

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Satellite West Middle School

Middle School 313

**209 York Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Suzane Joseph

Dates of review: February 3 - 4, 2010

Lead Reviewer: James Machen

Part 1: The school context

Satellite West is a middle school with 247 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 76% Black, 23% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 95%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

At Satellite West Middle School, teachers and school leaders align curriculum and instruction strategically with State standards to inform organizational decisions and offer a wide range of meaningful programmed experiences and learning opportunities for all students. Their thoughtful planning results in creating a calm, well-ordered, nurturing environment where students feel safe to optimize their learning potential. As a result, all students benefit from a broad, well-balanced and exciting education that includes the arts. Planning for improvement is collaborative and informed by data. However, plans infrequently define interim measures of progress and students' subject goals lack tight alignment to identified learning needs. Additionally, several teachers demonstrate that they have not yet mastered the skill of transferring data analysis and interim goal setting to consistently select a sufficient variety of challenging instructional materials to ensure that the appropriate level of rigor exists for each student. The school's clear expectations for instructional differentiation, though, accompanied by professional training, are resulting in lessons where more teachers are expanding the quantity and quality of engaging activities to support individual student's learning needs.

While there are no specific individualized plans for teachers' professional development, teachers are supported by administrators and by an effective array of professional development courses but these are not always channeled to meet the specific needs of every teacher. Coupled with this, individual staff are still developing their own action plans to fit with the school's overall goals and targets. Encouragingly, there are many opportunities for teacher collaboration with which to enhance their instructional capacity and to be involved in school leadership.

Leaders and teachers collect and analyze sufficient data across subjects and grades to provide themselves with information for planning for the school as a whole and for all groups. However, systems for the analysis of student data to enable students, teachers and parents to better understand and track each student's progress is underdeveloped. There are good lines of communication between home and school to inform of progress and work is in hand to streamline this through technology enhancements.

The entire school community benefits from a decent variety of learning resources across all core content areas. These resources are allocated based on school data. This results in all teachers being able to deepen their use of a wider variety of instructional strategies. The school realizes that there is a need to supplement funding and resources by expanding strategic partnerships with a broader range of agencies and organizations.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curriculum and instruction are well aligned to State standards in all subjects, inform organizational decisions and offer a wide range of programming experiences, including the arts to facilitate student-learning opportunities.
 - The school offers a standards-based curriculum in all core subjects to support the capacity to apply rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills. The school uses curriculum maps, linked to State standards, in all core subjects to guide the instructional process. As a result, all teachers are keenly aware of what should be taught and when.
 - Teachers use formative and summative assessment results to link and align their next steps to key standards. Consequently, teachers feel comfortable with their scope and sequence for units of instruction.
- The school is a calm and well-ordered community of learners, which is providing students with opportunities to nurture their artistic and creative talents.
 - Monthly meetings to monitor student group and individual needs provide numerous opportunities to develop strategies to motivate and engage students and are designed to improve positive social behavior. Thus, staff, teachers, students and parents feel that the tone of the school is having a positive impact on the entire school climate.
 - The school designs a variety of educational programs that recognize, develop and nurture students' talents. Students indicated, "band, dance and chorus are the things that makes school more enjoyable," and make it "fun and exciting". As a result, their attendance in the current school term is improving and they are confident.
- Students and teachers benefit from a variety of learning resources across all core content areas.
 - The strategic deployment of Smart Board technology, the use of highly skilled instructional staff focused on the neediest students, the renovation of a new science lab, and the expansion of the arts programming have served to support instructional learning opportunities of all students.
 - Resources are allocated based on school data. This has resulted in the creation of the In-House Professional Development Plan with a focus on differentiated instruction and visual literacy. Consequently, all teachers are expanding their use of a wider variety of instructional strategies.
- The collaborative environment affords teachers and staff the opportunity to share in all aspects of the school.
 - The English language arts and math coaches work with the core subject teachers and administrative staff to set class and school goals. These goals

are based on formative and summative test data and established during common planning time to ensure collaboration and linkage to desired student outcomes.

