

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**George V. Brower**

**Elementary School 289**

**900 St. Marks Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11213**

**Principal: Dennis O. Jeffers**

**Dates of review: October 27 - 28, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Rhonda Hurdle-Taylor**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Henry V. Brower is an elementary school with 725 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 88% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal, ably supported by his Assistant Principals, demonstrates a relentless drive to ensure the overall success of all students. He has skillfully targeted critical resources where they will have the most impact. Changes made since the last quality review have resulted in improvements to the school's climate and to student progress. The school's alliance with a community-based organization that funds their positive behavior intervention and support program, has led to constructive changes including the implementation of student incentives awarded for good behavior, the school tone being calm and conducive to learning and to student behavior being generally good. Central to the school's improvements is an enhanced use of data collected from ARIS, Acuity, students' daily assessment sheets and periodic assessments that allow teachers to have a clearer understanding and a better awareness of how to evaluate the performance and progress of student groups. This has resulted in improved student progress. School leaders recognize the value of having a wide and varied range of assessment data and under their leadership, the inquiry team has led the way in using the data effectively to monitor and review academic growth and to arrange suitable academic intervention services for students in need. As a result, interim assessments show that targeted students are steadily improving in math and English language arts.

The work of this team points the way to implementing successful instructional strategies more broadly across the school. However, teacher response across the school to accepting and implementing changes vary. Although instruction is a top priority, the quality and impact of instruction frequently lacks rigor. While there are some good examples of teachers using data to differentiate instruction effectively, this practice is not consistent across the school and therefore not embedded across all content areas. Similarly, some lessons are engaging for students while others are not. As a result, there is a need for the school to provide professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen and advance their instructional practices.

Students enjoy attending school in a learning environment that celebrates their work, and provides opportunities that help them grow socially and emotionally. They share that their teachers and principal are available to assist them when there is a problem. As one student states, "we feel like a family even though we are not related." Parents are particularly appreciative of the Sidewalks afterschool literacy program they believe provides additional challenge to the curriculum.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and staff work collaboratively to create a calm respectful and orderly environment in which learning can take place.
  - The overall tranquil tone of the building and the orderly manner in which students enter, exit and move throughout the day result in a tone that is conducive for learning.
- Students benefit from a standards-based curriculum, aligned to State standards that include art and technology.
  - The various technology programs available to students, including Read 180, Soar, smart boards and computers in the classroom, have enabled them to develop technological skills that they use well for research, writing and revising across content areas.
  - The extensive range of student art work beautifully displayed school-wide reflect the blue print for art standards and is evident in thematic units.
- Through regular use of a wide range of relevant data, leaders and faculty have an understanding of the performance and progress of individuals, by group and by subject, which informs whole school instruction.
  - Teachers analyze student daily assessment sheets, ARIS, ECLAS and Acuity reports, Periodic and in-house assessments to identify students' areas of need and to revise lessons in order to meet those needs.
  - During conferencing, teachers review the assessment results on their classroom data walls to allow students to monitor their own progress and teachers to evaluate on-going student progress.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices.
  - Formal and informal classroom observation reports, common planning meetings, classroom inter-visitations, and one-on-one conferences help teachers to review and revise their instructional practice and adjust the curriculum in order to improve student outcomes.
- The school's systems and partnerships support students in continual learning and promote students' personal growth and development.
  - The school's positive behavior intervention and support program has significantly decreased student suspension by giving students alternatives to poor behavior, offering guidance services to help them resolve conflicts and providing incentives for improved behavior.
  - After-school programs enrich the lives of students and promote academic growth. Test results indicate that students who participate in extended day programs show gains on their standardized tests results.

- Leaders use a wide range of data to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, interventions, professional development supports and deployment of staff. Teacher teams meet to examine student work and assessments and share best educational practices. As a result, they are able to adjust their teaching practice, adjust classroom assessments and adjust the curriculum as necessary.
- The use of teacher data reports, surveys on professional development needs, and student progress reports influence staff assignments and leads to tiered professional support. The school implemented multi-year assignments based on a dip in English language arts fourth grade scores in an effort to sustain the good progress demonstrated in third grade.

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

- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, tasks accommodate different learning styles and questions extend thinking, to maximize student learning.
  - Lessons are not sufficiently differentiated to meet the academic needs or strengths of individual students or student groups.
  - Classroom lessons do not demonstrate sufficiently rigorous instruction or challenge students to engage in higher order thinking. Teacher questions are not thought provoking and do not stimulate critical thinking.
- Extend and expand communication and collaboration with parents to increase their capacity to assist in their child's learning.
  - Parents are unaware of how to make use of tools such as ARIS parent link to examine their children's performance and support their academic progress as the school has not yet provided training.
  - Does not consistently provide parents with Interim progress reports, newsletters and other viable communication tools that inform them of ways they can help their children attain their goals.
- Extend the analysis of assessment data in all content areas to inform goal setting at all levels.
  - The administrative staff set goals at the school-wide and grade level. However, teachers are not using the data to set goals in all content areas at the classroom level so as to further support student learning.
- Strengthen teachers' response to all student work, to reflect guiding comments and level of performance, to convey high expectations and clear next steps.
  - Comments on students' work school-wide are generic and often do not include specific strategies that students should use in order to improve their work. This has led to students repeating errors.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: George V. Brower Elementary School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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	
<b>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.</b>				
<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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>
---	-----------------------	---	--	---	-------------------	---	-----------------------