

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The William Penn School

Elementary School K321

**180 7th Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11215**

Principal: Elizabeth Phillips

Dates of review: March 23 - 24, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The William Penn School is an elementary school with 1371 students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 11% Hispanic, 68% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 14% 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 95.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's rigorous curriculum, strategically aligned to key State standards and the critical thinking goals of the Common Core Standards, enables all students to become highly engaged, independent learners.
 - Student inquiry in all content areas, including science explorations, Math in the City and Technical Education Research Center (TERC) mathematics investigations and cross-curricular social studies projects, coupled with an in depth focus on writing, aligns instruction to the Common Core Standards and provides all students with powerful learning experiences. As a result students at every grade level are genuinely motivated and summative test achievement is consistently high.
 - Instruction is highly individualized to meet the needs of all students. Teachers review work during daily student conferences in every content area. Consequently, teachers are able to adjust instruction, providing challenges that address needs and support progress for every child, and students proudly describe their growth as writers and learners.
- A wide range of modalities, demonstrative of the belief that students should be provided with rich academic experiences, offers all students and student subgroups varied entry points in all content areas.
 - The Teachers College Reader's and Writer's workshop has established a coherent focus school wide. All aspects of instruction, including team inquiry, professional development and accountability are built on this foundation. The school, therefore, works assiduously to deepen these levels of practices and expand student-centered instruction in all content areas, as evidenced by the school's continuous academic success.
 - The use of the workshop model is deeply embedded schoolwide. All classes utilize small group instruction, providing quality differentiation and offering a range of individualized entry points, aligned to the school's vision. First grade students reference personal "Strategy Menus" with individualized techniques to successfully decode words, while fourth grade students develop the plan for how they will work in their groups. Accordingly, high levels of student achievement are the norm.
- The strong administrative team, under the leadership of the visionary principal, uses every resource to create a coherent, committed learning community that promotes continuous student growth.
 - Using school based options, the school has two hour-long after school professional development sessions each month enabling teachers to meet in cross-grade teams. In addition, the school has structured the last period of the day to have 55 minutes and covers teachers for an extra period once every two weeks to have grade level teams meet for 55 minutes. These diverse teaming structures, in addition to inquiry teams and study groups, provide teachers with the opportunity to reflect on

student work and hone instructional practices so that students are engaged in rigorous learning opportunities in all content areas and at all grade levels.

- The school has hired an outstanding English as a second language teacher to meet the data defined needs of Hispanic students, and an experienced special needs staff developer to provide strategic assistance to teachers in supporting students with individual educational plans. As a result, teachers praise the resources available to them and feel a strong sense of accountability for the student achievement.
- Analyzing a broad array of assessments, many teacher-developed, and an extensive array of student work, makes it possible for the school to adjust instruction and target student needs at the deepest levels.
 - The school utilizes “design your own” mathematics assessments, aligned to the curriculum as well as Teachers College evaluations to supplement in depth analyses of summative assessments. Groundbreaking efforts have deepened the consistency of running records, as they are administered and evaluated across teachers. Cross grade item analysis of student mathematics performance led to a schoolwide restructuring of the curriculum for teaching fractions and the expanded use of context problems. These systems, and the use of rubric based writing across all content areas, enable teachers and teams to intensify their understanding of student needs at the classroom, grade and school level, and target differentiated practices that have strongly impacted student growth.
- An extensive variety of outreach options shares high expectations with families and makes them a vital part of the decision making team.
 - “Family Fridays” which draw hundreds each month, invite family members to attend class with their children, review student work and experience the depth of classroom instruction. Further, first graders are provided with school-developed mathematics binders of games and manipulatives to work with at home. Parent workshops support its use. These unique options create a culture where high expectations are standard.
 - Parents are consistently involved in school wide decision making through the School Leadership Team and a range of subcommittees. In response to parental desire to learn more about the literacy program, parents attended workshops at Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. A parent-staff "Green and Healthy" committee developed a plan to build a school vegetable garden and developed curriculum related to it. As a result, parents state they are integral schoolwide decision makers.
- Observational protocols strategically enhance classroom instruction and teacher capacity, persistently improving student achievement.
 - The school’s coherent instructional focus, rooted in the workshop model and highly individualized support for student inquiry is espoused by all of the faculty, enabling the school to move forward as a united front, working in teams, study groups and at the administrative level to deepen the levels of teacher practice and consistently impact student achievement. This is evidenced by high Progress Report scores.

- Codified structures enable administrators to best evaluate and support each staff member. Observations are assigned by leader expertise and read by all administrators, ensuring unity of vision and purpose. In addition, binders record informal observations and chart targeted follow up and timeframes. New teachers are supported by Teachers College training as well as in house support and all teachers visit grade level and cross grade classrooms to ensure seamless articulation. As a result, teachers support has directly improved student achievement.
- School leaders and faculty teams regularly evaluate the quality of curriculum decisions and practices and make adjustments so that the needs of students are foremost schoolwide.
 - Weekly administrative team meetings, longitudinal studies of struggling students, and classroom data analyses enable school leaders to evaluate teacher practice and student progress. Findings from the use of these structures have led the school to add a literacy unit and refine pacing calendars in both literacy and mathematics. Consequently, instruction regularly addresses timely needs schoolwide, student improvement has already been noted in both subject areas and the school has deepened cross curricula alignments in keeping with the Common Core Standards.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the frequency of interim evaluations of progress towards school wide goals for all students so as to deepen the level of trend analysis.
 - The school has extensive protocols in place to reflect on student progress at the class, grade and school levels. Further teacher conferences and evaluations of student work occur on a daily basis. While in depth interim reviews of reading levels for struggling students are conducted four times a year, these same reviews are only conducted three times a year for all students, school wide. As a result, the ability to identify school wide trends in a timely manner is somewhat hampered.
- Provide additional support for teachers in the use of inquiry protocols so as to augment the degree of inquiry work on all teams.
 - Teacher teams in a range of grade level and cross grade configurations and specified inquiry teams all consistently reflect and analyze student work to assess student needs and adjust instruction. However, the understanding of inquiry protocols and the consistency of their use varies from team to team. Therefore, the timeframes for inquiry cycles and the expansion of positive strategies is not as fully developed in some teams, limiting the impact on student growth.
- Deepen the level of reflection on the findings of teacher teams to enhance the effectiveness of the sharing of team outcomes.
 - Teachers have real ownership of many aspects of the schools' teamwork and professional development, often serving as facilitators, mentors and turnkey trainers. In addition, administrators are part of all teacher team meetings and meet regularly to review the leadership skills of the faculty,

and the findings of the teams. Nonetheless protocols to share team findings on an ongoing basis are less formalized and codified school wide. This hinders the school's ability to implement newly discovered successful approaches to some extent.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

| | | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| School name: The William Penn 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 |