

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Mill Basin

Elementary School 236

**6302 Avenue U
Brooklyn
11234**

Principal: Mary Barton

Dates of review: February 8 – 9, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Marianne Ferrara

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mill Basin, Public School 236 is an elementary school with 632 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24% Black, 6% Hispanic, 63% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Mill Basin shares the building with Public School 771, a District 75 school. The children from both schools share facilities such as the lunchroom, gymnasium and auditorium space. The schools also share the services of a school psychologist. The interaction between the children and the adults in both schools is very positive.

The school's environment is both welcoming and nurturing. The parents and students acknowledge that the school culture is one of mutual respect. Programs to encourage positive behaviors are followed consistently, school wide. The relationship between the school and its families is very good, with many parents participating in workshops and events that assist them in working with their children at home. The school's decision-making processes enable parents to voice their opinions and make recommendations regarding activities and programs. Parents state that the school supports the academic and social needs of their children and they are confident that the school always acts in the best interest of the students. Parents receive their children's goals and teachers communicate with them if there are concerns. However, there is no interim reporting system in place between designated reporting periods to inform them of their children's performance.

The principal is a strong instructional leader who believes that each child is an individual who benefits from exposure to a coherent curriculum, inclusive of the arts and so the curriculum is well developed and offers a wide range of opportunities. The administration provides multiple opportunities for teachers to engage in and request professional development, impacting positively on the quality of teaching and learning. The effective use of personnel, budget and organizational resources supports school programs and teacher initiatives. Scheduling design enables teacher teams to meet and collaborate by grade level as well as across grades. This practice has a positive effect on lesson planning and refining instructional practices. Although students engage in learning activities, differentiation of instruction to address different learning styles and abilities is not evident in all classes.

The school-wide practice of goal-setting meetings for reviewing student data helps teachers to set goals for students and to provide instruction for them to meet these goals. Teachers evaluate progress toward achieving these goals on an ongoing basis. This enables them to explicitly understand the areas they must target to improve student outcomes. The school gives careful attention to tracking subgroups of students needing intervention. However, there is not the same rigorous attention to identifying patterns and trends and providing extensions for higher-achieving students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders make informed and effective data based organizational decisions and allocate resources to support student achievement.
 - School leaders use data to make effective personnel, funding and scheduling decisions. Scheduling design enables teachers to collaborate, review student data and engage in professional development. With the influx of English language learners in the early childhood classes, funding for a licensed teacher to provide a foundation in language acquisition is a priority that is benefitting these students.
 - This community depends largely on grants and actively pursues cost-free opportunities to enhance the instructional process. The result of this successful outreach is programs in music, art and law that the school is able to offer its students.
- The school provides opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful and differentiated professional development aligned with school initiatives.
 - The administration provides opportunities for all teachers to engage in and request professional development. New teachers work with the assistant principal, view demonstration lessons and receive support from the coach to assist them as they develop teaching strategies. Unlimited technical support is available for all teachers to ensure that they understand data tools and use them effectively to diagnose needs and inform instruction.
 - Teacher schedules incorporate time to work and plan by grade levels as well as with peers on other grades. The Kindergarten-2 teachers meet regularly, as do the grades 3-5 teachers, to discuss goal setting and contiguous grade-related curriculum issues. These collaborations encourage conversations about best practices and add to the professional growth of the teachers. Teachers receive training for all new initiatives such as Smart boards.
- The principal's instructional leadership focuses the school community on a relevant and broad curriculum that engages and encourages students to be active learners.
 - The principal's instructional knowledge ensures that all key curriculum decisions are in alignment with State standards. Through monitoring of instruction, she, along with the assistant principal, provide teachers with materials and guidance necessary to engage students in a coherent curriculum that addresses subgroups, especially special education students and English language learners.
 - School data from various sources indicates that focusing on vocabulary enrichment and use of academic language accelerates student learning across grade levels and subject areas. The school's action plan identifies a program specific to improving this area, provides training for teachers and effectively tracks student success.

