

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Elizabeth G. Leary School

Elementary-Middle School 207

**4011 Fillmore
Brooklyn, New York
NY 11234**

Principal: Mary Bosco

Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Elizabeth G. Leary School is an elementary-middle school with 1207 students from pre-Kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 30% Black, 14% Hispanic, 46% White, and 9% Asian students and 1% other. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 13% 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 proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes well informed and effective budgetary and organizational decisions across all aspects of the school that support student learning.
 - The school's budget allows for small class size in lower grades, and literacy and math blocks that provide double periods in grades 6, 7, and 8, which successfully supports students' learning. An "assist" period effectively utilizes an additional teacher who works with targeted groups in grades 2 through 5 in English language arts, and provides test prep for all grade 7 and 8 students. Smartboards, computers, and grade-level software support learning through students' active engagement and additional time on task resulting in continued progress, especially for special education students and English language learners.
 - Data is used to carefully assign teachers to students ensuring a well-match to meet students' needs. An integrated team teacher programmed for a self-contained class, the movement of several teachers to different grade levels, and coaches mentoring teachers as well as providing student support services, resulted in the school showing a 3.25% exemplary gain on the Progress Report relative to reducing the achievement gap.
- Administrators and teacher leaders consistently use data, observations, and student outcomes, to strategically plan for differentiated professional development that is targeted on promoting professional growth and achieving school-wide goals.
 - School leaders utilize informal and formal observations, walkthroughs, and an analysis of student outcomes, to implement a school-wide focus on writing and instructional strategies aligned to students' needs, emphasizing reflection and revision. Pre- and post- conferences are timely; observations are well written and provide immediate individualized feedback and next steps to improve. In turn, differentiated professional opportunities are planned, especially for new teachers, with a focus on clerical practices, lesson planning, and classroom management, which lead to environments that are conducive to learning.
- The principal has created a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a vision to continue to accelerate student learning.
 - A wide range of data is effectively analyzed by the cabinet, faculty, teacher teams, and school leadership team (SLT) that translates into a thoughtful Comprehensive Educational Plan that drives instruction. The school's clear and concise goals linking literacy with a focus on writing across the content areas, problem solving, technology, and professional development are carefully designed to promote changes necessary to accelerate student performance and progress.
 - SLT members participate in the development of goals and action plans during planning sessions resulting in feeling that their input is appreciated and that they are equal partners in the decision-making process. This, coupled with the effective methods used to share goals with the entire school community, including: on-line copies for the SLT, faculty discussions, parent meetings, and conversations with the parent coordinator, as well as printed copies in the main offices for review, creates a broad base of support for the school's vision.

- Administrators and faculty consistently and effectively communicate with families who have high praise for the academic and personal support their children receive that fosters gains in performance and progress.
 - Administrators and faculty consistently communicate with parents and share clear expectations beginning with a Parents' Orientation meeting when discipline codes, and curriculum outlines are reviewed. In response to the Learning Environment Survey a monthly Open House provides a venue for parents to meet with school leaders to voice their ideas on how to improve the school. Additionally, progress reports are disseminated between report cards, letters sharing periodic assessment results, and long-term and interim-goals with families and students through Engrade so that next steps can be understood, supported and achieved. The parent-teachers' association is re-issuing its publication, The Voice, highlighting important school information and upcoming events. As a result, parents are well informed and active partners in their children's education.
 - School leaders, faculty, and the parent coordinator, offer parent workshops on various topics, including ARIS, State exams, grading rubrics, academic interventions, homework and study tips enabling them to support their children's academic and personal needs. Consequently, students demonstrate higher skill levels on post-tests, interim-assessments, and content-specific projects.
- A very extensive network of support personnel and partnerships ensures the academic, social, and physical needs of students and families are met.
 - Staff engages in professional development on character education, and Project Wisdom develops positive student character traits from pre-kindergarten to grade 5. Participation in monthly service events enables students to self-reflect about their learning and commitment to the community. Parents are invited to monthly assemblies celebrating citizen award winners. Additionally, the principal's strategic plan of internal and external support services ensures that assistant principals, counselors, social worker, and school psychologist, collaboratively support students in crisis. Linkages with Bergen Beach, Brooklyn College, James Madison High School, and Learning Leaders impact positively on student progress. Many clubs and partnerships with Julliard, Brooklyn Ballet, and James Madison's band and law programs, enhance exposure to the arts and careers. Consequently, students' social, behavioral, and academic growth is accelerated.
- Teachers engage in professional collaborations that promote shared adult learning and that impact on student achievement.
 - Teacher teams meet regularly to look at student work utilizing protocols and rubrics to identify strengths and patterns of weakness that need additional support. An inquiry approach sharing research-based strategies like four-fact note-taking, a guided paragraph writing approach and peer editing with perfection tutorial, results in teachers being more confident about revising their practice and students showing improvement in writing more sophisticated pieces.
 - The policy of shared leadership is evident throughout the school with 100% of the teachers involved in professional collaborations, curriculum mapping pilots, and taking on roles as grade leaders, facilitators, data specialist, and coaches. In turn, the school builds internal capacity to develop a succession plan in the event that someone takes on another assignment or leaves for various reasons.

What the school needs to improve

- Emphasize consistency of rigor in the school's curriculum so that students across all grades make progress and reach their potential.
 - The school offers a broad, standards-based curriculum aligned to pacing guides, and makes purposeful decisions to emphasize key standards, especially in English. While the curricula emphasize higher order thinking skills and problem solving in the early childhood grades and intellectually gifted classes, the level of rigor is not consistent across all grades and subjects, especially integrated team teaching classes. This hampers progress in learning for all students.
 - Currently, the school is engaged in a Common Core Standards pilot that provides a small group of teachers with training using Bloom's Taxonomy to create and refine academic tasks that are challenging and engaging for a diverse student group. However, this is in the beginning stages and is not yet school-wide. As a result, the level of challenge and engagement varies greatly from class to class.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction so that data is used to design challenging tasks that maximizes learning for all students.
 - Teachers use data to form skill-based learning groups, and differentiate materials by reading levels and learning styles. However, not all teachers create tiered activities or differentiate work products that consistently lead to high levels of engagement and critical thinking for both at-risk and higher performing students.
- Align assessments to curriculum and analyze student-learning outcomes to adjust curriculum and instructional decisions both at the classroom and team levels.
 - Teachers and teams analyze various assessments, such as Acuity, uniform grade level math assessments, conferencing notes, and writing tasks, to identify strengths, areas of need, next steps, as well as revising instructional practices. However, the results from the assessments do not yet lead to consistent differentiation of instruction across all grades.
 - While teachers and teams utilize periodic assessments and class tests to identify students' strengths and needs, by subgroups including special education and English language learners, information is not consistently used for curriculum updates or to identify the most appropriate instructional strategies. As a result, some students' learning needs are not met nor do they reach their full potential.
- Establish a structure to evaluate the quality of curricular and instructional decisions and make necessary adjustments to increase the coherence of policies and practices.
 - Presently, teachers update curriculum maps on an on-going basis. Assistant principals review maps mid-year, and the principal at the end of school year, to make adjustments. Consequently, academic rigor is not addressed in a timely fashion and a lack of necessary adjustments leads to an uneven level of rigor and challenge, which impedes learning outcomes for some students.
 - Currently, the school is not utilizing protocols while conducting walkthroughs to evaluate the consistent implementation of high expectations, and common core standards through a common lens. As a result, at times there is a lack of coherence between the written, taught, and assessed curriculum.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Elizabeth G. Leary 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