

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Brighter Choice Community School**

**Elementary School 627**

**260 Hart Street  
Brooklyn  
NY11206**

**Principal: Fabayo McIntosh**

**Dates of review: March 24 - 25, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the School

Brighter Choice Community School serves students at the Elementary (General Academic) level. The school has 108 students enrolled in grades PK, K, 1, 2, 3, SE. The school population comprises 2% white students, 69% black students, 28% Hispanic students, 1% Native American students, 51% boys, and 49% girls. Currently, 7% of the student body are English language learners. The school enrolls 19% students with Individual Education Plans (IEP's). Attendance data is not available.

Overall Evaluation

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

The Brighter Choice Elementary School is in its second year of existence. The school views collaborations as necessary and productive vehicles for school improvement and student achievement. As a result, the principal, parents and faculty purposefully plan and make decisions that facilitate the implementation of school-wide goals and support student learning and progress. These include the implementation of a new reading series, programming the school to accommodate time for meetings and recruiting parents as vital partners in the schooling process. In addition, the principal generates distributive leadership among faculty and parents by encouraging their continuous active participation on school leadership teams, committees, and school events as key decision-makers. The caring, trusting, and supportive environment created by all members of the school community, nurtures students' emotional, social and academic development.

One of the principal's focus areas this year is professional development and the creation of a community of learners. To this end, teachers and faculty regularly participate in a variety of professional development activities that target professional conversations, sharing and growth. All teachers also participate in inquiry team processes that focus on improved instructional strategies and adjust classroom practices to enhance progress for low-performing students. The teachers meet weekly during common preps and over lunch for "lunch and learn" activities where they examine student achievement data and adjust classroom practice to improve student outcomes.

The school gathers a variety of data to plan and target instruction in English language arts and math and these teachers differentiate lessons accordingly. However, the school does not consistently use assessments to plan for students at advanced levels to capture their interests and promote their thinking and achievement in every subject area. Similarly, while there are goals for English language arts and math, there is inconsistent development of goals in other content areas to ensure teaching at high levels across the curriculum. Additionally, while the school gathers data to plan for school organization and instruction, there is a lack of structures in place to track performance trends in all subject areas. Thus, the school does not have sufficient information to strengthen the coherence of academic schoolwide protocols and practices that ensure coverage of all curricular standards.

The school has established an open-door policy that includes consistent systems of communication pertaining to schoolwide events and curriculum goal sharing. However, the school has not fully embedded a uniform structure to share information regarding student assessment outcomes and progress with families and students in all content areas.

The school has developed many collaborative partnerships with outside organizations that support the school's efforts for continual learning. Several of these partnerships offer students opportunities to apply and extend their learning and enhance their academic and personal growth. The music, dance, sports and health programs promote student appreciation for the arts and human development. As a result, students can explore their talents and learn about maintaining healthy lifestyles. Consequently, students are able to enrich their knowledge and deepen the connection between learning and real world experiences.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's many collaborative partnerships support continual learning, enrichment opportunities and personal development for students.
  - The school has formed extensive partnerships with outside organizations that include the Brooklyn Music School, the Brooklyn Children' Museum and Medgar Evers College. These collaborations and others extend learning experiences and advance students' development of knowledge through discovery and application of skills. Working with the YMCA Swimming Club and the East New York Child and Family Health Center enables students and families to understand and support healthy lifestyles.
  - School staff, in collaboration with community partnerships, provide enrichment classes as part of the after school program. These include drama, dance, cooking, chess, step, and basketball. The experiences accommodate the students' interests and promote their thinking and creative talents at higher levels.
- The principal is committed to providing extensive professional development and support for teachers, which has had a positive impact on instructional practices.
  - The principal has organized a teacher study group around differentiated instruction with 100% teacher participation. This has led to a school-wide focus on differentiating classroom lessons to meet the academic needs of all students.
  - Teachers participate in multiple professional development opportunities that encompass a variety of strategies for growth. These include teacher and principal conversations, participation at professional workshops on and off campus and collegial visits to peer, network and neighboring schools. These interactions have contributed to successful schoolwide implementation of consistent mini-lessons at the classroom level.
- The school makes strategic organizational decisions that support the school goals and enhance student learning.
  - The principal structures the schedule to provide opportunities for teachers to meet at least once weekly during common preps to analyze student data and make adjustments to classroom practice. Preps precede or follow a lunch hour that many teachers use to extend their meeting time.