- o The school leaders and faculty are exposed to a wide array of strategic professional development opportunities, which serve to enhance teacher craft in the area of leadership development. Thus, teachers are afforded numerous opportunities to engage in distributed leadership and expand their repertoire of proven instructional strategies. This results in teachers citing being proud of their professional growth and open exchange of instructional ideas.
- The instructional leadership of the administrative team has created a professional learning community, resulting in increasingly differentiated instruction within classrooms.
 - o The school's timely and effective use of Professional Learning Communities to facilitate teachers sharing best practices has resulted in increased use of differentiated instructional strategies across the school. Consequently, teachers are at the beginning stages of implementing improved instructional strategies.
- The instructional staff use a wide range of relevant data to track the achievement and progress of individual students
 - o The school uses multiple sources of data to identify students for specific intervention programs. Teacher teams and school leaders regularly reviews students' State and ARIS data. This has resulted in improved student achievement and monthly attendance and a decrease in the number of student suspensions.
 - o A school-wide thoughtful approach to gathering, analyzing and using subgroup data provides the basis for many scheduling and student grouping decisions. This is leading to a number of content area and special education teachers to collaborate and team-teach during mathematics instruction. As a result, effective instructional strategies are used to ensure that special education students and struggling students are well supported.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all goals and plans include measurable interim goals by which to monitor progress and inform instructional adjustments.
 - o Administrators and school leaders periodically review progress toward long-term goals collaboratively, but not all goals and plans, contain interim measures and timeframes detailed sufficiently to monitor and guide progress toward improved student outcomes for all. For example, the Comprehensive Educational Plan continues to be an effective planning tool for instructional improvement. However, there is a lack of interim measures to benchmark school growth toward defined long-term goals and this makes it difficult for progress to be monitored accurately and modifications efficiently made. Additionally, teachers are unable to provide timely feedback to families of how far their children are toward meeting their long-term goals and how they might help them themselves.

- Expand partnerships with a range of agencies and organizations to support students' personal and academic growth.
 - o The school is at the beginning stages of evaluating how to use outside organizations more effectively to support the school's mission and vision.
 - o Although the school administration identified, Heart Share and Positive Conflict Behavior Management as two partnerships with outside agencies, the school does not share the benefits of these partnerships with the entire school community.
- Develop, with teachers, individualized professional development plans to guide further improvements for them and their students, and use these to inform and give feedback on instructional effectiveness and as part of the whole-school development plans.
 - o Teachers receive frequent and helpful feedback on their instruction through observations by assistant principal and principal. Experienced teachers and those new to the profession are equally well supported. This dual observation system has been effective in implementing initiatives of the school's professional development plan, especially the institution of common approaches to lesson planning. However, teachers do not have individual professional development plans specific to their particular needs for improved instruction. The school's desired targets coupled with the identification of which development decisions are most successful and efficient for future use is not clear.
- Extend systems for the development of student goals and data to enable students, teachers and parents to better understand and track each student's progress.
 - o The school has established communication systems with families to promote active involvement and participation in their children's education. The school sends out student progress reports to parents quarterly and offer "SNAP" grades as another method of keeping them informed. However parents are not provided with a clear indication of their child's next learning steps so they can better work as partners with the school.
 - o The instructional staff is in the early stages of developing coherent policies and practices, aligned to strategies that are designed to consistently challenge the higher-achieving students. An example of this is their use of the Junior Great Books program to develop their inquiry-based instructional strategies in reading, literacy, and critical thinking.

School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

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|---|---|---|----------|----------|
| School name: Satellite West Middle School | △ | ➤ | ✓ | + |
| Overall QR Score | | | X | |
| Quality Statement 1 – Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: 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 and deliver rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, 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 its 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 |