



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Morris H. Weiss School

K215

**415 Avenue S
Brooklyn, New York 11223**

Principal: Antonella Bove

Dates of review: May 16-17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 215, The Morris H. Weiss School is an elementary school with 737 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 27% Hispanic, 46% White, and 21% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty have high expectations for students and actively engage parents to be partners in their children's education.
 - School leaders place a priority in communicating high expectations to students and parents. Monthly Parent-Teacher Association meetings and newsletters provide a forum where the faculty articulates the academic program of all grades and discuss strategies parents can utilize to assist children in making progress. Interim progress reports detail growth and set benchmark targets for students. Students and families are fully aware of children's performance throughout the year and are actively engaging in supporting students toward reaching desired outcomes. As a result, student attendance and parent participation in the school is increasing leading to improving performance of students.
 - Parents are fully participatory in school decision making. Parent leaders actively engage in setting school goals through the School Leadership Team and Comprehensive Educational Plan subcommittee. Monthly meetings, open to all parents, discuss the framing of goals and set priorities for the school. The school seeks feedback and ideas and regularly uses surveys for families to voice opinions and share concerns. As a result, parents feel as if they are valued members of the school community where they are true partners in their children's education.
- The school is supportive of the social and emotional growth of students and families, resulting in increasing student engagement and outcomes.
 - To ensure faculty has the capacity to meet the social-emotional needs of students, guidance counselors and the school based support team engage teachers in continual professional learning throughout the school year. As a result, teachers are able to easily identify concerns and provide students with appropriate intervention services that meet their needs. Partnerships with community-based organizations give exceptional levels of support to assist students and families. There are opportunities for parents with limited English skills to take classes to improve language development. There are also programs that provide students with enrichment and remediation. Counseling is available to assist families in crisis. As a result, disciplinary issues are decreasing, student attendance is increasing and students are making progress toward reaching performance targets.
- Leaders make informed organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support efforts toward improved student learning.
 - School leaders are strategic in the use of resources providing all students with opportunities to improve academically. For example, in response to historical data that demonstrates 4th grade students do not make desired progress, school leaders increased the number of teachers on the grade, reduced class size and programmed students homogeneously. Consequently, teachers are able to differentiate more precisely for

student groupings and predictive assessments indicate substantial improvement for most 4th grade students in reaching goals.

- Student and teacher programming allows for increasing opportunities for teacher collaboration. Teachers are beginning to engage in professional study groups. Teacher teams are beginning to develop curriculum that aligns to the evolving standards and prioritizes the performance strands for students. As a result, faculty is developing capacity to work together to understand student learning and toward engaging in instruction that focuses on elevating rigor and provides students with opportunities to build critical thinking skills.
- School leaders articulate an instructional vision that is that is creating a culture of collaboration and professional learning.
 - The principal articulates an instructional vision supported by most faculty that rigorous, differentiated instruction propels students to reach their academic goals and ensure they are prepared for higher-level learning. To that end, school leaders focus on teacher development and provide teachers, especially those new to the school or to the profession, with ongoing pedagogic support. This includes formal and informal evaluations of practice, mentoring and regular meetings with instructional coaches. Professional learning opportunities are data driven, specifically through sub-group outcomes and teacher observation. Teachers of English language learners have opportunities to attend training for strategies proven to work with this population. This results in the growth of coherence in pedagogic practice and improving student outcomes on periodic and benchmark assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics for various sub-groups of students.
- School leaders effectively gather and analyze a wide range of data to understand school-wide strengths and areas of need.
 - School leaders regularly analyze and disaggregate a range of data from several sources including Acuity, ARIS, NY Start, formative assessments, and occurrence and attendance reports to understand school wide achievement and the progress of students and groups of students across the school. As a result, school leaders make instructional decisions that address areas of concern. For example, to address the needs of student writing and extended response the school has rolled out a writing program and the use of exemplars in mathematics. As a result, teacher made and predictive assessments indicate growth in student writing and improving outcomes in short answer work.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop comprehensive curricula to ensure that instruction is consistently rigorous and emphasizes key standards across all subject areas.
 - Teachers are beginning to align curricula to the evolving State standards and purposefully emphasize key standards in English Language Arts, mathematics and writing. The school has started to develop curriculum maps; however, at this stage they largely focus on skill development and do not consistently address engaging students in academic tasks that

promote higher order thinking in all subject areas. As a result, there are missed opportunities for students to demonstrate deep understanding of content material.

- Elevate classroom practice to provide students with instruction that promotes high levels of engagement and the building of high order thinking skills.
 - Various levels of differentiated instruction exist across the school. Gifted and talented classes are beginning to engage in project-based learning that allow for student-centered tasks. Although some teachers use Bloom's taxonomy to scaffold questions, in most classes there are limited opportunities for students to engage in rigorous instruction that deeply engages all learners. Tasks are uneven throughout the school and do not provide all students and groups of students with opportunities to develop critical thinking skills and do not engage all learners at a level that is cognitively challenging.
- Strengthen the use of assessments and the evaluation of student work to ensure consistency, alignment to standards and accuracy in measuring performance and progress of intended learning.
 - Although teacher teams meet regularly to plan instruction and create assessments to measure learning, they are in the beginning stages of ensuring that each assessment and rubric accurately aligns to the standard that it intends to measure. As a result, the data generated does not consistently provide valid information in determining levels of student progress for individual and student sub-groups. Consequently, there is an unclear picture of student needs thereby limiting the impact assessments are having on school-wide and classroom instructional decisions.
- Extend the work of teacher teams to ensure that a vast majority of teachers using inquiry to understand and address the needs of students.
 - All teachers participate on a teacher team; however, the use of inquiry is just beginning to develop across the school. This year only one core team actively uses an inquiry approach to study student outcomes and assess the impact of instructional strategies on performance. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the capacity of teachers and teams in analyzing data to interpret the learning needs of students. As a result, teacher teams are limited in the depth at which they study data and in the role they play in decisions that affect instructional decisions across the school.
- Develop formal structures to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional and organizational decisions to build instructional coherence that aligns to school goals.
 - School leaders collect data and discuss student performance across the school. Nonetheless, school leaders have not built formal structures that systematically evaluate the impact of instructional and organizational decisions on student outcomes. As a result, there is inconsistency in the school's practice and it is difficult to gauge whether decisions are having the desired effect on student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: P.S. 215 The Morris H. Weiss 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
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