

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Henry Bristow**

**Elementary School 039**

**417 Sixth Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11215**

**Principal: Anita DePaz**

**Dates of review: April 12 - 13, 2011  
Lead Reviewer: Carol Mosesson-Teig**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Henry Bristow is an elementary school with 360 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 14% Black, 24% Hispanic, 56% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.7%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty design engaging and coherent curricula that emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills for a variety of learners aligned to State standards.
  - The school's development of an innovative school-wide enrichment model for all grades, enables assignment of students to social studies content groups as well as interest groups, and has a curriculum that incorporates interdisciplinary links and project-based learning. Art, dance, and the use of technology and music lessons through the Philharmonic partnership also provide a myriad of opportunities for students to pursue their talents and interests.
  - The principal's curriculum team guides the development of effective teacher-designed curriculum maps aligned to the Common Core State Standards and New York State Standards. In addition, conversations with teachers on and across grades focus on strengthening students' understanding of non-fiction texts, and enhancing reading and writing skills. This is supportive of the school aligning and implementing instructional tasks both vertically and horizontally that promotes and increase students' learning outcomes.
- The principal makes strategic and purposeful organizational and instructional decisions aligning resources to support goals and collaboration that improve academic outcomes.
  - Extended day, incorporated into every school day, creates an academic intervention period for both enrichment and remediation support. In addition, during two periods daily, the special education teacher support provider, the individual education plan teacher, and the academic intervention teacher, spend time in classrooms working with small groups to support students' learning.
  - Multiple opportunities scheduled weekly allow teachers to meet, analyze data, and prepare instruction, on and across grade levels. This scheduling, coupled with the principal's request for and implementation of a change to the school calendar, enables teachers to have an additional professional development day at no financial cost or instructional cost to the school, resulting in deeper vertical conversations around aligning curriculum and instructional practices.
- Assessments are used to drive curricular and instructional decisions and support flexible responsive decision-making on behalf of individuals and groups of students.
  - Grade-level teacher teams develop standard-based rubrics for Qualities of Good Writing and a Comprehension Toolkit, resulting in protocols effectively being shared and used throughout the school. Teachers also meet to enhance end-of-unit assessments for their math program. Data collected from assessments is shared among classroom teachers, the

principal, and academic service providers, to decide skill based groupings, identify targeted next instructional steps, and plan suitable frequency of instruction for students.

- The principal communicates a clear vision for the future that supports on-going progress and focuses the entire school community on accelerating student learning.
  - The principal's belief that student achievement comes first at PS 39 underscores all communication to faculty and families. Instructional goals, defined through an extensive array of data, are specifically linked to accelerating student performance. Planning processes such as faculty conferences, grade team meetings, and parent association meetings are transparent and generate broad support for the school's vision and strategies for improvement.
- The principal is proactive in making performance evaluation decisions and encouraging teacher reflection around the performance of their students.
  - Formal observations, review of student work samples and assessment results are embedded systems and guide improving teacher practice. The principal's match of the formal observation to individual teacher's needs, is based upon the *Enhancing Professional Practice* text by Charlotte Danielson, and provides precise action steps. Formal and informal meetings between administrators and teachers enable staff to reflect on practice and develop personal professional goals based on the school's and students' needs.
  - Analysis of data results in highly differentiated professional development. Teachers work one-on-one with outside consultants, participate with partnerships, and have opportunities to attend small group sessions for outside professional development. This results in improved effectiveness and preparation for leadership positions within the school.
- Teachers place a high value on collaborating and on professional growth, resulting in a shared responsibility and commitment to raising student outcomes.
  - Teachers appreciate PS 39's highly collaborative environment, and the understanding of their principal who serves as an invaluable resource having practical classroom instruction and coaching experience. One hundred percent of teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry either on-grade or across-grade levels to improve the critical thinking and reading comprehension skills of targeted students. Classroom, grade level, and school trends, are discussed at meetings leading to purposeful vertical planning and opportunities to share happenings school wide. There is an overwhelming sense from teacher team members relative to the value of shared planning, and attribute their professional growth to the support of their colleagues.

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

- Enhance school wide structures that evaluate goal setting and track progress to further accelerate student learning.

- The school has a goal to have 60% of their targeted population have a non-fiction reading level equal to their fiction reading level. An interim assessment given to students resulted in an awareness that 15% of the population's non-fiction reading level had dropped. While the principal and teachers were reflective as to the cause for the drop in scores, and adjustments were made to instruction and classroom materials, readjustments to the overall school goal were not affected. Therefore, the effective tracking of ongoing improvement to student achievement is limited.
- Teachers utilize multiple tools including student work, Acuity, rubrics, and assessments, to track the progress of their students relative to their goals. However, staff does not have sufficient structures to evaluate how to suitably adjust goals using this information.
- Improve teacher practice across all classrooms that promote active and lively student participation, offer challenge at various levels, and elicits higher-order thinking skills.
  - Although there is evidence of grouping in classrooms, a common understanding of differentiation is inconsistent. In one class, the teacher assigned different math tasks to groups based on levels. In another class, a teacher assigned groups the same math pages and they were supported by different adults in the room, while in a third class, all but one small group were working on the same math sheet, as a small group met with the teacher working on another math concept. This lack of a common practice of differentiation for tasks, allowing for choice in content, process, or product, limits students from making purpose and taking ownership of their learning.
- Continue to enhance on-going practices regarding the evaluation of teacher teams and professional development effectiveness to ensure a high level of instructional coherence across the school.
  - The framework to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams is evolving and teams are currently asked to self-evaluate. Teachers are also asked to complete a survey regarding the effectiveness of the professional development opportunities. While the collection of this data yields rich information, the lack of a more structured on-going system to evaluate the process does not allow the school to make timely curricular and instructional adjustments to extend student learning.
- Deepen authentic feedback to students and families so that they understand their strengths and focus on precise next steps for growth.
  - The use of reflective rubrics to evaluate student work and note performance levels is evident across classes. However, not all teachers give the next steps throughout the process on students' written work. This hinders some students from understanding their scores, monitoring their own progress, and taking responsibility for their learning.
  - The school has developed and sends home interim progress reports to families, twice during the year. Although these reports reflect student's performance, next learning goals are not yet included, thus preventing parents from knowing and providing suitable support to improve their children's learning.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Henry Bristow</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and 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>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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, 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>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<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.**

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>