As a result, the percent of teachers actively involved in teacher teams has increased from approximately 30% to 100%.

- The school utilized budget funds to purchase a new reading program for the entire school. School leaders and teachers determined that the new program aligns with the school goals and does a better job in accommodating student needs. Consequently, students are performing at higher levels on guided reading assessments.
- The school has created a safe and nurturing environment where students receive support for their personal and academic growth.
  - The school created the Community Circle Program in response to the need for building trust. The program involves the entire school community coming together weekly to examine a schoolwide character development focus, such as trust, honesty and tolerance. This has generated a climate of mutual respect among all school constituents.
  - Every class implements the school's self-developed CHOICE Program, which involves classroom discussions around the themes of self discipline, honor, individuality, excellence and making good choices. Specific targeted lessons focus on teaching students to use manners during student interactions, which has had a positive impact on individual students' social, emotional and academic development.
- Teachers work well in collaborative teams to gather and analyze data, plan instruction and share best practices that maximize learning for students in need of support.
  - All teachers meet in collaborative inquiry teams where they gather and analyze data that includes Acuity, running records, reading and math unit tests and student work. As a result, students identified in need of additional targeted instruction in reading and math, receive the appropriate interventions to accelerate their learning.
  - Teachers use the inquiry team process as a vehicle to look at student work, conduct inter-class visitations and observe classroom lessons on differentiated instruction. Findings and strategies shared have generated improved instructional practices for inquiry team target population students.
- The principal effectively engages teachers and parents in schoolwide decision-making processes that promote active participation and leadership.
  - Teachers and parents participate as members of the School Leadership Team that meets monthly and are involved in the development of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan. This has fostered their involvement and leadership in the school's decision-making process to improve student outcomes. The Parent Teacher Association, with support from school leaders, holds fundraisers and plans various schoolwide events such as the Parent University and the Parent Read Programs to elicit parent engagement. As a result, there has been a noted increase in schoolwide parent participation.
  - Curriculum night workshops provide parents with the opportunity to share and become familiar with teacher-developed curriculum maps in reading

and math. This raises the level of expectation for parents and students and defines the requirements needed to reach clearly defined goals.

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

- Expand formal structures to evaluate systems for gathering data and assessing outcomes to maximize the effectiveness of schoolwide practices.
  - The school uses a variety of data sources to inform areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. However, the school has not yet firmly embedded consistent structures to monitor, adjust and revise schoolwide practices on an ongoing basis. As a result the school is not able to consistently evaluate organizational practices.
  - Though the school has firmly embedded protocols to evaluate student progress in reading and math, it has not yet developed similar tools in science and social studies, limiting the understanding of student content area learning.
- Enhance communication of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs, outcomes and progress toward meeting standards in all subjects.
  - The school sends home newsletters informing parents of upcoming events and parents are aware of their children's academic levels. However, the school does not frequently inform parents about how much progress their children have made and what next steps students are parents can take to accelerate their growth. This limits their ability to influence learning and achievement.
  - Students consistently receive feedback on their work products. However, the feedback does not always include specific recommendations that inform students of their next learning steps for growth.
- Refine all goals to include precise, short- and long-term measurable outcomes across the curriculum in order to ensure that students progress effectively.
  - Teachers have developed goals for their grades and classes in English language arts and math. However, interim measurable goals have not been uniformly implemented in science, social studies, and the arts to ensure consistency of instruction and progress in these areas.
  - All students maintain goals in binders. However, a small number of students are still unable to articulate their goals or expected outcomes. This reduces the level of students' focus on required skills mastery and limits targeted subgroup growth.
- Promote greater consistency in identifying individual student's needs, strengths and achievement levels across the curriculum to support targeted instruction and higher-order thinking for all students.
  - While students are grouped in all classes, the range of instruction and assignments is limited in some classes and subject areas. Additionally, though lessons are standards based, the degree of rigor in these classes does not always challenge students to think and work critically. As a

result, student work sometimes reflects low-level responses to lesson activities, limiting engagement and challenge for higher-level learners.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Brighter Choice Elementary School</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>