

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Cypress Hills Community School**

**Elementary-Middle School 089**

**265 Warwick Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Irene Leon**

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

**Lead Reviewer: Nicole Williams**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 089 Cypress Hills is an elementary/middle school with 309 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 1% White, 12% Black, 1% Asian, and 84% Hispanic students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. Currently, 49% of the student body are English language learners and 14% are special education students. The average attendance rate for the 2009 school year was 94.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- By working intimately with faculty across the school, school leaders have developed a strong culture that supports teachers in growing their instructional practice in a variety of ways and at every level.
  - As an outgrowth of formal and informal discourse and focused, coordinated work, the school created a Common Practices framework that guides pedagogy school-wide and is carefully aligned with the instructional needs of dual language learners. This practice results in improved outcomes for dual language learners.(a)
  - The school offers differentiated professional development opportunities, with a focus for new staff. For example, a 3-4 week “cycle of support,” which includes coaching, demonstrating, modeling and co-teaching, affords teachers the opportunity to work one-to-one with a school-based coach. Regular feedback and reflection on instructional practices in this collegial environment leads to a school culture that embraces continuous improvement as the norm.
- School leaders consistently engage in professional collaborations to effectively hone instructional strategies that result in better student outcomes.
  - Teacher teams meet regularly, supported by the assistant principal and coaches, to refine curricula and assessments based on student work products. For example, the Writing Continuum Development Committee revamped the school's writing continuum based on a review of student data, which revealed that students across grade levels were able to effectively convey voice in persuasive writing pieces, but struggled with grammar and conventions of writing. As a result, teachers are better able to support dual language students in attaining writing mastery. (b)
  - A “professional learning community” cultivates each teacher's talent and provides leadership and decision-making opportunities, as evidenced by teacher-led inquiry groups who assume responsibility for analyzing student outcomes, monitoring and examining student progress, and developing strategies to enhance teacher practice and student learning.
- The school has aligned its resources to build capacity and further teacher development throughout the school.
  - The school community strategically selected the Academy for Educational Development (AED) as their network affiliate this year. This partnership provides the school with focused professional development, and strategies to be better positioned to strengthen the work of teachers at the middle school level to meet students' social, emotional and academic needs. Resources were allocated to hire an AUSSIE consultant who supports teachers in further developing and refining the mathematics curriculum.
  - A small group of beginning and middle level English language learners work with the ESL support teacher using Achieve 3000, a technology-based reading program that is customized to meet the specific learning needs of each student.

As a result of this structured support, English language learners are making academic gains in literacy outcomes.

- The school has designed a strong bilingual/bicultural, standards-based curriculum across grades and subject areas that support students in their dual language learning.
  - Teachers collaborate to develop clear, detailed curriculum maps in English language arts, writing and mathematics. This work has resulted in a coherent pre-K to 8 sequence in specific content areas and shapes teachers' understandings of what to teach and how best to teach students in both languages.
  - At the early grades, student-led publishing celebrations provide an important venue for students to reflect on their work, share select writing pieces with parents and peers, and further refine their reading, writing, and presentation skills. In the upper grades, students engage in reflective analysis of their portfolio work samples in core content areas, resulting in students' assuming greater accountability for their learning.
- Consistent beliefs across the school about the importance of language and writing have resulted in student work products that reflect rigor, engagement, and critical reflection in Spanish and in English.
  - Teachers across grade levels and content areas use a workshop model approach to actively engage students. "Language as a tool for learning" is a core belief resonating throughout the school community and is evidenced by the high-quality displays of student writing on bulletin boards, in writer's notebooks, and in portfolios.
  - Students recognize the importance of receiving individualized instruction tailored to meet their developmental needs in English or Spanish. One student stated, "My teacher uses lots of pictures and technology to help me learn the lesson in Spanish because she knows I'm English dominant and I need more help."
- Families have a strong voice and an active role in decision-making, that supports high expectations for all students.
  - Parents and community members continue to hold high expectations for the school's success, and take an active role as members of the Governance Council and Parent-Teacher Collaborative. In addition, a parent co-director works alongside the principal, which also contributes to parents having direct input into the day-to-day decisions of the school.
  - A myriad of outreach initiatives including curriculum nights, parent-teacher conferences, publishing events, and Wednesday morning coffee, cultivate purposeful parental involvement. As a result, parents are highly engaged in school activities and decision-making that support student achievement.

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

- Implement a robust system using interim benchmarks to track school-wide goals over time so that the school can accurately measure progress toward increasing student outcomes.

- Coaches meet with teachers to analyze data and set goals for student progress using school-based periodic assessments. However, the school does not have a fully developed structure for setting annual or interim goals with clearly delineated strategies and indicators of student progress and success. Thus, teachers are limited in their ability to develop strategic plans to help students in ways that support the achievement of specific, data-based learning goals
- Teachers analyze data from multiple sources, including artifacts of work produced, to assess student progress and gauge the developmental needs of each dual language learner. However, this practice does not consistently result in targeted goal setting for individuals and groups of students.
- Provide strategies to help teachers use ongoing assessment results to regularly inform and adjust instruction to better meet student needs.
  - Teacher teams have rich and engaging discussions as they analyze item skills reports and periodic assessments alongside student work. However, this practice varies across grades and content areas and does not lead to a systematic approach to the review and analysis of classroom level data to inform instruction for targeted subgroups. Consequently, data analysis at the classroom level for subgroups is uneven across all grades.
  - The school uses a Design Your Own (DYO) assessment program with benchmark indicators in mathematics and writing across grade levels, but not every teacher distills critical diagnostic information to proactively guide their instructional practice. Therefore, there are inconsistent levels of differentiation school-wide, which limit a strong intentional focus on accelerating the academic progress of all students.
- Establish a school wide approach to setting measurable interim and long-term goals in core subject areas for individual students and subgroups to ensure that students and teachers are aware of their next steps.
  - Tools such as Engrade and interim progress reports are utilized to capture student learning and provide feedback on an individual student's movement towards achieving short-term goals. However, the school is in the process of developing a purposefully designed data management system that would allow staff to use data more effectively to collectively improve instruction. Thus, the school is limited in its ability to effectively adjust instructional goals for individuals and targeted groups.
- Communicate school goals with an intent and purpose that results in a shared understanding of the school's focus to improve student learning.
  - Although there is total buy-in from the faculty regarding the school's initiatives, many teachers have trouble identifying the key priorities, which limits their ability to take ownership for improving their instructional practices aligned with school wide expectations for student learning.
  - Individual teachers and teams help students set improvement goals that address both academic and social behaviors. However, most goals are broadly stated, not measurable or specific to individual learners. Consequently, students and their families are not fully engaged in the goal setting process, which impedes the planning of next steps to further their growth and development.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name:</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>	

<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>	<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>				
<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>	<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>				
<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>	<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>