

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

The Langston Hughes Young Explorers Academy

Early Childhood School 236

1871 Walton Avenue

Bronx

NY 10453

Principal: Beverly Ellis

Dates of review: November 16-17, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Langston Hughes Young Explorers Academy is an early childhood school with 385 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. The school population comprises 31% Black, 66% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 29% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 92.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

“Our Principal makes sure that everyone knows that the main objective of the school is to improve the academic achievement of all students”. This is the way that many of the parents describe the high expectations of the Langston Hughes Young Explorers Academy. The commitment and shared vision of the entire school are exemplified by comments of staff, parents and students, led by a supportive and thoughtful leader who ensures that there is rigorous, coherent curriculum across all grades and levels. The curriculum is aligned to NYS standards.

Resources have been carefully allocated to support the goals and initiatives of the school. School leaders and staff regularly review and analyze data in order to identify targets, goals and priorities that support student progress and proficiency. This information is shared with families, including student’s strengths and weaknesses. Parents also told how the ARIS Parent Link has provided them with useful information about their children.

There are many opportunities and supports for teachers to meet, plan and share information regarding the progress of their students in teams and across grades. However, processes for establishing differentiated goals and feedback for achieving them is still being refined school wide. School leaders and staff are developing processes to monitor and adjust their goals more systematically, in order to support the progress of all students effectively.

The school continues to provide opportunities for teachers to develop their craft and structures to support distributed leadership. School leaders and staff often evaluate the work with teacher teams that are involved in structured professional collaboration and make adjustments to support this work accordingly.

What the school does well

- The principal is a supportive and reflective leader that promotes a culture of mutual respect and high standards for all. Staff, students and families are engaged in their learning, leading students into higher order thinking learning activities and social and emotional progress.
 - This is the second year of the collaboration with a Bank Street College program which is part of the Emotionally Responsive Classroom, using the “Teddy Bear Curriculum” .This program continues to support the social and emotional development of students and leads to more effective partnerships and open communication with parents about their children’s progress.
 - The principal and staff work as an effective team to maintain a calm, respectful and organized environment for meaningful learning to take place leading to engagement and active participation of students during lessons.
- School leaders and staff make purposeful decisions about curricula in all subject areas, aligned to NYS standards and which lead to a coherent practice of engaging lessons throughout the school.
 - Teachers have many opportunities to review data, plan and target instruction so that lessons are engaging and aligned to their school curriculum which consistently reviews priority standards, including the Arts.
 - School leaders and staff meet regularly to ensure that higher order skills are embedded in the curriculum and lessons, especially for those students that are not making progress so that all students are engaged and challenged appropriately.
- Administration and staff gather and analyze a wide range of data enabling them to identify overall trends, strengths and areas of need to evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaborations.
 - Teachers and administrators effectively use a wide range of data to understand student performance and regularly collaborate which leads to effective goal setting processes for staff and students. This has let to improved student outcomes based on the analysis of DRA results as well as other formative and summative assessments.
 - Administration and staff also use data to monitor student progress so that effective intervention strategies can be incorporated in daily lessons and long term plans.
- School leaders and staff effectively engage and communicate with all members of the school community which results in efficient staff collaboration around needs assessment, goals and action planning.

- The school works closely with parents, who consistently praise the school for their consistent efforts to share information about attendance, behavior and academics which impacts favorably on student progress and learning. The ARIS parent link has been well received in this school community and has provided parents with meaningful information.
 - School leaders and staff work closely with an Aussie Consultant and participate in a study group using Marie Clay's book "The Observation Survey" to target instruction and this impacts effectively on the quality of the conferences that teachers have with students and parents.
- Teachers are involved in collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable learning goals for student subgroups and those in need of additional support, which results in students making good progress.
 - Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share best practices, analyze data and plan curriculum and instruction. This has led to a focused study and progress on special education and English language learners which is carefully tracked in their action plans and modified as needed.
 - Teachers use a collaborative inquiry approach to interrogate the data which leads to improved teacher practice in the use of instructional standards based strategies in the classroom.
- The principal effectively uses school resources to provide suitable support systems for teaching staff to improve and raise the level of instruction school wide.
 - The leadership makes informed and strategic organizational decisions to support student learning. An example of this is the opportunity for staff to work with the Aussie consultant on Saturdays in addition to the regularly scheduled visits during the week. This has led to improved teaching practices around guided reading as described by staff in the school and noted in formal and informal classroom observations.
 - The leadership provides ample time for teachers to meet regularly and adjust their instruction. This results in more effective progress monitoring of student goals' and the schools' instructional goals as well. This also leads to more ownership and shared accountability of student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- To expand the use of the collaborative inquiry process school wide in order to set differentiated and measurable goals for all students and subgroups aligned to NYS standards.
 - Teachers do not make sufficient use of the data that is gathered to differentiate instruction consistently and strategically.

- The continued support for teachers to differentiate instruction will result in more effective and targeted instruction in the classroom based on formative and summative data.
- To further develop the use of data by all staff in order to systemically monitor interim progress and adjust instruction in order to close the achievement gap between assessment and instruction.
 - The process for providing feedback to students on their work consistently with clear next steps aligned to NYS standards results in students' ability to self monitor their goals and learning process as well as establish more coherence of practice school wide.
 - The continued development of a systemic process for analyzing interim goals and benchmarks results in more effective progress monitoring and increased levels of student achievement.
- To refine the process for providing feedback to students with clear benchmarks aligned to NYS standards in order to support self monitoring and student progress.
 - The alignment of criteria charts and rubrics to NYS standards results in more effective teacher conferences with students that provides them with specific feedback for improvement and self assessment strategies for their progress.
 - The schools' continued use of tools such as ARIS and others, leads to more focused conversations about goals and progress with students and parents with clear next steps for improvement.
- To continue differentiated support for teachers in order to evaluate systems for assessing students and making adjustments in the curriculum that are more closely aligned with the data.. This leads to more effective alignment and implementation of best practices school-wide.
 - The schools' structured opportunities to evaluate the quality of curriculum and instruction results in improved strategic monitoring by setting interim checkpoint goals. This enables them to effectively evaluate the progress made in reaching the school's long term achievement plan as well as increase the coherence of policies within the school.
 - School leaders and staff share student information with colleagues and parents about progress, behavior and attendance. This information is also shared in the monthly progress reports. However, the lack of protocols results in variation from classroom to classroom in terms of the quality and quantity of information that is shared with staff and families.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: The Langston Hughes Young Explorers Academy for Early Childhood	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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