

Quality Review

Report

2009-2010

The Florence Nightingale School

Elementary School 110

285 Delancy Street

New York
NY 10002

Principal: Karen Feuer

Dates of review: March 9-10, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Gwen Stephens

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Florence Nightingale School is an elementary school with 473 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 16% Black, 50% Hispanic, 19% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The hard working and passionate principal and her team consistently move around the school to communicate high expectations to parents, staff, and students. The warm and nurturing environment fosters collaboration among teachers, and respectful, friendly interactions between students. Enthusiastic parents in this “family-like” school are involved in a variety of community activities, and attend parent meetings, fundraisers and school performances, working hard to support the school aims and aspirations. The strategic allocation of budgetary resources is evident throughout the school, and enhances student performance. Collaborative team teaching models provide parallel and small group instruction as well as support for teachers to develop and improve their instructional practice. Teacher teams meet regularly by grade to work on curriculum mapping and lesson planning, collaborating effectively to continually improve their teaching and student learning. However, the work of inquiry teams is limited. Not all teachers participate on inquiry teams where they can benefit from research-based collaboration. As a result, the impact of teams, expanded practice and inquiry is not a consistent, school-wide process.

The school uses a range of academic, cultural, and community partnerships, with financial support from the parent teacher association to enhance learning during the regular day and after school. These programs, along with visual arts, theatre and dance, provide a range of curricula experiences for students and professional development opportunities for teachers. This creates an integrated community focused on personal growth and success. Teachers take great pride in their work and the student work that adorns the hallways. Although recent improvements have extended differentiation strategies to many classrooms, not all teachers are confident in the use of data to provide differentiated instruction to ensure meeting all student-learning needs. This means that not all students, in particular the higher achieving students, are appropriately challenged in their lessons and do not all progress as rapidly as they could in their learning. In addition, students and their parents are not always clear about how, precisely, they can improve their work. The school leadership and faculty gather and analyze a range of formative and summative data and make the use of data a priority. These efforts include a focus on improving the performance of sub-groups, such as English language learners and students with individual education plans, as well as students in gifted and talented classes. There are systems in place for monitoring school level goals and curricular decisions, however there are no expanded systems used to monitor student achievement data to sustain the momentum, and effectively institute long-range plans for consistent improvement.

What the school does well

- The school provides a safe, trusting, orderly environment that generates strong values, promotes positive attitudes toward learning, and supports increased levels of academic achievement and strong cohesion among all stakeholders.
 - o Students want to be in the school, demonstrate pride in attending the school since pre-kindergarten, and are excited that they know and are known by the staff. Students say that the school, “feels like home” and “everyone expects you to do your best”.
 - o Warm interactions between students, parents, administrators, and teachers are evident throughout the building. Student work and art projects are proudly on display throughout hallways, resulting in an environment that celebrates, supports, and values the progress that students make.
- The strategic principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions, optimizing resources to support the school-wide instructional focus on learning and enhancing teacher accountability for improved student outcomes.
 - o The principal’s innovative programming includes an early morning reading intervention program for kindergarten through grade 5, and common planning blocks to maximize student and teacher time. The expansion of the collaborative team teaching program to all grades provides specialized supports to students with individual education plans. Pairing of teachers, based on expertise, provides opportunities for teachers to create an environment that accelerates student learning.
 - o Teams of teachers, including the pupil personnel team, offer collaborative support for their peers in classroom management strategies. This helps remove barriers to learning and encourages teachers’ understanding of the impact of academic expectations on the students in their care. This focus has resulted in high levels of student engagement, and cooperation among teachers to support teaching and learning at the school.
- The school has developed a wide range of effective partnerships that support the school and enhance learning opportunities for all students by providing a rich connection between academic excellence, personal growth, and the real world.
 - o The parent-teacher association has engaged community-based partners and the school community in an environmentally sustainable art project called the Seed Project. An offshoot of this project has been students’ decision-making and active participation in healthy and nutritious changes to the lunch program, enhancing students understanding of the need to “go green”.
 - o Theatre, dance workshops and the ‘Go Project’, providing a social worker every Friday for student support, are just a few of the range of cultural and student-centered support programs that are offered in the school.

