

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Doris L. Cohen School**

**Elementary School 230**

**1 Albemarle Road  
Brooklyn  
NY 11218**

**Principal: Sharon Fiden**

**Dates of review: April 12 – 13, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Gwen Stephens**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Doris L. Cohen is an elementary school with 1304 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 29% Hispanic, 21% White, and 45% Asian students. The student body includes 40% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty develop curriculum including the arts that aligns to state standards and supports a broad and engaging instructional program for all students.
  - Purposeful decisions are made regarding the alignment and revision of curriculum maps to infuse the Common Core Standards. In English language arts, there is a focus on reading comprehension and use of complex text. Horizontal and vertical alignments of writing tasks now include detailed rubrics and benchmark goals. As a result, the integrated focus of reading and writing across the curriculum in a coherent way has produced high quality student work products school wide.
  - Students participate in a broad and engaging curriculum, which includes a wide range of art, music, athletics and clubs to support their growth. Tasks in these curricula are planned so that groups of students including, Gifted and Talented, English language learners and special education students are engaged to produce outcomes that align with instructional goals of the school.
- The administration and staff effectively use a comprehensive range of relevant data across subject areas to develop a good understanding of the student performance to adjust school practices.
  - The school uses data to guide key decisions and provide insights on student performance trends. For example, data on English language learners gathered from NYSESLAT assessments supports instructional interventions for these students, including the use of 371/2 minutes in an extended morning program. This program for kindergarten and first graders uses Foundations for prevention and intervention. As a result, these students enter the next grade reading on or above grade level.
  - The school's commitment to using data to support strategic decisions extends to close monitoring of attendance data across the school. With over 1200 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 and over 20 dialects, the school has created effective strategies to ensure that families understand school routines. As a result, the school's attendance rate proudly reaches 96%.
- The principal and her staff work as a unified team to set high expectations for all students and families, which creates an environment that fosters a shared commitment to academic success.
  - The school leadership models teamwork and collaboration by listening to parent feedback and suggestions. As a result, parents feel comfortable and there is active participation in the PTA and on the school leadership team. Parents attend school performances, prepare meals for school-wide celebrations and sponsor fundraisers. The result is that PS 230 is a

place where families come together and have a shared commitment to the school's expectations and goals.

- The school provides interpreters at Parent Teacher conferences, workshops and events. There is consistent communication and information provided to families via the web and notices. These efforts demonstrate the on-going commitment to support families with opportunities to meet the school's expectations.
- The instructional team provides teachers with opportunities to refine teaching practices resulting in adjustments that improve student learning.
  - Formal and informal teacher observations and "learning walks" utilize rubrics that focus on key understandings within the "instructional core" to serve as the foundation for teacher and administrative conversations. This supports high levels of teacher buy-in and a rich environment of knowledge building. Teachers remark that their individual needs are respected and their strengths are valued. This guided and differentiated practice by the principal in developing collegial collaborations leads to ongoing nurturing of targeted support to improve teacher and student outcomes.
- The school has a strong vision for the future and clearly articulates its core beliefs through action plans that provide a framework for goal setting.
  - The administration has developed a set of clearly articulated data based school-wide goals, which reflect the urgency to increase student achievement. The goals focus on supports for its diversity of learners in a framework identified as the "Instructional Core Model" (student and teacher in the presence of content knowledge). Detailed displays of student work demonstrate students' increasing ability to articulate their knowledge specifically in mathematics. It is an example of how the school is meeting its goals, thus improving the academic performance.
- The school's strategic use of resources has resulted in efficient growth and sustained progress for this large school community.
  - The instructional work at the school provides teachers with coaches and scheduled time for grade and content area meetings and inquiry groups where teachers share instructional practices and create solutions for problems that inhibit student learning. As a result, teachers are able to make long-range plans and align decisions that impact positively on student progress.
  - A major priority for the school is to provide materials and resources including technology for instruction. There are SMART boards, teacher desktops, document readers, art materials, science labs and rich classroom leveled libraries. In addition, teachers are able to access student data, and organize supports to meet the needs of their students.

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

- Strengthen teachers' expertise in the use of classroom level data to enable them to capture student progress on a daily basis and determine next steps.

- The expectation from school leaders is for teachers to use assessments to provide customized instruction for students. In mathematics, teachers participate in Design Your Own (DYO) assessments and use them as a common lens to measure student work. However, the practice of using classroom level assessments to check in on immediate student learning and guide daily instructional decisions is uneven across the school. As a result, teachers are missing opportunities for tracking student progress.
- Broaden consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so that lesson planning reflects tasks that accommodate different learning styles and maximize student outcomes.
  - Evidence of differentiated practice is present in the school where some teachers use data to flexibly group students. However, meaningful groupings were not observed in some classrooms, limiting the ability of lessons to meet the needs of all learners.
  - The use of effective questioning that elicits higher order thinking to enrich student engagement at their levels was not typically embedded in the delivery of all lessons. Therefore, not all students receive adequate challenges and supports in their development of critical thinking habits.
- Enhance the professional development model to improve the understanding of strategies that support the increasing diversity of learners and accelerate the school's ability to meet their needs.
  - Professional learning opportunities are aligned with school-wide goals. However, specific professional development that focuses on lesson planning and differentiated strategies is not in place. This limits teachers' ability to consistently create effective lessons that provide scaffolds for all students in order to meet their needs and improve student outcomes.
- Deepen the practices to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and make improvements to support and adjust the work as needed.
  - Collaborative teams meet on a regular basis to plan curricula, assess student work and share data. School leaders discuss this work with the teachers; however, they do not use data to measure their progress. As a result, there is no evaluation of teacher team effectiveness across the school which is limiting the broad adoption of promising practices.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Doris L. Cohen School K230</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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>	

**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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