



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Carlos Tapia School

Elementary School 120

**18 Beaver Street
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Liza Caraballo

Dates of review: April 1- 4, 2011

Lead Reviewer: James Quail

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Carlos Tapia is an elementary school with 469 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 84% Hispanic, 2% White, 2% Asian and 1% multiracial students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school offers rich and varied curricula making strategic decisions to highlight key standards to meet the needs of its diverse learners in order to close the achievement gap.
 - The school uses curriculum maps, units of study and calendars for all subjects, and purposefully integrates key, evolving State standards and higher order thinking skills into its planning. All students produce a great deal of writing, in all curriculum areas. This work reflects the use of benchmark papers, rubrics and teacher comments to set clear learning expectations in each grade and class. Currently, to improve literacy, the school has integrated a focus on vocabulary in all subjects and grades, including the arts. In addition, the school now uses a school-wide, word study program, Words Their Way. English language learners and special needs students use materials and programs matched to their particular academic levels in math and literacy. This helps align the curricula to meet student needs and fosters active student engagement.
 - All students produce authentic written expression pieces, which highlights their thinking. Teachers use questioning techniques to stimulate higher order skills. In this magnet school for the arts and social studies, all students select theme-based projects in which they compare cultures, use timelines, and compile various sources of information to support their answers. Thus, academic tasks have been embedded across the school to promote thinking and the production of meaningful student work.
- The alignment of curriculum with teaching practices supports the school's belief system to differentiate instruction, which leads to high levels of student engagement.
 - Group instruction, conferencing, running records, and learning centers are evident in all classrooms. In special education classes, students use magnetic letters and words to assist them in word study. There is strong evidence of word walls, small group instruction and the use of thought provoking questions, in all classes. Teachers use materials and programs to meet the precise needs of students. English language learners use Rosetta Stone and Destination Math while special education staff monitors student academic progress on a weekly basis. The recent Learning Environment Survey (LES) reflects that 97% of the teachers feel the school finds the best ways to help students learn. This alignment of teaching strategies and practices, across the school, to meet precise student needs supports students in producing meaningful work.
- School leaders use a variety of data and evaluation tools to closely monitor and evaluate pedagogy in order to support and improve professional growth.
 - School leaders and faculty collaborate regularly around the school's shared vision and mission by attending leadership meetings, and working on instructional cabinets to analyze data, share best practices and set

school-wide initiatives. The vast majority of teachers, parents and students hold the school and its leaders in high regard for creating an atmosphere, which values all voices. These efforts help build an agreed upon and purposeful instructional focus to improve learning.

- School leaders consistently use observations, staff surveys and conversations to guide their next steps with staff members. Teachers benefit from workshops on strategies to use with English language learners and the use of effective questions to stimulate thinking. The three new teachers receive mentoring, targeted support from the literacy coach, math consultant, peers and school leaders. These strategic decisions along with the precise planning to meet specific teacher needs promote professional growth and the improvement of instruction.
- School leaders make strategic organizational and curricula decisions across the school to meet student needs and align instructional goals to accelerate learning.
 - The school has purchased additional computers and materials to meet student needs during the regular and extended day programs. This year, additional teachers and paraprofessionals provide intervention services to at risk students in literacy and math in all grades. External consultants and network specialists now support teachers in literacy, math and small group instruction. This wise use of resources to meet instructional goals enhances efforts to meet student needs.
 - The school has organized teacher teams on each grade and provided time for them to collaborate around the study of student work and the integration of higher order thinking skills into instructional practice. These teams use a protocol and agenda to maximize their time to examine learning. After school and extended day programs provide additional time for students to attend academic and sports programs to meet their needs. This practice to carefully use time helps the school build capacity to engage students in challenging academic tasks.
- The school regularly uses systems to assess and adjust curricula, instruction and organizational decisions to accelerate student learning.
 - The school purposefully integrates the evolving State standards in reading and math and revisits them at staff conferences, and leadership meetings. School leaders and faculty examine student work to see evidence of higher order thinking skills. The school uses a range of test results, formative data, observations, and surveys to monitor progress and adjust practices. For example, the school now has inquiry teams on each grade that meet weekly to examine efforts to improve written expression and comprehension. This careful aligning of instructional practices and resources builds coherence to accelerate learning.
- The faculty and school leaders foster a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a clear vision to accelerate student learning
 - The Comprehensive Education Plan strategically reflects annual and interim goals with clear action plans to meet school needs. The school thoughtfully analyzes this data at leadership meetings to address agreed

upon, improvements in math, reading and literacy. The school addresses the social-emotional growth of students by providing them with intervention services from the psychologist, guidance counselor and social worker. This helps create a clear improvement plan to meet student needs and close the achievement gap.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the alignment of teacher assessments at the class and team level to analyze curricula and instructional decisions to create a clear picture of student needs, in order to assess progress over time.
 - Presently, individual teachers and teams create and use common assessments, including Periodic Assessments, and other data to inform their instruction and practices. However, not all teachers use this data to create a clear picture of the strengths and needs of their English language learners and special needs students. This restricts the school in adjusting practices to meet student needs and increase learning.
- Enrich the use of tools to support individual teachers and teams to aggregate and organize data to assess trends and identify areas for improvement to improve student outcomes.
 - Individual teachers and teams use data and assessments to measure student growth. However, there is limited use of this information to track the trends in the data and use tools to measure student performance for English language learners and special needs students. This restricts efforts, across the school, to make adjustments in classroom practice and instruction to meet the changing and assessed needs of students.
- Strengthen the sharing of relevant information with families and students to engage them in knowing the clear expectations in learning to build capacity and increase student outcomes.
 - Parents receive report cards, results of various assessments and they use ARIS to know their children's progress. However, this data does not include timely information about the next steps in the improvement process. This limits efforts to build capacity to increase learning.
 - Students reflect on their work and self assess their efforts. However, not all students routinely speak about and reflect on their next learning steps thus restricting their active engagement to accelerate their learning.
- Increase professional collaboration that aligns with individual teacher goals along with monitoring procedures to address the impact of these offerings on adult and student learning.
 - Teachers regularly share their practices to improve learning. However, a recent survey indicates that some teachers express a need for professional support that meets their specific needs. The absence of this limits their professional growth and restricts improved student outcomes.
 - Currently, individual teachers purposefully collaborate to align their efforts to a new goal centered on written expression. Teachers ask for more

support in this area. As a result, the need for additional support limits opportunities to enrich professional learning and increase student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

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|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| School name: Carlos Tapia 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 |