

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The SEEALL Academy
Elementary/Middle School K180
5601 16th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11204

Principal: Gary M. Williams

Dates of review: December 1-2, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Yvette Donald

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The SEEALL Academy is a elementary-middle school with 1157 students from K through grade 8. The school population comprises 2% Black, 18% Hispanic, 39% White, and 36% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leader makes thoughtful organizational decisions across key aspects of the school to support increased student learning.
 - Two assistant principals, kindergarten to fifth grade, and middle school, focus on instruction across their designated grades. During common planning time, which all teachers are programmed for, the literacy coach works closely with assistant principals and teachers to integrate the new literacy program across all grades. In addition, teacher team leaders, in close collaboration, work to develop integrated practices to be shared with all teachers. This clear and concerted effort on the part of administration and key staff members assures focused cohesive instruction that is demonstrated in each grades application of the color coded system of student ability groupings.
- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a respectful and orderly environment for learning to take place.
 - Students report that the trusting, respectful and nurturing relationships they have with their teachers allows them to focus on their learning and take risks to reach for higher levels of achievement in class. Middle school teachers involve students in task selection. This increases students' levels of engagement and investment in their learning, as well as developing higher levels of social and emotional competence in order to promote achievement.
- School personnel assure that the personal and social needs of students and families are addressed.
 - Town hall meetings and assemblies serve as a venue to celebrate successes, and hear, address and resolve the concerns of parents, staff and students. These meetings, along with professional development, under the supervision of a dedicated assistant principal of student services and his team, ensure that a full range of supports for students is provided. This has lead to significant decrease in the number of infractions both in and outside of their learning environment.
- Parents are partners in their child's education and are kept informed of the school's expectations, programs, and their child's needs.
 - The school provides workshops for parents on critical academic and social issues such as new common core standards and the school's anti bullying campaign. In addition to these meetings, a parent leadership team meets with the Principal monthly to discuss the school's successes, challenges and provide input related to school-wide decisions. This assures ongoing communication between the school and families. One example of how parents input affected school policy is that the student progress reports sent to middle school parents will now be generated for elementary school students and parents.
- Teachers across the school welcome and take full advantage of opportunities to collaborate both in department and grade-level meetings in an effort to strengthen instruction and increase student outcomes.

- The school sets a high priority on teacher team collaboration and input. Representatives from teacher teams, including coaches, team facilitators and support services staff, are active members of the principal's very inclusive cabinet. This instructional team's analysis of student state exam outcomes, and periodic assessment data, aligned to teacher team practice, prompted the collaborative decision to change curricular programs. Teachers report that these collaborations have increased their practice and motivate them to continue learning and have empowered them to continue contributing ideas and innovations to increase student performance to strengthening instruction in the school (a,c)

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the school's curriculum to highlight and emphasize key standards in order to ensure accelerated learning for all students.
 - The school's curriculum are aligned to State standards and the key areas of critical thinking and problem solving have emerged as a result of the work done by the data teams and fourth grade teacher teams. However, these broad areas are not explicitly reflected in curriculum maps nor strategically and uniformly communicated to all teachers, preventing them from targeting instruction to embed these foci across all grades and subject areas. Consequently, the academic rigor of tasks and learning experiences are inconsistent across the school.
- Strengthen the use of data to differentiate classroom groupings and learning activities to provide appropriate challenge aligned to student achievement levels.
 - The school's newly adopted elementary level literacy curriculum supports a three tiered color coded grouping system. The implementation of this program provides a broad understanding of student's performance levels. However, this level of attention in directing small group instruction is not consistent across all classrooms, including the middle school grades. As a result, student tasks do not assure that all students engage in learning experiences that utilize their strengths and areas of need to produce meaningful work products.
 - Student leadership of learning, facilitated by teachers, is the prevailing belief which guides instruction in the middle school. For example, students lead discussions, and engage in dialogue in order to share their thinking. Since the adoption of the middle school literacy program is in its' infancy, and supports in fidelity to the program are under development, teaching practices do not yet focus these student-led activities to ensure high levels of student learning.
- Further develop and strengthen the application of the observation tool to evaluate teaching practices and identify next steps in order to strategically support the achievement of school-wide goals.
 - Administration formally and informally observes teachers to gauge efforts in meeting student needs. However, the observational tool, and the process used is not specifically connected to school-wide goals, limiting feedback that promotes pedagogical development towards the vision of the school.

- Teachers engage in professional development with network team members, within teacher teams, and around the school's newly adopted literacy program with outside vendors and in-house coaches. However, the support for this work is not strategically focused on teachers along the continuum of teacher development, specifically, new teachers or teachers new to the school, to ensure improvements in content knowledge and teaching practices.
- Develop a system to ensure that all teachers know their students' strengths, areas for growth and progress on a consistent basis to support targeted instruction across all grade levels and subject areas.
 - The school utilizes summative and periodic data, including State exam results, instructionally targeted assessment results and programmatic end-of-unit tests. However, there is an inconsistent alignment of classroom assessment data to the school's instructional focus areas across all subject areas and grade levels. Guidance from administrators to teachers as to how to supplement this information in order to identify strengths and areas of needs for key subgroups of students is sporadic. Consequently, this prevents teachers from adjusting instruction to assure academic successes for all students.
- Refine and ensure that goals are appropriately aligned to student ability levels and include long- and short-term measurable outcomes to monitor progress and accelerate learning.
 - The school uses a variety of data to set school-wide goals and long-term plans. These goals do not include progress-monitoring mechanisms, nor are there benchmarks set that monitor student learning and progress. This prevents administration and faculty from identifying the appropriate mid-course corrections that, if addressed, would assure that the school is on a path to meeting its goals. As a result, there is a limited understanding of the modifications needed to be made related to organizational and instructional goals at key points in the year to ensure consistent high level of student achievement.
 - Teacher teams use summative data to set goals for groups of students. For example, the data and fourth grade teams used State testing results to set goals for a targeted group of students who are in the lowest third at the school and classroom levels, respectively. However, teacher teams do not yet have a practice of consistently using common periodic assessments or end-of-unit tests to track and adjust goals for these groups of students. As a result, teams of teachers have limited formative knowledge of how students are progressing toward meeting instructional goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The SEEALL Academy	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