

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**The Nadia J. Pagan School**

**Elementary School 226**

**1910 Sedgwick Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10453**

**Principal: Gloria Darden**

**Dates of review: January 12 – 13, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Sonia Menendez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Nadia J. Pagan is an early childhood- elementary school with 427 students from pre - kindergarten through grade 4. The school population comprises 24% Black, 75% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 36% English language learners and 12% 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 93%.

### Overall Evaluation

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

This school has a welcoming, nurturing, and child-centered environment that honors the development of the whole child. All students benefit from a rich, standards-based curriculum that makes students want to come to school, resulting in consistently high attendance over the previous three years. The school offers a good range of activities and clubs both within and outside the school day. The arts curriculum provides interesting opportunities for students to develop their creative and artistic skills. Parents credit the many enrichment activities with motivating their children to attend school and helping them focus on their work. The school communicates high expectations in a variety of ways, including student work with teacher feedback using rubrics, impressive displays of student artwork, and bulletin boards with data on attendance, behavior, and achievement. However, rubrics to help students know their next steps are not well understood by themselves. Parents are supportive of the school's instructional expectations for their children. Parental involvement has increased in workshops and the English as Second Language classes specifically for them. Even so, there is still some reticence for parents to become decision-making partners within the school leadership team although the school is working hard to encourage them towards greater participation.

With the support of an energetic data specialist, the school collects and analyzes a wide range of formative and summative data to understand the performance and progress of students across the school and subgroups. The school is very clear about such subgroups and uses assessment data to evaluate the progress of each one. It pays particular attention to analyzing data relating to its large population of English language learners, as they had not made adequate progress for two years. This analysis led to the development of the English language learners' forum that meets monthly to assess progress. Participating teachers have developed a handbook of instructional strategies geared to second language learning, which all teachers use as a resource in planning lessons. As a consequence of improved planning, this subgroup made significant progress last year yielding extra credit on the Progress Report and meeting their Annual Yearly Progress measure on State accountability. However, there remains a lack of rigor and consistency in differentiating instruction for students in general.

An enthusiastic principal and her two energetic assistant principals provide a clear vision for the school's development. They work collaboratively with staff to create a calm, respectful, and orderly environment where good learning takes place. Collaboration and teamwork are strong features of the school and allow staff to share expertise effectively. Weekly meetings in teacher teams by grade and across grades enable staff to share information about curriculum alignment and effectiveness, encouraging teachers to discuss best practices and student achievement. The principal empowers teachers to share the leadership with grade leaders facilitating grade team meetings and supporting colleagues to plan lessons and analyze data, share best practices and identify resources to better meet the needs of their students. However, not all students can articulate their next learning steps to make their work better.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty have developed extremely effective systems and consistently use a wide range of data and establish a clear understanding of the performance and progress of individual students and subgroups.
  - The principal has created an environment that is focused on using data effectively to bring about improvement in student achievement. Data displays and conversations in teacher teams on how to use data effectively to inform instruction have created a shared understanding, ownership, and commitment to improvement. The data specialist and school leaders gather a wide variety of data, including information about students participating in art and chess enrichment clubs. The “mother” core inquiry team and curriculum team analyze the data and disseminate to grade teacher teams. Teachers use this information to identify trends and needs of individual students and subgroups, and to identify instructional strategies aimed at increasing learning.
  - The school gathers and analyzes detailed data to gauge progress and to better address the needs of English language learners. The English as a second language and bilingual teachers have developed a handbook for all teachers to support them in planning lessons. In addition, teachers with expertise in special education provide instructional modifications within the units of study. This strong focus has resulted in significant gains in subgroup progress and performance.
- Administrators have a very good understanding of the strengths and needs of the teaching staff and provide differentiated professional development to help individual teachers meet their goals and improve student outcomes.
  - The school’s plan for professional development is integral to its goals and meets the needs of individual teachers well. The principal and her team recognize that developing teacher expertise is critical to increasing student outcomes. Consequently, teacher teams are making good use of a variety of professional books to guide their conversations. Effective and focused formal and informal classroom observations by the administration followed by constructive conversations, support teachers in improving their craft.
  - One-on-one discussion between teachers and administrative staff allow teachers to develop goals and targets for their students. In addition, the school provides a survey to teachers where they identify their strengths and areas of need and collaboratively develop a professional development plan. As a result, there are well-developed clear strategic whole school goals for teachers and students that are monitored rigorously.
- Students benefit from a broad and enriched standards-based curriculum that is designed well to meet students’ learning needs, to motivate them to learn, and help them make steady progress.
  - Teachers are involved in developing the curriculum and plan data-based instruction effectively in teams, making purposeful decisions to emphasize key standards and meet the specific needs of students. They use data to enhance students’ learning successfully by including opportunities for their students to apply skills and knowledge learned in one area of the curriculum in another.

