. Even so there is not yet a consistent link between this data and expectations for interim targets or timeframes for revisiting and revising goals or objectives for improving instruction. The school has measured student success against benchmarks in English language arts and is now monitoring math as well. It has not yet set long-term goals or interim measurable goals for progress monitoring for all content areas or school plans. Neither are students fully informed of their short-term targets from which they themselves are able to assess their own progress.

The principal continues to consider and develop next steps for the school and is generating positive feedback from staff and parents. The school's creative efforts to reach out to parents to include them in their children's personal and academic growth are commendable. Parents feel welcome and state they are "included in everything".

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administration has introduced a wide and varied range of assessment data to create different entry points for analysis of student outcomes.
- The school communicates high expectations for parental involvement and student attendance through creative outreach that has led to increased attendance at parent/teacher conferences and other school events.
- The school provides a calm, safe, nurturing environment that is conducive to learning.
- The administration has made teacher collaboration a high priority which has resulted in opportunities for teachers to plan together, visit each other's and similar school's classrooms, in order to enhance practice.
- The school is supportive of students, staff and families and is committed to future growth while beginning to articulate a clear vision.

What the school needs to improve

- Utilize existing data collection procedures to provide students with clear, next steps for improvement and to help them articulate and self-assess progress towards measurable goals.
- Extend current analysis of subgroup data to address root causes of learning needs in all subject areas.
- Build on the promising beginning to the school's standardized assessment toolkit to ensure that lessons are aligned to students' achievement levels and all students are sufficiently challenged.
- Refine the teacher goal-setting process with rigorous monitoring procedures and measurable, interim checkpoints to ensure the link between professional growth and improved student outcomes.
- Sharpen analysis of school organizational decisions and practices by identifying specific interim and long-term goals with measurable outcomes in order to assess progress towards desired targets and make adjustments.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school collects a wide range of student data that includes informal as well as formative, diagnostic assessments. Data provides the school with a view towards longitudinal growth in various content areas and ongoing student progress and notably, trends in English language arts. The Learning Support Organization provides item analysis reports for English language arts and math and information as to areas of strength and need for students in each performance indicator. Through examination of English language arts school-wide data, the school has established that students are in need of extra support in comprehending non-fiction text. Examination of math assessments has yielded concerns in number sense and operations with place value as a missing, critical foundational skill. The school has recently begun to utilize this information to revise the math curriculum. Teachers keep data binders with assessment information but student portfolios with relevant student work are not yet tied to these and their strengths and needs. As a result, careful monitoring of performance and progress is not facilitated for teachers or students.

Administration keeps year-to-year comparisons on the performance for various sub-groups. Students who appear on multiple progress report categories are identified for targeted support through academic intervention providers or a small group instruction period. They are also viewing student progress such as lowest third, ethnicity and gender but the school has yet to provide teachers with disaggregated data on subgroups in their classes. There has been increased monitoring and awareness this year of students who have been previously held over. This has created a deeper understanding for teachers of these students' social and emotional needs.

Attendance is closely monitored and the school has created an increased awareness for this through: its ongoing monitoring, a visual display of daily attendance towards the stated goal and daily announcements regarding perfect attendance. The school has made a concerted effort this year to bring parents into school to discuss student progress and performance. It has established other creative outlets such as open forums before parent-teacher conferences, allowing for school aides to assist with dismissal so teachers can confer with parents when they pick their students up from school, and a "confidential room" for parents to discuss their children's academic progress with the school-based support team. This has led to an increase in the number of parents who are receiving progress updates and who are providing information to the school regarding their child's unique strengths and needs.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal has made the use of running records for reading a school-wide practice. Teachers are expected to conduct reading assessments on a monthly basis. This is a new practice and teachers are beginning to understand and use the assessment data for small-group instruction. Their analysis has been assisted through the addition of a program that provides teachers with clear examples of expected skills and strategy use at various levels of reading. The school’s inquiry team has been instrumental in increasing teacher comfort levels with use of additional periodic assessment data. The team is itself becoming more familiar with analysis of data and the setting of measurable short- and long-term goals. The school does not yet consistently analyze assessments to provide progress monitoring of measurable goals between units of study or teacher-student conferences and the team’s current communication structure with lead teachers has resulted in lack of understanding of the classroom teachers’ roles in the process.

While some teachers transition through individual student conferences with a clear determination as to the status of students’ skill achievement, this is not yet a consistent practice school-wide as some conferences are not linked to previous learning or expectations. Teachers use rubrics in most content areas but these, as yet, are not standards-based and feedback is therefore articulated in broad statements such as “you answered the question being asked” or “your sentences are complete”. This creates a lack of clarity as to the degree of success reached and insufficient detail for next-steps for students and parents, as they describe goals broadly, for instance, merely as “a level 4 on all subjects”.

Parents understand and appreciate the efforts the school staff makes to reach out to them and provide information on what their children are learning. They express great satisfaction about learning new ways to assist their children at home and the school’s Family Learning Nights bring more parents to school for these necessary collaborations.

