

Quality Review Report 2009-2010

William Paca

Elementary School 155

319 East 117 Street

New York

NY 10035

Principal: Lillian Raimundi-Ortiz

Dates of review: February 3 - 4, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Luz Cortazzo

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

William Paca is an elementary school with 446 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 79% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 43% English language learners and 14% 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 94%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

William Paca celebrates the accomplishments of its students through regular assembly programs to recognize high attendance, academic achievements, as well as conduct. The school has made progress since the last review. The principal and her instructional cabinet share a common vision and support a capable faculty who know their students well and set high expectations to raise student achievement. The principal's strategic use of the budget enables teachers to collaborate on teacher teams several times each week. As such, they continually learn from each other and collectively support their own pedagogic growth. This strategic use of the budget has led to the alignment of instructional goals with the school's resources for instructional opportunities beyond the school day. Thus, struggling students participate in after school programs with an emphasis on accelerating their learning. In addition, higher achieving students engage in enrichment activities. The varied support enables students to meet established learning goals.

The development of formative assessments such as beginning and end of unit exams, the review of running records, students' work and the analysis of Acuity results, coupled with the utilization of summative data, is a well-established practice at the school. Although this data is available, its analysis is not yet a rigorous school-wide practice, limiting the school's ability to effectively set short-term goals and benchmarks to measure student progress. While rigorous habits are evident, higher order skills are not evident in all grades and content areas. Consequently, higher achieving students do not always receive suitable challenge. Additionally, although school faculty regularly evaluates instructional practices in response to learning needs, these practices do not always provide differentiated access into the curricula.

Outside organizations and school staff integrate focused collaborations throughout the day. The school's strong partnerships with parents and outside collaborations have a positive impact on students' social, emotional, and academic development. Parents and faculty share in the school's high expectations. The school communicates these expectations via a monthly newsletter, progress reports, the school's monthly calendar, a parent survey, as well as personal interactions. Additionally, parents are invited to participate in a weekly coffee meeting with the principal, as well as monthly curriculum meetings and parents find these helpful. One parent stated, "PS155 is my second home, they treat parents and students with respect". However, school leaders have not yet taken the important step to engage parents in decision-making as it relates to setting their child's goals. The school has expanded its number of enrichment activities and students enjoy participating in these activities.

What the school does well

- The arts curriculum provides valuable and interesting opportunities for students to develop their creative and artistic skills.
 - School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions to emphasize key standards including the State instructional requirements in the arts and the blueprints for teaching and learning in the arts. Students frequently participate in arts learning by studying visual arts. Additionally, the art teacher partners with classroom teachers to support student learning on how to problem solve and study critical thinking. Students speak proudly of their accomplishments as artists, and appreciate the level of support they receive.
- The school routinely analyzes relevant data to identify trends in student progress and performance in order to make needed adjustments in curriculum and instruction.
 - There are well-established, time-bound data management systems that enable administrators and faculty to obtain a clear picture of students' performance and progress. During grade level collaborative meetings and conferences with school leaders, school staff adjust teacher developed assessment tools with a clear focus on the assessment of learning.
- School leaders and staff consistently use varied formative and summative data to track the progress of individuals and target groups of students to make adjustments as required.
 - The school's consistent use of beginning- and end-of-unit assessment data in the content area, conference notes, running records, and skills analysis of State assessments helps to identify strengths and areas of need. As a result, teachers are equipped with good information relative to the effectiveness of school level instructional decisions.
 - School leaders and faculty gather and analyze a range of data coupled with frequent and ongoing review of attendance data, suspension data, and related services. This enables staff to create a picture of the school's strengths and the areas in need of improvement. This comprehensive review has led to a notable increase in student attendance, and subgroups making significant progress, thus narrowing the achievement gap.
- The principal has created a focused learning community with a vision to continue to accelerate student learning.
 - The ongoing review of data from summative and formative assessment drives the development and utilization of grade-level goals and action plans for groups of students. This informs planning at all levels. Additionally, school leaders conduct their own needs assessment via a school developed teacher survey and monthly conversations with parents during morning coffee. The entire system is very responsive, regularly

sharing goals and action plans, thereby generating significant levels of support from the school community

- The principal's performance goals and objectives, as well as the Comprehensive Educational Plan, align with clear, school-level action plans, which leverage growth in student outcomes.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, develop tools to analyze data, and plan curriculum and instruction.
 - Creative programming affords all teachers opportunities for common planning periods. The consistent frequency of these sessions enables teachers to develop and practice leadership to accelerate student learning. These conversations result in detailed conversations on the data and achievement of the target population, thematic unit planning, and new teacher mentoring.
 - The structured professional collaboration evident at weekly grade level meetings results in shared leadership as well as school-wide accountability to accelerate student progress. Teachers support each other's growth through collegial observations, provide feedback to each other on learning strategies, and share best practices. This collaboration and the use of an inquiry approach have led to the rapid development of teaching skills.
- The school's supportive partnerships with outside organizations and parents have a positive impact on students' personal growth and development.
 - The school has a range of partnerships with external organizations that support its vision well. The focused collaboration with Target has led to the enhancement of literacy skills for students and parents. The new library media center and parent literacy night are a few examples of this collaboration. This partnership meets students' needs in a cohesive manner that directly affects their academic achievement.
 - The school provides professional development on positive behaviors that enable the faculty to provide students with many opportunities for social and emotional learning. The implementation of a school-wide behavioral initiative by focusing on positive behaviors has led to a decrease in the number of incidents in the school resulting in effective teaching and learning for students.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the differentiation of instruction so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level, including effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning.
 - Teaching strategies and classroom routines are generic, thereby limiting students' differentiated access into the curricula especially for higher achieving students.
 - Within many lessons, appropriate differentiation meets the needs of different ability groups. However, some teachers do not consistently use the data they collect to adapt their methods of instruction or to ensure that

each student has work to match their ability, as evidenced in student work products and processes.

- Refine and ensure that all goals include precise short- and long-term measurable outcomes to monitor students' progress effectively, and to reinforce ownership and accountability.
 - The school uses Periodic Assessment and other data to track progress and adjust the goals for student subgroups. Not all goals have such measurable outcomes. The practice of providing feedback to students and families on students' progress and on the opportunities for enrichment is not yet consistent across the school.
- Design a uniform protocol for learning walks and collaborative inquiry findings to provide a common lens that evaluates teaching practices and identifies the next steps.
 - Although the school recognizes the importance of school and class learning walks, there is no common protocol or observation tool to enable staff and administrators to maximize student outcomes through rigorous evaluation. This limits the ability to make effective performance management decisions and provide a full range of supports.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for all plans to measure progress, make readjustments, and evaluate success.
 - Teacher teams meet weekly to review the progress of their targeted populations and there are clear checkpoints for whole-school goals, usually every six weeks. However, school leaders have not taken the next step to develop a school-wide system to measure progress towards interim goals and identifying areas of improvement, nor do they always document procedures clearly enough with measurable timeframes so that findings are always available for review.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: William Paca	△	▶	✓	+
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