- Enrichment teachers provide ample opportunities for students to connect what is taught in their subjects with the content students are learning in their classroom. Consequently, students realize the relevance of what they are learning. As one student stated, “Chess helps me think better.”
- Teachers share the administrations’ vision for continuous improvement and increased student achievement by actively engaging in teacher teams where inquiry results in pertinent adjustments to curriculum and instruction that better meet students’ needs.
  - The school has established comprehensive systems to enable staff to meet regularly in teacher teams on grade level and across grades. Student progress is at the core of their discussions. Using an inquiry approach, student assessment data is analyzed, teacher work shared, and the impact of actions evaluated. As a result, the school identified the need to review student work in order to identify next learning steps as the focus for team meetings and to take their inquiry work to the next level.
  - Support staff and administrators provide very good support to teacher teams to ensure that modifications to curriculum, pedagogy and goals are planned using student data and their impact is monitored through the analysis of student work. The impact of this work has increased student outcomes and teachers consistently ask themselves, “How well are our students doing and what will help them do better.”
- The staff creates a caring and respectful environment, in which students’ achievements in the arts and content area are celebrated in colorful displays that have positively impacted students’ academic success.
  - Relying on assessment data, guidance and support staff are required to keep track of the impact of their activities which are analyzed to build a clear picture of effectiveness. The data specialist prepares a data tracking form that indicates how students who participate in activities, such as chess and art, are performing and this information is used well by school leaders and teachers in planning continuing development.
  - The curriculum is enriched by many opportunities in the arts and chess which parents credit as one of the reasons their children love to come to school. Students’ academic and personal development is very well supported through the caring climate in the school, where each student is well known and knows who to go to if they have a question or a concern. This creates an environment of mutual trust and positively impacts students’ learning.
- The principal and staff have established effective systems to track progress, and review and modify goals and plans that are impacting positively on student learning.
  - Teachers and administrators determine student and whole school targets, using baseline data, and then track and monitor them rigorously. Teacher teams use interim assessments, student work, and teacher conferring notes well to check that students are making adequate progress. As a result, teachers have a clear picture of patterns and trends of student achievement, including that of subgroups, and make modifications to units of study or provide additional support. This process has demonstrated increased student outcomes for all students, particularly so for English Language Learners.
  - The school monitors its success in reaching student and school goals carefully. The data specialist supports teachers with the school’s system of monitoring

and analysis, which has helped teachers reach a good level of understanding of what is to be achieved. The excellent level of conversation in teacher teams on student achievement and progress helps them to plan more accurately for students' different needs.

- Administrators and teachers regularly use data to evaluate the effectiveness of professional collaborations, instructional practice to improve the quality of instruction and maximize student learning.
  - The collaborative structures in place provide a clear direction for school improvement. Data is used well to provide evidence that informs planning and necessary changes. As a result of careful evaluation, the school revised its curriculum to include instructional modifications that teachers use to meet the needs of special needs students.
  - The school is continually evaluating its performance. As a result of careful analysis of the progress of English language learners and teacher observations, teachers developed a handbook with instructional strategies to support instruction for English language learners. This has positively impacted teachers' instructional practice and increased students' performance.

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

- Extend the existing good practice to further enhance teachers' skills in differentiating instruction to increase academic rigor for all students.
  - Teachers are held responsible for the progress of their students and are increasingly using data effectively to differentiate their teaching by matching tasks to identified student needs. However, there is a level of inconsistency in the application of this strategy intended to increase the level of challenge for higher-achieving students that results in tasks that are much too difficult and does not support progress adequately.
- Build on the communication system and collaborative environment to encourage and engage parents in school decision-making so that their involvement helps strengthen overall accountability and influences increased student outcomes.
  - Extremely effective communication structures and regular parent meetings are assisting the school meet its goals and contribute to parent satisfaction as evidenced by the Learning Environment Survey. However, parents are still not fully involved as active decision makers in the school's improvement plans in order to broaden the school's scope and to increase student success.
- Sharpen the information structures in place and communicate the immediate short-term goals to students so that they are fully aware of their next steps in learning.
  - There is a good system in place for setting long- and short-term goals for students and communicating these to students and parents. However students do not know well what their next learning steps are within their immediate work as they cannot articulate well or fully understand the rubrics set for them. This impedes their ability to develop and improve their work themselves and make best progress.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Nadia J. Pagan School	△	▶	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
<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?			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	
<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?				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

<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>