- Teachers work collaboratively in teacher teams, participate in collegial conversations and identify practices that support student progress.
 - Teacher teams meet by grade level to engage in collaborative inquiry. Curriculum discussions and goal-setting activities help them to improve their teaching skills and share practices, such as strategies for looking at authentic student work. This distributive leadership model ensures that teachers play a key role in decision making, and assists them in developing strategies for targeting students' instructional needs.
 - Members of the core inquiry team assist teacher teams in implementing practices and programs. They share suggestions, disseminate data that teachers use for planning, and work collaboratively on teacher teams. These activities encourage teachers to design and have ownership of curriculum maps and pacing calendars and to develop a coherent approach to implementing the curriculum.
- The school uses interim goals and benchmarks as a focal point to measure progress and evaluate student success and teacher effectiveness.
 - School leaders consistently gather, analyze and share school-wide data in order to set interim goals and evaluate progress toward achieving them. This enables them to monitor and track successes of subgroups of students, such as special education students, and to disseminate information regarding intensive interventions that will help students attain their goals. The result is very few Level 1 and 2 students in this subgroup.
 - Teachers use their own assessments, in addition to ARIS, Acuity and ECLAS, to develop student goals. School leaders analyze data to gain knowledge of students' abilities, improve instructional strategies, and provide materials and training for teachers to ensure their effectiveness.
- The school provides a safe and nurturing environment where students receive the academic, emotional, and social support they need to succeed.
 - In order to promote value building and character development among students, the Idea of the Week and the Book of the Month selections emphasize positive behaviors. These school wide initiatives are a response to staff discussions regarding discipline issues identified in the last Learning Environment Survey.
 - Staff members know the students well and they enjoy a good rapport with them. This relationship enables students to speak comfortably with adults and allows the faculty to identify and address social and academic issues that arise with individual children. Children enjoy school, stating that the school is great and the teachers are caring and respectful. The parents describe the school as an extension of their family.
- The school has a good communication system in place to share relevant information with families regarding student progress and school programs.
 - The school offers parents many opportunities to be partners in their children's' learning. They participate in an array of instructional

workshops that include curriculum topics, goal setting and ARIS Parent Link. This increases their knowledge of available educational resources and reinforces the school's high expectations for students to succeed.

- The school uses many communication sources to share school wide information with families, such as the monthly newsletter, the school website and email. The Parent Association and School Leadership Team meetings provide opportunities for their input in developing the Comprehensive Educational Plan, discussing budget issues and school-wide programs. Parents feel the principal values their opinions and works with them to provide worthwhile educational experiences for children.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the rigor in differentiating instruction so that tasks accommodate different learning styles and questioning extends higher-order thinking skills.
 - Evidence of differentiated instructional strategies, that address a wide range of student ability levels, is apparent in classes where teachers work cooperatively to prepare lessons targeting the needs and strengths of subgroups of students. However, differentiation does not occur consistently throughout the school.
 - Many teachers use worksheets and textbook assignments to assess skill and concept competency. Authentic and meaningful work products that demonstrate students' understanding of the lessons are not consistently evident.
- Refine the systemic approach to disaggregate data to identify patterns and adjust practices and tools to challenge higher-achieving students.
 - The school uses data to carefully analyze individual and class performance and to ensure that subgroups of students receive interventions to address their specific areas of need. However, the analysis of data for the subgroup of high-achieving students does not lead to the consistent delivery of rigorous and challenging instruction and extensions.
 - The school uses a wide range of assessments and resources to produce a clear picture of students' abilities. Systemically, however, the school does not make use of analysis of performance trends for high achievers to make classroom-level curriculum adjustment decisions.
- Provide students and families with formal interim progress reports to inform them of student progress.
 - Parents receive information about children's goals with recommendations for achieving them. However, there is no formal communication or interim progress report at consistent intervals to provide parents with an overall picture of their children's performance in all subject areas. Many teachers speak with parents informally if there are specific concerns about a student's progress. However, the distribution of written progress reports that monitor student progress is not in place.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Mill Basin (Public School 236)	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X			
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X			
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X			
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X			
Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?				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			
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X			
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals 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 progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?				X			
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X				
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?				X			
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X			
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed