

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**George Lindsay School**

**Elementary School 250**

**108 Montrose Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11206**

**Principal: Nora Barnes**

**Dates of review: May 24-25, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: James Quail**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

George Lindsay is an elementary school with 810 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 76% Hispanic, 2% White, 9% Asian, 1% Native American and 2% multiracial students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 10% 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 95.7%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school offers rich and varied curricula making strategic decisions to highlight key standards to meet the needs of its diverse learners in order to close the achievement gap.
  - This Magnet School for Communication and Multimedia Arts uses units of study and calendars for all subject areas, uses curriculum maps and wisely integrates the key standard of writing across the content areas, including math and arts with a focus on higher order thinking skills. Students produce a great deal of writing. Courses in puppetry, dance, music, art, photography, writing and multi-media help the school in emphasizing critical thinking and literacy skills across all grades. There is widespread use of benchmark papers, rubrics and teacher comments to set clear learning expectations in each class. A new vocabulary program, Words Their Way is in use to increase comprehension skills in all classes. These efforts to align the curricula to meet student needs support the school in striving to close the achievement gap and promote positive student outcomes.
  - Across grades, there is a strong emphasis on higher order thinking skills, the use of thought provoking questions and the analysis of student work. All teams carefully study student work, in terms of clear and agreed upon expectations. One kindergarten teacher shared a student's paper showing the correct listing of a main idea taken from a magazine story. All class visits show strong evidence of the use of questions to promote student thinking and reflection. This helps embed academic tasks across the school to produce meaningful work and engage students in learning.
- School leaders make strategic organizational and curricular decisions across the school to meet student needs and strategically align instructional goals to accelerate learning.
  - The school has purchased additional materials for the extended day sessions, brought in technology programs, expanded classroom libraries and hired external consultants for staff development. The strategic use of substitute teachers helps free staff for focused professional learning. The school provides time for teams to meet on each grade to study student work and integrate higher order thinking skills into its planning. Extended day offerings in the areas of math, and literacy reinforce this focus. This strategic alignment of time and resources to key goals and plans enhances efforts to engage and challenge students with meaningful academic tasks to develop their full learning potential.
- School leaders and faculty purposefully use a variety of assessments and other data to track progress, adjust plans and share relevant information with families and the school-community to build capacity for learning.
  - Special needs students, English language and at risk learners receive added time in targeted, extended day programs based on a careful review

of their work, unit tests and other measures including Periodic Assessments. Teachers in these programs use technology and materials that match the specific needs of these subgroups. Teachers in grade one share and use various scaffolding strategies for struggling students while kindergarten teachers use a variety of non-fictional materials to increase comprehension for students in their inquiry groups. This careful analysis of student progress and adjustment in plans supports the school in meeting targeted needs in a consistent manner to accelerate learning.

- Across the school, teachers write specific comments on student work products. Parents speak highly of teachers and their recommendations to improve learning. They mention results from tests, homework, ARIS Parent Link and the schools' website to help them monitor their children's progress. One student said, "Look at my work and you can see how I am doing." This consistent process to share student progress builds capacity for learning and helps students know clear expectations.
- Across classrooms, differentiated instruction and practices effectively engage students in striving to meet their learning needs.
  - One teacher describes how she meets with the English language learner specialist to plan lessons for her targeted students. Across the school, teachers ask questions that promote thinking. For example, students use materials matched to their precise reading levels as they work on independent learning activities. These differentiated practices help provide multiple entry points for students to increase their learning.
  - Students work in small group settings, help each other and receive clear, specific directions. Across classrooms, teachers model learning and use a wide range of non-fictional books and magazines to promote critical thinking skills. These strategies and routines support thinking and engagement and help students produce meaningful work products.
- School leaders use data, including student work to make purposeful and proactive staffing decisions to improve instruction and promote the professional growth of teachers.
  - School leaders wisely use informal and formal observations, conferences, and student data to make staff adjustments. The school uses coaches, lead teachers and mentors to support new staff. Two English as second language specialists help classroom teachers enrich their instruction. The school aligns its consistent professional development offerings in pedagogy and content knowledge to meet the specific needs of teachers. For example, teachers receive support to improve critical thinking and comprehension while incorporating non-fictional texts into instruction. Lead teachers attend external workshops and turnkey their learning. These proactive and informed decisions enable the school to promote professional growth to elevate school-wide practices and learning.
- Individual teachers and teams of teachers use a wide range of data to meet student needs and adjust instruction.
  - Teachers and teams strategically create, and analyze test results along with Periodic Assessments, and student work. As a result, the staff has placed an emphasis on vocabulary development, writing, and the use of

non-fictional texts and technology programs. This supports teachers and teams in creating a clear picture of student needs and strengths and helps them differentiate and adjust their practices to increase learning.

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

- Strengthen efforts and activities to meet the social and emotional needs of students while engaging them in decision making to enrich learning and the school environment.
  - Students and staff feel safe in the school but according to the recent Learning Environment Survey (LES), a small number of teachers express the need to improve student behavior and assist students in connecting to one adult who will support them in their social development. The limited use of this data restricts effort to support the social-emotional growth of students to increase learning and academic gains.
- Enrich reflective teacher practices and routines across classrooms to support students and families in assessing academic and behavioral progress and build capacity to increase student outcomes.
  - Across classrooms, students assess their own academic and behavioral progress but not all students know the steps to improve their learning, especially around behavior. This lack of knowledge limits students in developing their potential to improve their social and academic learning.
  - In the recent LES, teachers mention a need to engage parents in the area of behavior. Presently, the school sends home report cards; test results and holds workshops on how parents can help with academic progress. This effort is not as consistent with student behavior. This limits the sharing of timely information with caregivers to build capacity to improve behavior and increase opportunities for students' academic success.
- Enhance professional development for teachers in the areas of social and emotional growth to celebrate the academic engagement and success of students to build capacity for real world learning.
  - The school provides continuous and purposeful professional development offerings around academic and instructional improvements. In addition, the school works with numerous external partners and organizations to enrich these efforts. However, few targeted offerings center on the positive, emotional and social growth of students. Thus, this limits efforts to build capacity to accelerate the personal and academic growth of all students, and elevate teacher practices to positively influence learning.
- Refine systems for monitoring progress toward the achievement of long and short-term goals to improve instructional practices and enrich teacher ownership of student outcomes and learning.
  - School leaders mention various systems they use to measure school progress to make adjustments in goals. However, some but not all teachers noted the connection of these goals to their planning and curriculum adjustments. This minimizes efforts to build ownership for learning to influence student outcomes in a positive manner.

- Individual teachers and teams meet to carefully study student progress toward goals using grade specific rubrics. However, the sharing of this information across the school is inconsistent. This inhibits the building of a collective effort to improve practices to increase student outcomes.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: George Lindsay School</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>	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