The principal has set an open tone in the school where teachers and parents feel empowered to bring suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The school’s progress report has served as a catalyst for self-reflection and open forums have been held for staff and parents to provide input towards the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan. Teachers trained in *Teach for America’s* performance tracking approach, have been instrumental in the school’s increased use of data to monitor progress towards its whole school goals.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

This area of the school’s work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The tone in both classrooms and the school building is calm and nurturing. Students enthusiastically claim that they feel safe and can name more than one adult in the school building who they could rely on for assistance and support.

Teacher collaborative planning is evident as: charts, student work and the utilization of graphic organizers are consistent throughout the classrooms in each grade. This

planning has enabled teachers to specifically address New York State standards and utilize common assessments for units of study. Teachers have an informed overview of the structure and pace of the units. Most lessons are sequenced and aligned but not all are delivered to ensure that students have sufficient background knowledge and key skills to enable them to remain effectively engaged with lesson content. Not all students experience rigorous learning activities to enrich their knowledge sufficiently. Delivery of instruction is not consistently challenging, nor are all students engaged at their individual achievement levels. However, the school addresses the needs of struggling students through small-group lessons and groupings in the classroom. The math club provides challenge for some high-achieving students and their efforts have been rewarded with the receipt of second and third place prizes in a competition run by the New York City chapter of the American Statistical Association.

The principal has made strategic organizational decisions to support a more coherent instructional approach. Many classrooms have received upgraded computers through the creative use of resources and procurement of grants. Teachers utilize the computers to extend their lessons for research purposes and students are able to access them as well for their inquiry based learning in science.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has developed a spreadsheet that provides summaries of teacher meetings, informal and formal observations and walkthroughs. This data is viewed by the administration and coaches to pinpoint areas of strength and need for professional development offerings and resources on specific areas of practice. They use the stages of implementation from the *Santa Cruz Professional Teaching Standards* to evaluate teacher strengths and needs set against specific indicators. The administration has not yet facilitated the link between individual and whole school planning so that the highest standards of progression from one stage of implementation to the next can be more easily communicated and achieved. This has resulted in little to no movement in implementation stage for some practices, over the course of several months.

The principal is proud to have reversed the high teacher turnover rate the school has previously experienced. This is especially supported by the new teacher orientation that occurs in the summer months along with ongoing mentoring during the school year resulting in a smooth transition for these teachers to the life of the school and teaching profession as a whole. Teachers feel supported in their professional growth. They are asked to complete a "Teacher Development Goals" template and this is referenced when outside professional development or inter-visitation opportunities present themselves at other schools. Teachers are very appreciative of this and feel that such support helps them to be on the "same page" with their peers.

The school has called upon the services of an outside agency to work with specific students on social-emotional needs. This has provided assistance to students who would not otherwise receive it as they are not currently mandated for services. Teacher anecdotal evidence resulted in the utilization of clinicians from the school's individualized education planning team as co-teachers in classrooms for lessons on respect and social development. This has helped develop a shared understanding of behavioral expectations and has facilitated communication among students and teachers around related issues.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is underdeveloped with proficient features.

The principal has initiated promising, research-based practices that are expected to help the school meet its Comprehensive Educational Plan goals. Many of the efforts made by the school are geared towards English language arts with the expectation that other text-based content areas such as social studies and science should also see growth as students generalize literacy strategies and skills. Data indicates that students, school-wide, experience difficulties with non-fiction texts and the school has implemented genre-based units of study with the view to overcome this deficit. They have also added a test-taking unit to further familiarize students with the format and language of the English language arts and math informal assessments. The progress to date of these practices, as expressed in student outcomes across the content areas, has not yet been fully analyzed.

The school has established benchmarks in reading and with the school-wide practice of guided reading and there is also a review of *Fountas & Pinnell* levels five times a year. Teachers analyze the results of informal and periodic assessments to determine small group configurations for strategy or skill lessons in English language arts. The analysis of prior year student outcomes has begun in math but has not yet extended to other content areas, nor has the differentiation of whole class lessons or revision of measurable goals based on data been accomplished. There is not yet a revision process for all school plans, including teacher and student goals, that is geared towards improving learning.

The principal has a clear vision for the school and is working to ensure that all are onboard with the goals necessary towards meeting this vision. There is a strong desire at all levels to continue the substantial engagement that has already taken place with school development planning. Commendably, much work has already been implemented and more is underway in a number of areas. Staff are clear on the goals for the school year which teachers express as "NAME", an acronym to express the need to address new teacher retention, attendance issues, and improving outcomes in math and English language arts. These goals have focused the staff on issues based on the examination of summative assessments.

The principal has made good use of his review of data to implement changes and evaluate organizational decisions that were put in place prior to his assignment as principal. As a result of a comprehensive review of data, he has: hired an assistant principal with a background in balanced literacy and special education, contracted with a consultant group for support with guided reading, retrained teachers on the *Junior Great Books* series, implemented structured grade team meetings, and introduced an online curriculum planning program and online program for coaches and administration to document teacher observations. Current plans, though, do not yet incorporate quantifiable interim benchmarks and timeframes for gauging the impact of these new organizational decisions.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Community School 92	Δ	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score		X		
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		X		
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X	
Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?		X		
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X		

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYO, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?		X					
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3							
		X					
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?			X				
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4							
			X				
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X					
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?		X					
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?		X					
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5							
		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed