

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**Entrada Academy**

**Middle School 384**

**977 Fox Street  
Bronx  
NY 10459**

**Principal: Socorro Diaz**

**Dates of review: February 23 - 24, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Monica George-Fields**

## Part 1: The school context

Entrada Academy is a middle school with 218 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 76% Hispanic, 1% and Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 28% 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 93.5%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The Entrada Academy shares a building with three other schools. The school is in its second year of existence and teachers and students look forward to growing into a middle school serving grades 6 through 8.

School leaders and teachers are collaboratively developing detailed, cohesive, and standards-based curriculum for all subjects and grades, which is leading to a common purpose and instructional consistency and coherence. School leaders have successfully established and created a clear set of expectations that the entire school community supports. All teachers deliver the curriculum using differentiated and language-based instructional strategies, which leads to accelerated learning for students. During every lesson, a writing component is planned and executed to ensure the development of writing across the content areas.

The school regularly gathers and analyzes data about student outcomes and examines achievement trends of English language learners and special education students. School leaders and faculty have successfully established and created structures that address the learning goals of subgroups of students, so that there is alignment between instructional practices and student achievement. However, the school has not adjusted data tools to increase the coherence between school-wide goals and instructional practice. In addition, some of the school's long-term goals are not widely known by the school community, which leads to limited adjustments to these unfamiliar goals based on assessments of student learning.

Effective and structured professional development workshops are offered to support the school's overarching goal of cultivating and supporting professional growth, which leads to high levels of staff collaboration. School leaders and teachers regularly evaluate and adjust the school-wide curriculum to ensure the delivery of consistent instruction within subjects and across the grades. Although students participate in a Beacon after-school program, the school has not established its own internal and external partnerships to provide additional supports for students' academic and socio-emotional needs. The school is inconsistent in its communication with parents, rarely contacting those with high achieving children, which limits their involvement in their child's education and their ability to support them in reaching their potential.

The administration and faculty regularly use periodic assessment and classroom observation data to successfully determine the effectiveness of professional development workshops. However, the school has yet to develop a structure whereby school leaders and teachers can systematically evaluate the ways assessment information is organized and shared with students and families in order to make appropriate adjustments that increase student achievement.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders have purposefully and collaboratively created annual school-wide curriculum frameworks that emphasize key State standards, which ensure consistent alignment with the school's instructional goals.
  - School leaders and teachers ensure that instruction is consistently aligned to the standards. The school has developed detailed curriculum units for every grade and subject area that identify essential questions and highlight connected State standards. For example, each unit lists objectives, aims, skills, outcomes, and choice of culminating activities for students to learn.
  - Within each unit, school leaders and faculty have deliberately included a variety of activities and assessments that encourage the development of students' higher order thinking skills. For example, an activity in a grade 6 interdependence unit included a higher-level assignment where students had to explain the effects of magnetic fields on the migration of animals.
- All teachers actively and successfully support the school-wide vision that students learn best through language-based instruction and differentiated experiences, so that subgroups of students engage in purposeful work.
  - Teachers successfully differentiate lessons by providing students with different levels of materials or work product expectations. In a collaborative team teaching class, students participated in a whole class mini-lesson, and then groups of students either worked on high interest pieces with low or high readability, which culminated in different activities matched to levels of achievement. This practice allows students who are struggling or who have mastered several concepts the ability to engage in challenging activities that address the same subject.
  - School leaders and teachers meet on a weekly basis to discuss informal and formal observations of how their students are performing in each curriculum area resulting in their identifying additional activities to offer students. These regular discussions ensure that teaching practices across the grades are consistent with school-wide beliefs.
- School leaders and teachers routinely gather and analyze a broad range of data on student achievement, which allows the school to successfully identify performance trends, areas of strength, and those in need of improvement.
  - School leaders and teachers use school-created Excel spreadsheets and ARIS reports to track student performance in math and reading. During weekly meetings, teachers discuss student performance and make targeted decisions about how to improve student performance trends. The administration regularly monitors overall strengths and areas for improvement at a school-wide level.
  - Teachers specifically gather and analyze pieces of student writing within the various subject areas. Subsequently, teachers discuss progress toward school-wide goals and determine where adjustments to the curriculum are necessary. This practice is leading to students having meaningful writing experiences in all subject areas.

- School leaders and faculty have successfully created structures that address the learning goals of subgroups of students, so that there is alignment between instructional practices and student achievement.
  - School leaders and faculty have developed an action plan whereby Spanish-speaking teachers are programmed to co-teach with non-Spanish speaking teachers. During the mini-lessons, the ancillary teacher summarizes main points of the lesson and elicits responses to questions from Spanish dominant students. As a result, English language learners consistently have access to rigorous instruction that enables them to achieve their learning goals.
  - School leaders and teachers used the school's New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test results and other testing data to determine the appropriate instructional strategies for their English language learners and special education students. This results in subgroups of students receiving successful supports in all subjects.
- Effective and structured professional development workshops are offered to support the school's overarching goal of cultivating and supporting professional growth, which leads to high levels of staff collaboration.
  - School leaders organize and strongly encourage professional development workshops facilitated by staff members. Thus far, teachers have facilitated workshops on creating and effectively using Excel, on differentiating instruction, and how to use the SMART board in support of effective instruction. As a result, teachers' collaboration and sharing of best practices have increased leading to higher level of student engagement.
  - School leaders have been creative in scheduling to arrange extensive intervisitations by teachers within the same subject across grades. These vertical teacher alignments have led to a consistent approach and increased student achievement as evidenced by student work products, collected in student portfolios.
- School leaders and teachers regularly evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum frameworks, organizational decisions, and instructional practices, which leads to appropriate adjustments toward coherent practices.
  - The school staff uses their regularly scheduled grade meetings to consistently review the curriculum and make adjustments according to student needs. Based on the additional support via co-teaching that the English language learners and special education students receive, teachers regularly adjust the curriculum so that there is consistency across the grades.
  - School leaders and teachers routinely identify available teaching periods in staff members' schedules so that individualized and group tutoring can take place. As a result of these timely adjustments to staff members' schedules there is timely assistance for students. Students indicate that lunchtime sessions with teachers have been helpful in meeting goals in math.

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

- Create opportunities to increase communication with students and families about achievement and social and emotional needs so that the parents can fully support their children's educational experiences.

- Teachers routinely use rubrics to evaluate student work in all subject areas. However, they do not communicate consistently with students about what this feedback means, which leads to students' inability to understand or explain how they could improve their work.
- School leaders discussed ARIS Parent Link during a routinely scheduled parent association meeting, which had very few parents in attendance and little follow-up. As a result, the parents who participated in the school's evaluation process were not aware of the ARIS Parent Link or its benefits.
- Develop internal and external resources for students and families to effectively address all students' academic, social, and emotional needs.
  - Supports for students and their families are limited because the school does not have a parent coordinator and has not fully developed relationships with external resources other than with the Beacon program, which offers services to all students of the four schools in the building.
  - The school currently provides professional development in academic areas and curriculum development, but has not fully implemented professional development in the area of supporting students' social and emotional needs.
- Establish a structure where school leaders and teachers can systematically evaluate the ways assessment information is organized and shared with students and families in order to make appropriate adjustments that increase student achievement.
  - School leaders distributed aggregated data on student achievement in the beginning of the school year, but the staff have not discussed or evaluated aggregated student achievement since then. The school has therefore not been able to determine what adjustments should be made to the way in which they gather, analyze and use data to improve teaching and learning.
  - School leaders decided in the beginning of the school year to eliminate progress reports for students excelling and to only distribute the reports to struggling students, thereby failing to provide all parents with progress reports. This has severely limited some students' and families' knowledge about how well they are doing.
- Develop a system whereby school leaders communicate all of the school's long-term goals to all teachers, students, and parents so that school leaders and teachers can monitor progress towards all goals and make adjustments as necessary.
  - The school has established several long-term goals in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan, but those goals are not readily available or widely known by all members of school community. As a result, the community's ability to monitor of progress toward these goals is limited and shared ownership has yet to be established.
  - In the absence of a fully structured protocol to monitor progress toward all long-term goals, school leaders and teachers are currently developing methods so that they can identify interim goals for all subgroups of students.

# School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

|   |   |          |          |   |
|---|---|----------|----------|---|
| <b>School name: Entrada Academy</b>   | Δ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| <b>Overall QR Score</b>   |   |          | <b>X</b> |   |
| <b>Quality Statement 1 – Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: 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>  |   |          |          |   |
|   | Δ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| 1.1 Design and deliver rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, 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>   |   |          |          |   |
|   | Δ | ➤        | ✓        | + |
| 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>  |  |   |  | Δ | ➤                 | ✓ | +                     |
| 3.1  | Establish a coherent vision of its 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>   |  |   |  | 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                 |   |                       |
| <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>   |  |   |  | 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 |                       |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>   |  |   |  |   | X                 |   |                       |
| <b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>  |  |   |  |   |                   |   |                       |
| Δ  | <b>Underdeveloped</b>  | ➤ | <b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b> | ✓ | <b>Proficient</b> | + | <b>Well Developed</b> |