

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Bergen School

Elementary School 001

**309 47 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Jennifer Eusanio

**Dates of review: April 11 – 12, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bergen is an elementary school with 1094 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 89% Hispanic, 3% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 33% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Detailed, comprehensive assessment practices consistently provide identification of student performance and progress in order to improve student outcomes.
 - All teachers and teams follow an annual, detailed timeline of interim assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics. Early Childhood Assessment in Math (ECAM), ELL Periodic Assessments, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project assessments, and math end of unit tests are some of the targeted benchmarks that inform curricular and instructional decisions. A snapshot of individual student strengths and challenges is accomplished through the embedded practice of analyzing student work using various protocols and task-specific rubrics. Subsequently, differentiated classroom strategies are more precisely planned for all learners, particularly for benchmark goals in language acquisition and reading levels of ELL students.
- Explicit feedback from school leaders includes clear next steps to improve teacher practice and raise levels of student achievement.
 - School leaders write detailed, purposeful observation reports that provide actionable feedback explicitly linked to school-wide and professional goals. Three times per year, one-on-one conversations with each faculty member afford a dialogue grounded in student progress data and other classroom indicators with mutually-agreed, next steps to improve. Additionally, school leaders and faculty conduct focused, collegial learning walks to establish a common lens for best practices that are aimed at achieving school-wide instructional goals and raise student achievement levels.
 - Differentiated support for teachers is the hallmark of professional development at P.S. 1. All staff, including new teachers and those completing probation, are actively supported by several specialty coaches, a math consultant and two staff developers from Teachers College. Intervisitations, classroom lab-site work, study groups, team planning and off-site workshops promote professional growth and reflection. As a result, targeted teachers demonstrate growth in content and skill knowledge and implement classroom strategies that show improvements in student reading and writing work across grades.
- School leaders and faculty effectively communicate with students and families, resulting in all learners being highly motivated and reflective to reach their goals.
 - Families and students value the ongoing discussions with school leaders and teachers about progress toward academic, behavior, and attendance benchmarks. Monthly reports convey progress levels and next steps to achieve success. Email contact with teachers and the principal's open-door policy augment lines of communication and improve student learning.
 - Reflective analysis permeates classrooms as students use tools such as friendly checklists, task-specific rubrics, reading logs, and journal entries. Student partnerships foster conversations and written reflections as part of

editing and revising. A peace education cluster teacher plans lessons that help students to reflect on indicators of good behavior and strategies such as

“Focus Stop” to learn to calm down. A calm, academic learning environment leads to improved student work and behavior.

- Teacher teams reflect on their practice and provide each other with meaningful feedback that leverages changes in pedagogy and improves student outcomes.
 - The school's core value placed on teamwork is exemplified by the faculty's embrace of professional learning communities in a complex, distributed leadership structure. An inquiry group comprised of teacher leaders/facilitators meets bi-weekly to discuss latest data trends, student and team progress, and research-based practices to share with teacher teams. Collaborative teams led by these core leaders engage in action research by examining student work, sharing instructional strategies, and creating lesson plans together. For example, a fourth grade team discusses a teacher-created chart that identifies rigorous expectations for reading levels, and decides on ways to “push” students to the next level by implementing specific strategies in response to skill deficits. This exchange leverages improvement in pedagogy and targeted fourth graders are progressing between one and three reading levels per month.
- A shared vision, commitment, and collaborative working style create a culture of action planning, reflection, and improvement that advance student learning.
 - The school's theory of action, to cultivate high quality teachers that leverage gains in student achievement, drives the thoughtful, data-informed Comprehension Education Plan (CEP) and LAP. Sharply focused annual and long-term goals and explicit action plans are informed by a detailed needs assessment. In turn, each week the principal conducts three separate cabinet meetings with various stakeholders maintaining high levels of communication and participation. As a result, a broad base of support for the school's vision sustains a culture of continuous student improvement.
- School leaders and faculty are highly effective in developing and using current tools to maintain ongoing data resources that inform curricular and instructional decisions and support improvements in learning.
 - P.S. 1 Connects is the school's web-based, professional learning community created by the school's instructional team. The site houses various data fields that display school-level performance and progress trends contributed for and by staff. This is supplemented by teacher data binders that include conferencing systems, and TC Pro that provides benchmark results in reading and writing and other progress measures. These tools are valuable resources for periodic data analysis to make classroom level decisions and guide how best to support all learners to make gains in achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen and refine teaching practices and academic tasks that extend student thinking and content knowledge to ensure that all lessons continually improve students' cognitive capacity.

- The workshop model is an embedded teaching practice across all classrooms. Lower and upper grade students actively partake in balanced literacy lessons guided by Teachers College reading and writing units of study. Teachers provide extended supports and differentiated approaches to help students make progress. However, some lessons lack built-in, structured opportunities for interaction between students that promote the high level of active engagement and rigor necessary to increase conceptual understanding in all learners. Consequently, not all higher achievers as well as strugglers make sufficient and timely gains in achievement.
- Further align curriculum and instruction so that students make connections across disciplines and apply their knowledge to real-life situations to increase their capacity for critical thinking.
 - Detailed curriculum maps across all grades and subject areas guide teachers in lesson planning that includes differentiated strategies, multiple resources integrated with technology, and varied materials to support students' diverse learning needs. However, maps are not fully complemented by rigorous academic tasks that sufficiently emphasize high levels of cognitive demand or essential questions that consistently challenge all students. This hampers progress in learning for all students.
- Refine organizational decisions so that they are well-aligned to the school's instructional goals and support improvements in learning.
 - Teacher and student programs are planned to include grade level accelerated classes in order to plan lessons that appropriately support and challenge higher achievers. Additionally, the school's web-based, professional learning community provides a place for teachers to research strategies suited for this group as well as struggling students. However, at times academic tasks and resulting student work reveal a lack of rigor. Consequently, not all student work products of higher achievers demonstrate sufficient challenge and cognitive capacity and result in little difference from other individual and groups of students.
- Ensure that teacher feedback is constantly matched to individual student needs to challenge and extend their thinking and improve progress across content.
 - Teams and individual teachers monitor a plethora of data to determine student progress toward goals, especially for ELL's. Teachers engage students in a feedback loop of understanding through conferencing and ongoing one-to-one facilitation during the independent work period. Written feedback on student work is evident on bulletin boards and in student work folders. In some cases comments are broad and generic such as "good job". Therefore, not all feedback reflects precise and specific commentary on what the child does well and what he/she needs to do to get better resulting in missed opportunities for students to support or enrich their work.
- Further formalize systems for evaluating the quality of curricular and instructional decisions to ensure that policies and procedures are coherent in supporting student mastery of skills and content.

- Capacity-building practices are embedded in the work of teacher teams. Some teams focus on organizational structures and school-wide student data trends, while others on curriculum, instruction, and personal growth. However, formalized systems are not yet perfected so that the effectiveness of their work to modify curricular and instructional practices ensures coherence of highly rigorous expectations for student learning and outcomes across all content.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Bergen School	UD	D	P	WD
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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
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>	UD	D	P	WD
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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

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>	UD	D	P	WD
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	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed