

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**The Anderson School**

**Elementary – Middle School 334**

**100 West 77 Street  
New York  
NY 10024**

**Principal: Jodi Hyde**

**Dates of review: March 4 - 5, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Roser Salavert**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Anderson School is a citywide gifted and talented elementary and middle school with 518 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 9% Black, 10% Hispanic, 58% White, and 23% Asian students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and less than 1% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 96.7%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

The new principal has successfully embraced the school's culture and vision and is strongly supported by the faculty, parent community and enabled by the school leadership team. Strong monitoring and evaluation supports the school's high expectations for students' success. As a result, the principal has been successful in making some changes in the math and language arts curriculum to give greater challenge to advanced students and prepare middle school students for Regents exams. Teachers deliver lessons taking into account students' cognitive and affective domains. As a result, students are highly engaged in challenging activities. For example, in preparation for an academically rigorous debate between Athens and Sparta, the teacher included a humorous and light category called 'the bachelorette'.

The school leaders, faculty and parent community have created a safe, nurturing and collaborative school environment that promotes students' academic and personal excellence. Students like the school and focus on their academic learning. They are also enthusiastic about the many electives and enrichment activities that they can choose. In the classroom, teachers use student data to create large, small and independent groups to engage all students in rigorous performance-based tasks. Teachers use print and innovative technology resources to ensure that they meet the needs of students.

The core inquiry team guides grade level and vertical teams to ensure the coherence of the inquiry work school wide. A well thought out schedule that allows for classroom visitations and professional collaborations beyond the regular meetings supports teachers in this effort. Teachers use data effectively and consistently to identify school, group and individual goals. They meet individually with their students to track progress and to help them become independent learners. Despite extensive collaborations among teachers, a systemic approach to student feedback and the teaching of vocabulary is still an emerging practice. Similarly, teachers' differentiation practices seldom take a learners' perspective, which sometimes limits students' transference of skills across subjects.

In a school with an inclusive vision, the presence of English language learners and twice - exceptional students is practically non-existent. However, the school leaders, with the parent community, are working together to fulfill this educational goal.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school offers an advanced and balanced curriculum in a safe and caring environment where students thrive academically and personally.
  - o The school constantly revises its curriculum maps to meet the needs of students. Based on the results of an in-house study, the new principal has added depth and rigor to some of the math units to better prepare middle school students for the Regents exams.
  - o Teachers use effective questioning strategies, print and technology resources to engage all students in science experiments, extend their mathematical thinking and /or engage them in problem solving to accelerate the learning process. These are embedded practices across grades.
- The school's stimulating, caring and collaborative atmosphere fosters students' academic and personal excellence.
  - o The school faculty and the principal facilitate advisory groups based on the social/emotional curriculum developed by the school during the summer to enhance the development of the whole child.
  - o All students in grades 4 and 5 engage in the school's orchestra and learn to play an instrument to ensure that they receive support for both their academic and personal growth (participation in the orchestra in middle school is optional).
- School leaders and faculty use multiple sources of data to identify student needs and to improve assessments that sustain student success.
  - o After an extensive review of reading assessment data, the school has adopted the Fountas/Pinnell system to establish interim reading goals for elementary students and student groups to better monitor the development of students' advanced reading skills.
  - o Teachers deliver lessons with multiple entry points and make adjustments based on students' needs. For example, a lesson on tall tales began with a 'practice run' followed by small group assignments called 'student support' groups, and a 'pair share' activity which was based on the teacher's assessment on how students were progressing in their tasks.
- School leaders and teacher teams use data effectively to set student goals and provide differentiated support to extend student achievement.
  - o Language arts and social studies teachers use student data to set goals and develop performance tasks. These tasks include detailed expectations and differentiated scaffolds to both guide and challenge the students in the completion of their work and ensure ownership of their own learning.

- o Teachers use formative assessments and ongoing data gathered while conferring with students individually or in small groups to help students set short-term goals. They continually adjust these interim goals to help students meet their long-term goals and build independence as learners.
- Teachers are engaged in teacher teams using an inquiry approach to analyze assessment data to improve students' learning outcomes.
  - o The school's inquiry board of directors includes teachers from each grade, the data specialist, and the school leaders. This team organizes, coordinates, and leads the work of all other teams, with some teachers participating in more than one team. This distributive leadership creates strong coherence among the work of the teams and has a positive impact on the quality of the instruction and student learning.
  - o Last year's inquiry study showed that anxiety was a key factor in students' performance on the State tests. As a result, this past September the school added to its strong menu of electives with a course on organizational and time management to better prepare students for testing. This has already helped improve students' performance on periodic assessments.
- The school utilizes the observation process and student outcomes to plan professional development that it differentiates and aligns with school goals.
  - o Teachers meet individually with the principal to determine professional goals that further their professional growth and ensure the academic success and social/emotional development of their students.
  - o The principal promotes the integration of technology in students' learning and supports teachers' interest through an on-site consultant, which has a positive impact on the work of the students. As part of their social studies unit on communities around the world, grade 3 students were involved in the writing and production of public service announcements posted on the school's website to promote social awareness on children's educational and health issues.
- The school leadership, faculty and parent community share the vision for the school and review its progress regularly to ensure students' success.
  - o The principal, working with the school community, has developed a homework survey that is assisting the school in adjusting homework practices school wide to support students' accelerated learning.
  - o The school leadership team meets regularly to evaluate the progress of the school towards meeting its annual goals and make necessary adjustments. The parent community through its fund raising activities and community initiatives collaborate with the school leadership in these continuous efforts to fulfill the school's educational vision.

## What the school needs to improve

- Build on teacher feedback on student work to include links across subjects to enrich the transfer of strategies and vocabulary to further students' learning.
  - o There is coherence in teaching practices across subjects and when asked, students show that they can apply strategies they have learned in one subject to another appropriate context. However, there is no systemic approach on feedback practices or the teaching of vocabulary to enhance students' transference skills and their ability to make deep conceptual connections.
- Deepen teachers' professional collaborations by sharing insights through the lens of students to extend best practices and develop teacher leadership.
  - o Teachers are engaged in the ongoing analysis of student data to track student progress and develop differentiated lessons, but similar conversations from a student's perspective is an emerging practice.
- Evaluate the use of resources further to ensure that the school population better reflects the student population in the community.
  - o The purpose of a citywide gifted and talented school is to embrace all learners. Therefore, the Department of Education offers gifted and talented assessments in nine different languages, and encourages students with disabilities to participate in the selection process. However, at this time, the school only serves three English language learners and one twice - exceptional student.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Anderson School	△	▶	✓	+
<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>	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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>				<b>X</b>			
<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>				<b>X</b>			
<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>				<b>X</b>			
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>