

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Weeksville School

Elementary School 243

**1580 Dean Street
Brooklyn
NY 11213**

Principal: Karen Hambright

Dates of review: October 21- 22, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Weeksville School is an elementary school with 373 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 80% Black, 17% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 1% White and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Relationships across the school are warm, supportive and inclusive of students, teachers and parents who take pride in being part of the community.
 - Student participation has evolved through memberships in various school-wide initiatives such as 'Fan 4 Kids' that brings an enhanced level of fitness and nutrition education to students and reaches out to parents to extend the learning at home. Students from each grade also have opportunities for input in the planning of the school menu and fitness activities. As a result, students are developing habits that foster lifelong healthy lifestyles.
 - The school's safety committee comprised of school leaders, teachers, and guidance support staff, meets weekly to assess the implementation of the school safety plan and to make adjustments. Consequently, there has been a reduction in school safety concerns promoting a culture of mutual respect. The school's 'Child Study Team' also provides opportunities for students to receive one-to-one and group counseling to support their emotional development and growth.
- School leaders, after gathering teacher input, make informed organizational decisions to support improvements in student learning.
 - The school maintains coaches in literacy and math to assist teachers in improving instruction in the classroom. The coaches work with school teams and individual teachers to share promising practices. Additionally, the school hired a technology liaison to assist in the use of technology tools, and a writing cluster teacher to enhance rigor in writing instruction. Consequently, teachers feel supported in their professional development, and they have noted improvement in student writing.
 - The school sets aside dedicated time during the daily morning sessions for intensive school-wide intervention services. All teachers, including cluster teachers, work with small groups of students to meet their identified academic needs in reading, writing, and math. As a result, students are improving their skills in these targeted areas, as evidenced by assessment results.
- Teachers benefit from participating in teacher teams that foster reflection as well as provide options for researching effective instructional techniques.
 - Teachers collaborate at grade-level team meetings twice weekly as part of their schedule. Each team has selected target population students identified in need of additional help. The teams focus on examining student work and engage in professional conversations to develop instructional strategies that improve writing. These interactions are promoting the development of classroom protocols and the integration of writing in all lessons.
 - The principal's assignment of teacher leaders to facilitate the process of teacher inquiry, and the establishment of a core planning team comprised of teachers and support staff who meet weekly to discuss and review school initiatives, is supportive of building school capacity and distributive leadership. Consequently, as stakeholders and collaborative partners, teachers are highly motivated to adopt effective practices that promote student academic progress and achievement.

- Parents have opportunities to be involved in their children’s learning through open communication with the school and engagement in the decision making process.
 - Parents who comprise 50% of the school leadership team, along with school leaders and teachers, collaborate on the school’s Comprehensive Education Plan. As a result, parents feel they are able to influence their children’s instructional experience and have a positive impact on their progress.
 - In addition to promoting an “open door” policy, school leaders and teachers communicate regularly with parents through the school’s website, workshops, curriculum night, and informal conversations. Quarterly reports sent home inform parents of their children’s progress. Consequently, parents are able to intervene, when necessary, to ensure their children make the needed adjustments to achieve in school.
- The school’s systems and partnerships support students and their families in continual learning and promote students’ personal growth and development.
 - Collaboration with the Brooklyn Arts Council engages students with band, recorders, and percussion instruments. Change for Kids, a non-profit organization working with four schools in the city, offers students opportunities for creative writing and showcases students’ original plays at school assemblies to promote self esteem, literacy and continued learning. I-zone, a computer based program for students in grades 4 and 5, provides instructional activities in identified areas of need in literacy and math, and tracks students’ progress to inform next steps. Additionally, Pace University Tutors volunteer to work with students two to three times a week to support students in literacy and math. These partnerships are increasing skill development and academic growth.
 - School based support personnel such as the guidance counselor, social worker and speech teacher collaborate with staff and dialogue with parents regularly to ensure students’ social and emotional needs are met. As a result, students express that they feel supported and well cared for at school.

What the school needs to improve

- Align the school’s curriculum with State standards to ensure that all students make progress in their learning.
 - The school has identified key state standards in English language arts and math and has aligned the curriculum across classrooms. This has led to a school-wide effort to deepen instruction in reading, writing, and math. However, instruction in science and social studies is minimally evident. This limits exposure to rigorous standards based learning and continual growth in all content areas.
 - Although, the school has emphasized teaching using higher order thinking skills in English language arts and math, this practice is not evident in all lessons, student work products and assessments. This reduces opportunities for critical analysis, creativity, understanding, and achievement.
- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction to reflect purposeful groupings, suitable challenges and questioning that extends critical thinking to maximize learning.
 - High levels of student engagement are not consistent as evidenced by the varying levels of classroom participation in lesson discussions and interactions. In one classroom, some students were not working on assigned tasks, while others were having conversations on topics not related to the lesson at hand. In addition, in several

classrooms student work products in folders, notebooks and on bulletin boards minimally reflect learning. This diminishes students' ability to be critical thinkers, impacts the development of prior knowledge, and limits academic growth.

- While differentiated instructional strategies are evident in some classrooms, a number of classrooms do not provide multiple entry points for students performing at different levels. This adversely affects the level of individual student understanding of the concepts presented, skill development, engagement, and achievement.
- Extend data gathering and analysis practices to all core subjects at team and classroom levels to inform instructional decisions and provide a complete picture of academic progress.
 - The school has organized English language arts and math summative data in binders by grade and individual classroom levels. However, assessment data in science and social studies and formative assessments in all core subject areas lacks consistency. As a result, teachers are not able to adequately assess needs and plan differentiated lessons to meet the instructional needs of all students.
 - Teachers use ARIS and periodic assessment results to determine student levels in English language arts and math. However, data for special education students and English language learners is not used uniformly to plan instruction, thus limiting opportunities to maximize their learning.
- Use observation protocols to assess and improve teaching practices that lead to student progress and achievement.
 - While school leaders observe lessons and provide feedback for teachers to improve instruction, the feedback does not clearly indicate strategies to enhance rigor in the classroom that deepen student levels of understanding and learning.
 - The school provides a variety of professional learning experiences for all teachers as part of its plan to raise student achievement. However, the school does not consistently distinguish by teachers' needs professional learning activities. This lessens opportunities for teachers to strengthen identified skills for growth and development.
- Develop a system of checkpoints to measure progress toward school-wide interim and long-term goals in order to adjust and ensure student performance.
 - Teacher teams have developed interim goals for their targeted students and are in the process of developing structures to monitor progress. However, these protocols, which include a calendar for benchmark reviews of assessments and work products, are not fully developed as yet. This adversely affects the timeliness for necessary instructional adjustments that impact student performance.
 - Although school leaders have developed goals for the year and have taken action in their implementation, the alignment of the goals with the school's Comprehensive Education Plan is still in progress. The school leadership team has yet to meet to align desired outcomes, based on the most recent student performance test results, with the established goals, thus limiting coherence and long-term impact on achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Weeksville 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