

# Quality Review Report 2009-2010

**Pablo Neruda Academy for Architecture and World  
Studies**

**High School 305  
1980 Lafayette Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10473**

**Principal: Ivan Cohen**

**Dates of review: April 28 - 29, 2010  
Lead Reviewer: Elena Papaliberios**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Pablo Neruda Academy for Architecture and World Studies is a high school with 380 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 26% Black, 72% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 83.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The school's environment allows students to feel that they are safe and they enjoy the respect that they have for each other and their teachers. A student said, "This is a small school and all of the teachers really know me." A strong partnership with the Leadership Program helps it to prepare its teachers to conduct advisory classes that build community and support students' social, academic, and emotional needs. The College Now program, is well supported by Hostos Community College, allows students to take college level courses.

The school's goals, jointly developed over the summer with teacher leaders, are focused, aimed at improving student outcomes, and known by all constituents. The inclusion of a professional development goal was developed in response to teachers' requests to have more opportunities to choose and attend professional development sessions. However, measurable goals for individuals and groups of students are not yet an established practice, thereby limiting the ability to monitor suitably student performance and progress.

All teachers at Pablo Neruda Academy for Architecture and World Studies are involved in collaborative teams. They work well together on department- and grade-level teams where they analyze data, focus on the academic program, and align their classes to build coherence among content areas. Math teachers started this year to administer the Acuity periodic assessment in order to monitor student progress. At their department meetings, teachers have the opportunity to assess student outcomes and work on strategies to support student growth. However, the use of students' results is not yet translated into effective differentiation of instruction across all subjects, most notably in English as a second language classes, nor are there structures for monitoring much of the school's work, thus preventing the school from determining the effectiveness of its curriculum, teacher teams, and assessment tools. Furthermore, school leaders do not yet use the observation process as an effective tool to monitor progress of pedagogy or to set individual professional growth plans for teachers.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- All teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations weekly through grade level teams and department teams in order to align their curriculum.
  - Teachers have the opportunity to serve as lead teachers in department- and grade-level teams, thus leading to their development as leaders. Lead teachers effectively facilitate the weekly meetings and meet with the administrators at the beginning of the year to help develop the goals for the year.
  - All teachers are members of collaborative teams, department and grade level, where they address administrative issues and review student work to develop lessons that are aligned across the content areas. The grade 9 team is planning the alignment of English with art, where students will be designing a room of an historical era related to the book they are reading in English.
- The school has created an environment that is safe with mutual respect among all members of the school community.
  - Students feel that school is a safe place conducive to learning. Many students speak about the advisory program and the positive impact it has on developing a family atmosphere. They feel that they can turn to any advisor if they are in need of support and guidance with any academic, social, or personal problem.
  - A parent shared that all her son's teachers know him very well and they have reached out to the parent to attend meetings. She feels that she also knows all of her son's teachers and that has helped to keep communication open.
- Groups of teacher use periodic assessment data to identify trends, strengths, and weaknesses.
  - Math teachers administered the Acuity periodic assessment this year to measure student performance and progress. This is beginning to change the way teachers analyze student data as they focus on students' specific strengths or areas of need in order for them to master the work.
  - Math teachers gather and track classroom level data and use their own Excel data tools to record and document students' outcomes. Student work is shared and analyzed at the teacher team meetings, and colleagues share best practices. This work is focusing teachers on improving student outcomes in each of their classes as they implement the shared strategies.
- There is a clear list of school-wide goals focused on improving student outcomes.
  - The school's four school-wide goals are clear and concise. They are, to increase graduation rate, increase attendance, provide diverse

professional development, and create a college readiness culture. The latter goal is the spearhead for the development of college readiness skills in each content area, which are now part of the curriculum, especially in English language arts.

- The school effectively communicates and shares the school's goals with the entire school community. The school leadership team plays an integral part in the development of these goals and is the conduit for the distribution of information. Team members report to their departments, and memos and posters are created to disseminate the information.
- External partners provide professional development that enables teachers to support students' academic and emotional needs.
  - Through a productive collaboration with the Leadership Program, the school provides training for teachers on character building, team building, and listening skills, which has effectively supported the development of the advisory program at the school. Students and teachers feel that advisories are effective in creating a family environment where students feel comfortable sharing their concerns.
  - Academically, students receive enrichment from Hostos Community College through their College Now Program, where students take college level courses such as sociology, English, and criminal justice. Gear-UP consistently supports and monitors students as they move from middle school through high school and into college. Students said that these programs are preparing them to be successful in college.

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

- Create rigorous and differentiated lessons that provide multiple entry points for all students, including English language learners.
  - Teams of teachers meet in department teams to review their site-specific developed curriculum. However, most lesson plans generated do not provide differentiation of instruction based on the needs of students. Classroom visits revealed lessons that did not provide differentiation of content, or process especially in classrooms with English language learners. Student engagement was limited and in English as a Second language classes, it excluded students who were new to the school or the country. Consequently, students' needs are not being met, especially those who are new arrivals.
- Expand the use of data tools to collect, organize, and analyze student data at the classroom level.
  - There is little evidence of the staff's use of Department of Education data sources to organize and analyze data. It is not yet a common school-wide practice for teachers to use data tools to look at and analyze student work. Only some teachers use an Excel format to record student data. Teachers are trained on the use of Teacher-Ease, a computerized data program, but most do not use it. This precludes teachers from accessing a uniform data tool that can produce progress reports for students and parents, and one that has the potential to provide families access to on-line information.

- Use the observation process to develop individual professional development plans for teachers, which include professional and academic goals that are data driven.
  - The observation process is not effectively used as a vehicle to develop professional development plans for all teachers. Goal setting is not an evident practice with all teachers; this limits the school's ability to look at student outcomes as the focus for the development of targeted goals. A few teachers are involved with setting goals at the beginning of the year, but there is no process in place to monitor and evaluate those goals throughout the year. The lack of goal setting prevents the school from developing individual professional development plans to support the learning and growth of teachers, to improve their pedagogical skills, and to identify and provide sufficient external professional development sessions to enhance teaching skills.
- Establish data-led, differentiated, measurable goals for individuals and subgroups of students and procedures to evaluate their progress.
  - The school is in the beginning stages of setting students' instructional goals in English classes; however, it does not yet include a process to evaluate students' progress toward mastery of the goals. It is also not yet evident that classroom assessment data is used to set differentiated goals for individual or subgroups of students in order to improve achievement.
- Create structures to evaluate and adjust curricula, effectiveness of teacher teams, capacity building, and assessment practices.
  - Teachers developed curriculum at the beginning of the year and infused college readiness skills into all content areas. However; currently, structures are not in place to regularly make adjustments, monitor, revise, and evaluate the effectiveness of this practice. For example, a quick review of the English curriculum revealed that a teacher is spending three months on reading *Raisin in the Sun*; however, the school has not reviewed the curriculum to assess if the amount of allotted time is an effective practice.
  - Although teacher leaders are in place for most of the collaborative teams, no support is provided to develop their leadership skills through focused professional development sessions. This precludes them from making their work more effective and sessions more productive for all teachers involved. Additionally, the school does not have rigorous monitoring procedures to evaluate the impact of collaborative teams on student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

<b>School name: Pablo Neruda Academy for Architecture and World Studies</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			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>							
		X					
<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>							
			X				
<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>							
		X					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>