

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Sheldon A. Brookner School

Public School 135

**684 Linden Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Trevlyn McRae

Dates of review: January 5 – 6, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Khalek Kirkland

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Sheldon A. Brookner School is an elementary school with 757 students from PK through grade 5. The school population comprises 94% Black, 3% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school administration utilizes its resources to develop consistent instructional strategies to meet the needs of students.
 - Despite having two separate buildings which are quite a distance apart from each other, the school has been able to ensure that all classrooms utilize strategies of the week, core virtues and monthly writing and collection which better prepare students for more rigorous expectations.
 - Cabinet meetings, Inquiry teams and Professional Development team meetings are structured to allow teachers to collaborate across team assignments and engage in the development of challenging academic tasks for students.
- The curriculum is designed to provide interesting opportunities for all students increasing student engagement and attendance.
 - Students meet three times per week for extended day after-school programs as well as participate in enrichment activities. The enrichment activities provide students with a wide variety of choices and the students are assigned to activities on cycles, which change two times per year. The extended day activities are aligned to the curriculum, which are helping to close the achievement gap for at-risk students.
 - During the school day, coaches work with students via push-in and pull-out sessions. Students deemed at-risk are broken up into two groups that work on differentiated tasks in both literacy and math. As a result, students are supported to increase their academic performance.
- Differentiated instructional strategies are evident across classrooms and provide multiple entry points for students fostering a greater understanding of concepts and student engagement.
 - Teachers in the lower grades routinely utilize centers to assign groups of students to different activities based on the most recent TIA (Targeted Instructional Assignment) data. Students are able to articulate why it is that they are assigned to each group and are engaged in challenging academic tasks.
 - Teachers in upper grades use persuasive writing assignments to determine grouping of students in order to develop narrative procedures. These heterogeneous groupings foster a rich conversation amongst students with varying learning abilities.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring both new teachers and teachers new to the school with a clear focus on improving instructional practices to promote student success.
 - The principal and assistant principals have established systems for implementing an intervisitation schedule for all new teachers. These

teachers are monitored based on observations as well as the feedback from their assigned buddy teachers. In addition, coaches are assigned new teachers and new teachers to the school to work with on six-week intervals on both instruction, and school culture. Consequently, all new teachers are given detailed feedback that aligns their professional growth with school-wide goals.

- The administration saw higher order thinking skills as a weakness across the school and decided more professional development was needed around questioning. To that end, teachers participate in a minimum of 40 hours of PD across all curriculum areas in order to challenge students across multiple disciplines. Literature circles are utilized to evoke critical thinking within all classrooms by fostering rich discussions amongst students.
- The faculty has established systems and protocols to analyze data, plan curriculum, and share good instructional practice in order to improve student achievement.
 - Teachers utilize Fountas and Pinnel reading assessments to track each child's progress and determine if differentiation strategies are effective.
 - The inquiry team is looking at data to explore why results for boys on ITA exams are not reflective of their scores on the NYS exams. The team is also looking at their STAR program and the disparity of boys in each of the classes. As a result, they have decided to revamp the STAR program assessment to not only ensure an equal distribution of boys and girls entrance into the program but also sustain this equal distribution.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the system to monitor outcomes across the school in order to positively effect school-wide curricular and instructional decisions.
 - The UFT consultation committee is composed of teachers on most grades and meets each month. However, teachers unevenly organize data to implement changes school-wide. As a result, there is still very little movement academically as students move from one grade to the next based on the school's profile data.
 - Curriculum maps are developed with the assistance of the coaching staff and grade leaders however there is no opportunity in place for grade leaders to meet with other grades. Consequently, best practices identified in inquiry teams are rarely shared vertically in order to increase performance of key subgroups.
- Develop a system in collaboration with parents to increase their child's capacity to track and assess progress towards attaining set goals to accelerate achievement.
 - Progress reports are sent out to parents twice a year in conjunction with a curriculum night held in September where school-wide data is shared.

However, there is no evidence of communication between the school and home around goals for each class or each student in order to drive students to achieve to their fullest academic potential.

- Teachers submit interim assessment results to the administration each month but the principal has not formulated a system to allow students to assess their own progress. Consequently many students were unfamiliar with their reading levels.
- Provide systems to better track learning goals in order to assist both teachers and parents with their children's academic growth for improved performance.
 - Classrooms showed evidence of using assessments but these assessments are not common amongst teachers on the same grade level. Consequently, it is hard to track student progress by grade and adjust instructional plans to improve achievement across the school.
 - Parents were provided information on the Fountas and Pinnell assessments given to students as well as the reading goals for each grade level. However, there is no clear description for parents as to how exactly to help their child if they are performing below grade level making it hard for families to effectively support student progress.
- Expand the systems for monitoring data relative to student achievement in order to ensure information is used effectively across the entire school.
 - Every other month teachers are required to turn in periodic assessment results, which thus far show that students do not have the background knowledge necessary for success. For example, teachers recognized that boys were underperforming in the area of reading comprehension and made adjustments in the content moving toward National Geographic magazines. However, the school did not make adjustments as to how the content would be delivered as boys are still lagging behind girls in ELA interim assessments in upper grades. The administration has not developed systems to evaluate these and other assessments slowing the ability to align across the faculty what students need to know and be able to do.
- Develop interim goals so that progress can be measured and success evaluated to mobilize collective efforts to improve instructional practices.
 - Monthly meetings take place with the staff however very little emphasis is placed on communicating interim goals for targeted sub-groups of students. As a result the administration is not able to articulate where improvements are needed beyond Fountas and Pinnell levels.
 - The administrative team has put a system in place to monitor teachers via observations. However, there is a lack of emphasis placed on setting goals for each teacher during the year. As a result there is very little evidence of adjustments made in teacher assignments despite a lack of student growth among particular grades.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Sheldon A. Brookner 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