



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**P.S. 153 The Homecrest School of Music**

**21K153**

**1970 Homecrest Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11229**

**Principal: Carl Santa Maria**

**Dates of review: December 13-14, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

P.S. 153 the Homecrest School of Music is an elementary school with 517 students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 20% Hispanic, 32% White, and 36% Asian students. The student body includes 29% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Leaders make informed organizational decisions that align with instructional goals and support efforts leading to improving student learning.
  - To support teacher development and ensure multiple opportunities for collaborations, teacher programs allow for a minimum of three common preparation periods across grades and professional development periods several times a month. This provides teachers opportunities to share instructional practices and enhance pedagogic skill resulting in the beginning of instructional coherence across grades.
  - School leaders are purposeful in programming students and creating teaching assignments to support the needs of students. To support the growing English Language Learner population in the early childhood grades, an additional English as a Second Language teacher was hired. This provides the resources necessary to support a push-in model of team-teaching resulting in this student grouping engaging in instruction that addresses their learning needs.
- Teachers and teacher teams align curricula and assessments leading to data analysis that affects instructional decisions across grades
  - Weekly teacher team meetings provide a forum where teachers analyze assessment data from the Teacher's College assessment and teacher made assessments to gain an understanding of student mastery of targeted standards. Teachers use the information garnered at these meetings to plan their units of study toward supporting students reaching learning targets. The use of assessments at specified intervals several times a year allows monitoring of progress and teachers use common planning periods to study student performance. Teachers are aware of student abilities, which enable them to make instructional decisions geared to improve performance.
- School leaders articulate an instructional vision that is creating a culture of collaboration and professional learning.
  - School leaders articulate a clear vision to faculty that through a literacy based instructional model students will make progress across all content areas. Most teachers are supportive of the vision and demonstrate a willingness to participate in professional development opportunities to build pedagogic skill in a balanced literacy model of instruction, resulting in the beginning of instructional coherence across the school.
  - Building the capacity of teachers is a priority of school leaders and there are several mechanisms for teachers to build their pedagogic capacity. New teachers receive support through mentoring and coaching specifically designed to ensure growth toward reaching pedagogic goals. As a result, teachers continually elevate their instructional practice to

ensure alignment to school goals and forward movement of students in reaching their instructional targets.

- School leaders support teacher growth through professional development to support instructional practice resulting in improving student performance.
  - Teachers engage in professional learning opportunities to support the school's implementation of the evolving State standards. Weekly professional development focuses on analyzing the standards and instructional methodologies. Teachers share best practices and are beginning to analyze student work to understand the effectiveness of strategies in building student skills, building toward a more consistent instructional approach that positively affects student performance.
  - Professional development is differentiated and targeted to support individual pedagogic growth. The schedule provides for weekly double period blocks for grade professional development sessions with the focus of building instructional coherence along a balanced literacy model of instruction. Vertical teacher teams are beginning to analyze student work to measure the impact of instruction across the grades. Consequently, teachers receive support in their professional growth and are cognizant of how their practice affects student outcomes.
- Systems to evaluate assessment practices and methods of communication result in increasing coherence practices throughout the school.
  - Monthly instructional team meetings focus on ensuring that assessments accurately measure student progress toward mastery of key standards. A result of this work is the adjustment of practices to articulate student progress as evidenced by a school-wide grading system ensuring class grades accurately represents student performance outcomes.
  - Weekly cabinet meetings and regular School Leadership Team meetings monitor the methods of communicating performance outcomes with students and families to ensure that school practices are effective in involving students and families in improving student outcomes. As a result, teachers and school leaders are expanding methods of communication to include an increased number of progress and assessment reports and ongoing support for parents to use ARIS Parent Link as a tool for monitoring student progress.

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

- Develop comprehensive curricula across all subject areas to ensure that instruction is consistently rigorous and emphasizes key standards across all subject areas.
  - Although each grade follows a course of study that aligns to State standards, there is not a well-articulated curriculum in use that consistently emphasizes academic rigor, high order thinking skills or planned tasks to engage all learners. As a result, there is inconsistency across the school in how instruction aligns to key standards and in opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills, limiting opportunities for students to improve performance.

- Elevate classroom practice to provide students with rigorous, differentiated instruction ensuring high levels of engagement and development of higher order thinking skills.
  - Some teachers are beginning to use data to group students and plan instruction to engage all learners. However, this is not a consistent practice and instruction is not effectively differentiated to ensure access to the curriculum for all learners. Consequently, there are missed opportunities for students to engage in the curriculum through multiple entry points toward reaching and exceeding learning targets.
  - Instruction in some classrooms provides students with opportunities for rigorous engagement and development of higher order thinking skills. However, in most instances instructional practices lead students to a basic level of comprehension and engagement in academic tasks that are not supportive of the development of the critical thinking skills necessary to progress student performance to mastery of the standards.
- Expand school-wide goal setting to ensure alignment with data driven needs and imbed interim benchmarks to measure progress toward reaching goals.
  - School leaders set overarching goals intended to improve student performance. The goals are broad and not specific relating to targeted groups or skill performance and do not articulate specific benchmarks to measure interim progress. Members of the school community have limited input in the school-wide goal setting process and can only articulate general goals with one member of the School Leadership Team stating, “I think our goal is to do better in math.” As a result, it is unclear if there is understanding by the school community of school needs or the progress of students toward reaching goals.
- Develop structures to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional decisions to ensure alignment to school goals and consistency across the school.
  - The cabinet and instructional team meets regularly to discuss instructional practice and student performance. The team is just beginning to develop structures to evaluate the impact of organizational and instructional decisions on student performance. As a result, there is limited impact of the team’s work on building coherence of practice across the school and it is unclear how instructional decisions are affecting student outcomes.
- Deepen the use of assessments to measure and track student progress across the school.
  - Although the school is consistent in its use of Teacher’s College assessments to measure baseline skill and progress there are no specified processes for using assessments to measure interim progress at small intervals to make timely adjustments to school-wide plans or instructional practice. Some teachers use their own class assessments to measure interim progress but this practice is not consistent in all grades and in all classes resulting in inconsistencies in how student progress is measured and how assessment data supports improving student performance.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: P.S. 153 The Homecrest School of Music</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>	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**

<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>
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