

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Walter Kassenbrock Elementary School

Elementary School K185

**86-01 Ridge Boulevard
Brooklyn
NY 11209**

Principal: Kenneth Llinas

Dates of review: February 7 – 8, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Daniel J. Purus

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Walter Kassenbrock School is an elementary school with 834 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 16% Hispanic, 71% White, and 12% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 11% 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 94.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty design coherent curricula across content areas that are aligned to key standards to meet student needs and challenges.
 - The majority of teachers visited embed performance-based assessment tasks that align well with key standards and units of study. In the area of writing, teachers use data and student work to identify areas of need. The Common Core Learning Standards are used to guide teachers in the development of rubrics and rigorous performance tasks for persuasive writing. Teachers use standards-based rubrics to set clear expectations, evaluate student writing and inform students of to next steps. As a result, students use writing to develop opinions supported by evidence while gaining a deeper understanding of the content they are learning.
- Teaching practices are aligned to the curriculum and demonstrate a common understanding of how to engage and challenge students to improve learning.
 - Discussions at the teacher team level stress a push for improving informational writing as evidenced in most classrooms. Teachers design writing tasks that are aligned to the curricula and use teaching strategies that lead to high levels of thinking. For example, there is evidence of students using the 4 Square writing method across content areas to include details and logically expand their reasoning to improve their informational writing pieces.
 - Teachers use data to establish flexible groups based on need and implement effective strategies for differentiating instruction to benefit students at various achievement levels. In a fourth grade classroom, the teacher carries out a strategy lesson while other student groups engage in various learning activities allowing for multiple entry points. Activities include persuasive writing based on the Boston Tea party, dialogue writing about colonial life and a literary circle focusing on author's purpose. Informational text is leveled appropriately based on each group's readability level. Tailored instruction is evident in all classrooms visited, as students indicate they are sufficiently challenged. Higher achieving students remain engaged and enthusiastic reflecting the exceptional way this school aligns differentiated tasks to how students learn best.
- School leaders make effective organizational decisions that support instructional goals to improve teaching practices and student outcomes.
 - Organizational decisions and resources are leveraged in support of school goals. This year, changes to the master schedule increased concentrated blocks of time for teacher team meetings. This organizational decision increased opportunities for professional development, common planning and collaborative inquiry supporting the

school's goal to improve teaching practice. Resources such as SMART boards are utilized in many classrooms in grades 3 through 5. These resources are used as interactive tools so that students can learn collaboratively, to increase student engagement and support the advancement of digital learning.

- The use of instructional time is structured to maximize student learning across grades and content areas. Many teachers engage in conferencing to ensure that students master both content and skills aligned to the curricula. Teachers maintain conference records indicating the outcomes of these conversations with students to consistently capture relevant real-time data that indicates students' current strengths and needs for planning next steps.
- The principal has effective structures for evaluating and adjusting the curricula to establish next steps and reach targeted students.
 - School leaders rely on various assessment tools to evaluate the quality of curricular, instruction and organizational decisions such as teacher surveys, checklists and a variety of assessments including pre and post unit assessments. For example, data analysis identified a need to refine vocabulary instruction. The school developed a vocabulary assessment tool that honed in on key areas of need resulting in adjustments to the curricula. As a result there is coherency in the teaching of vocabulary that accelerates student performance.
- Teachers work in collaborative teams to analyze data and revise curriculum to adjust practices and impact learning for all students.
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers use various assessment tools to analyze student learning outcomes. Teacher teams use data from the ITAs, ARIS, predictives and item skills assessments to track student progress, inform curricula decisions and modify teaching practice. A fifth grade team examines student work and uses the Common Core Learning Standards to analyze the progress of groups of students and individual students towards mastery. These teachers discovered the need to create and use a rubric to support information writing. Consequently, collaborative inquiry informs teaching practice and results in improved student writing skills.
- School leaders make proactive decisions with actionable feedback based on performance evaluation data resulting in improved teacher practices.
 - The principal and assistant principals engage in a thorough and ongoing analysis of student progress data coupled with frequent walkthroughs and classroom observations to assess the school's instructional focus, teacher performance and to develop teacher goals. Supervisors are able to make precise teacher performance evaluations and provide strategic feedback that informs the quality of teaching and next steps to improving instruction. This actionable feedback is communicated in a timely manner and is used to construct a plan of action for continued professional development that fosters self-reflection and elevates instructional capacity to improve the achievement of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend student progress monitoring systems to include all subgroups to make instructional decisions that ensure ongoing growth and student achievement.
 - Some teacher teams and individual teachers use tools to aggregate and organize data, track trends and make timely instructional decisions. However, this practice is not consistent across all teams and classrooms. Additionally, the tracking of all student groups across all content areas varies. Because these practices vary, the school cannot be sure of performance trends for all student groups. As a result, the use of timely instructional and curricula decisions are delayed, hindering student performance.
- Set specific differentiated learning goals for individual students to support students in taking ownership of those goals and reach their potential.
 - Some teacher teams and individual teachers set differentiated learning goals for their students and groups of students. Additionally, students say they engage in self-assessment and are able to articulate their learning goals and specific next steps. However, the goal setting process is not consistent across the school nor are goals always based on data and related to the curriculum. As a result, the inconsistent use of learning goals to leverage change has limited impact on classroom practice.
- Continue to use professional development as a venue for promoting leadership and an exchange of ideas that lifts teaching and student learning.
 - Professional development opportunities focus on data analysis and student work to inform teacher practice and differentiate instruction. However, not all teachers benefit equally from professional development planned for the entire staff. Without additional differentiated tiered supports that promote leadership and foster self reflection, the expansion of capacity building, improvement of instruction and advancement of learning outcomes is hampered.
- Expand systems for evaluating interim progress towards meeting long-term goals so that instructional adjustments result in improved student outcomes.
 - School leaders and teacher teams have systems to measure long term goals for planning based on measuring the achievement of annual goals. Teacher teams use weekly data reviews to monitor targeted student progress towards goals. However, the school does not have fully operational systems to regularly track ongoing progress toward meeting interim and long range goals for all students across all grades. Consequently, the school is not entirely positioned to identify areas of strengths and needs groups of students to make timely instructional adjustments that focus on areas of improvement or enrichment.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: K 185 Walter A. Kassenbrock Elementary	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