These programs also provide professional development for classroom teachers. This allows teachers to support student's social and emotional needs and creates a safe and respectful environment in the school.

- The principal and faculty consistently and effectively communicate high expectations to students and their families, resulting in a shared commitment to the productivity and citizenship of the school community.
 - o Parents appreciate the accessibility of the principal and her “open door policy” which invites parents into the school and fosters opportunities to informally share and incorporate parental suggestions into school initiatives. This creates an effective home-school connection reflected in increased attendance at student performances, Parent/ Teacher orientation meetings, and the use of the ARIS parent link.
 - o The leadership team builds a foundation of trust and earns the respect of parents and teachers by engaging in collaborative decision-making. This increases ownership in achievement of school goals and helps to build capacity within the school.
- The school regularly evaluates and revises curricular and instructional decisions to improve student outcomes, and strengthens the use of organizational resources to build coherence in policies and practices.
 - o Teachers use common planning time to review student results from formative and summative assessments, to monitor the effectiveness of classroom curriculum and to review curricular decisions to revise next steps. This year in order to provide more focused lessons and alignment between grades, the school revised the English language arts curriculum calendar and curriculum units of study to inform classroom instruction.
 - o Administrative team meetings are held regularly, and provide a forum for reflection and evaluation of the school's policies and practices. These meetings offer systematic checks to the school's progress, using checklists and interim updates to build capacity for on-going decision-making to positively affect student outcomes.
- The school reviews a comprehensive set of student data to systematically impact on curricular decisions, resulting in significant student progress in English language arts.
 - o Teachers use student reading levels, baseline assessments, and summative assessment results to inform their classroom instruction. Based on the analysis of this data, extra supports and extensions are provided so that consistent student progress continues.
 - o The identification of differences in student outcomes by sub-group enables the school to effectively monitor and track their progress. English language learners attend Saturday school to receive additional instruction and time on task to increase their performance in English language arts.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand professional development opportunities for teachers, to deepen their understanding of action research so that inquiry teams can conduct more reflective, professional conversations and leverage classroom practice.
 - o While teams of teachers meet on grade level planning teams, the school has not extended and coordinated the use of an inquiry process. This means that teachers can not yet all develop expertise in using research data to identify and replicate best practices and effective instructional strategies in order to drive student achievement.
- Ensure that teachers challenge students consistently at the right instructional level by using formative data to differentiate instruction so that lesson planning and classroom activities reflect rigor and purposeful groupings.
 - o Teachers routinely assess students and accurately know their achievement levels. Although there is evidence of differentiated practice in some classes, this is not fully embedded school-wide. In some classrooms, all students receive the same task to complete in the same way. This does not provide adequate challenge for all students in order to maximize their learning outcomes.
- Fine-tune school-wide systems for providing feedback to students and families on their progress, so that students can articulate their next learning steps.
 - o Rubrics and achievement levels on assessments are displayed in all classrooms. However, on-going feedback to students is inconsistent and does not enable students to understand, reflect on, and improve the quality of their work and achieve their learning goals.
 - o The school distributes newly revised detailed report cards to parents at the end of the standard Citywide marking periods. However, more frequent interim progress reports are required to provide regular feedback to families, to enhance parents' knowledge of their child's progress, and to better equip them to support their children at home.
- Expand systems to monitor student achievement data against which progress is measured, adjustments made, and success evaluated for all students.
 - o School leaders and faculty do not currently have coherent policies and practices in place across the school to track and monitor the progress of all relevant sub-groups. Current systems do not meet the specific needs of the higher achieving students. As a result, this group of students are not consistently challenged across the school and do not achieve as well as they could.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Florence Nightingale School	△	▷	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed