

# **Quality Review Report 2009-2010**

**Performance School**  
**Elementary School 385**  
**750 Concourse Village West**  
**Bronx**  
**NY 10451**

**Principal: Lourdes Estrella**

**Dates of review: February 3-4, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Yolanda Torres**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Performance School is an elementary school with 714 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 31% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 18% 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 90.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

#### This school is proficient.

The Performance School, established in September 2008, has transitioned in leadership changes. Within its first five months in function, the founding principal resigned and an executive principal came into place. The executive principal, mindful and realistic about the needs of school, has successfully refocused staff on instructional and social-emotional strategies that are positively impacting student learning and behaviors. Every morning, students enthusiastically recite the character pledge as a reminder of being respectful and responsible for their actions. They clearly understand the expected attitude and behavior in classrooms and throughout the building. One student sums it up by stating, "It is not about saying the pledge; it's about doing what it says." Students know that their teachers care about their learning and well-being. Parents see positive changes and appreciate their children's eagerness to learn in this safe and nurturing environment. After-school programs and activities with community-based organizations also contribute to a wholesome learning environment where students' social and emotional aspects are supported as well.

The school has established two academies that effectively support students' grade-specific academic needs. These academies focus on the meta-cognitive skills students need to scaffold their learning and meet short-term goals. School leaders analyze formative assessments and classroom observations on an ongoing basis. Thanks to these analyses, the school has wisely decided to revisit the reading process and is providing support to teachers on strategies that hone in on students' needs. However, because these instructional school-wide adjustments are recent, the rigor is inconsistent and the learned strategies have yet to transition to other subjects.

Professional development for teachers is at the core of the learning process and of high priority to the school. Because of the high percentage of inexperienced teachers, their instructional needs drive the school-wide professional development plan. There are pockets of exemplary practices that support colleague-to-colleague learning. Teachers confer with individual students to provide them with feedback during independent and small group work. However, the depth of teachers' feedback and academic discourse during conferrals is inconsistent across the grades. Although teachers are beginning to meet and plan collaboratively, there is scarce evidence of teachers being involved in the inquiry process. The school leadership acknowledges the need for transitioning towards a collaborative inquiry model, to better support teacher learning and student progress, and to develop processes that enable them to evaluate the impact of professional learning on student outcomes.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has sound understanding of the school's needs and promotes a shared understanding of data analysis to plan realistic goals that drive school-wide improvement.

The principal shares disaggregated formative and summative data with the staff that introduces a sense of urgency in their teaching. During grade meetings and monthly faculty conferences, ongoing sharing of data from formal and informal observations and a variety of other assessments inform instructional decisions. Staff are successfully refocusing their instruction on specific strategies aimed at helping students make progress in their learning.

- Each grade and subgroup has a specific goal to reach in English language arts and math. During teachers' weekly meetings, they discuss student data and agree on how to plan their lessons to help students move towards their goals.
- The school community has unified to create an environment that is safe, positive, and conducive to learning.
  - Students like their teachers and appreciate that they are learning in an environment that is clean and safe. Students walk the hallways and take notice of the behavior expectations posted on the walls in adherence to the school-wide character pledge. They clearly understand that they are to follow the rules and policies of the school and demonstrate this in their daily interactions.
  - Parents speak of how motivated their children are to arrive to school on time ready to learn and how they are equally enthusiastic when completing schoolwork at home. They admit that the work, at times, is challenging, but that their children make it through by seeking their help or through technology.
- The school has partnerships with community-based organizations that support the academic, social, and emotional needs of students.
  - The school offers a variety of after-school programs that develop students' leadership skills and other social and emotional aspects. Students enjoy participating in these customized programs. School leaders ensure that the programs hone in on students' specific needs and share the program outcomes with them on a regular basis.
  - The school ensures that students are involved in activities with community-based organizations to give them a positive outlet where they can grow emotionally and focus on their areas of need. Parents also acknowledge that these activities benefit their children by providing them with essential strategies to learn how to deal with situations in the outside.

- Expectations for attendance, behavior, and achievement are communicated clearly in a variety of ways to secure students' and families' commitment to learning
  - The school acknowledges the importance of attendance by posting and celebrating students' accomplishments. Students and their families appreciate this acknowledgment and demonstrate their commitment to continuing to sustain good attendance that can positively affect their learning. The daily recitation of the character pledge sends a message of mutual respect as well as the need for students to hold themselves accountable for their own actions. Students understand how adhering to this message contributes to a positive learning environment that helps their overall improvement.
  - Parents participate in a variety of workshops that help them develop their leadership and parenting skills. Their involvement in the school leadership team also affords them a voice in the decision-making processes of the school.
- School leaders and teachers ensure that students are set grade-specific goals that enable them to receive the education they deserve.
  - The school serves students in two academies, addressing the specific academic needs at both the early childhood and the upper elementary stages. Teachers meet regularly to share how students are performing and how they plan to address students' next learning steps in alignment with grade-wide goals.
  - Every classroom has adopted a university name that serves as a motivation for students to set their goals as future scholars. As they select the university their class is to adopt, teachers and students are engrossed in learning about the institution and its academic expectations. This experience motivates students to set challenging goals that help them accelerate their learning.
- Teachers and school leaders analyze formative and summative data to assess student progress and performance and use the information to plan to meet their academic needs.
  - Teachers gather and analyze data from assessments to plan their lessons and hone in on the literacy skills students need to improve reading comprehension. The school-wide decision to revisit literacy and the reading process is affording teachers opportunities to become more reflective in their own practice, by discussing in-depth which skills students have mastered as well as those where they need more practice.
  - Teachers use running records and periodic assessments to track student progress and communicate outcomes to both students and their families. As school leaders continue to model school-wide tracking, teachers are becoming more adept in this process, thereby facilitating their understanding of how best to support student learning and communicate progress and next steps with parents.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop better opportunities for teachers to become involved in collaborative inquiry in order to stimulate professional learning and support continued student achievement.
  - While there are some structures in place for teachers to meet and plan regularly, there is lack of evidence of teacher involvement in the collaborative inquiry process. The lack of teacher meetings, focused on data-driven discussion and analysis of student work via inquiry, prevents teachers from developing a deeper understanding of how to support the range of students' academic needs.
- Build on the school-wide instructional decision to revisit reading comprehension strategies to increase the rigor in literacy and other subjects for academic improvement.
  - The instructional decision to revisit specific reading processes and strategies is a focus in the school. Through observations and formative assessments, the school decided to make an instructional adjustment to help students improve on their reading and writing skills. However, because this is a recent adjustment, the impact of these learned strategies in other subjects has yet to be seen.
- Be sure that the feedback provided to students on their work is meaningful with detailed information on their areas of success as well as the next steps for improvement
  - All classroom teachers confer with students and offer feedback. However, in-depth and meaningful feedback to better support students' intellectual growth is inconsistent throughout grade levels. Teacher feedback on student work often lacks substantial details to inform students on their next steps in order to accelerate their learning. While there is evidence of rubrics being used in some classes, the lack of differentiated feedback denies students and their parents the opportunity to have a clear understanding of how best to tackle their learning needs.
- Refine school-wide practices and policies to increase instructional coherence that builds capacity to improve academic outcomes.
  - The school lacks a systemic collaborative teacher team process to support teacher learning and instructional practice, and evaluate the impact of professional development on teacher and student outcomes. However, school leaders are committed to increasing teacher involvement in the inquiry approach in order to build capacity and empower teachers in their learning and leadership development. Without such processes, the school is not in a strong position to achieve school-wide coherence with a positive impact on student learning, as it grows to instructional maturation.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Performance School	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	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	
<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?			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>			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>							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed