



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Academy of Business and Community Development

Middle/High School K336

**141 Macon St
Brooklyn, NY 11216**

Principal: Simone McIntosh

Dates of review: May 16-17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Gannon

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Academy of Business and Community Development serves students at the Secondary School (General Academic) level. The school has 231 students enrolled in grades 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, SE. The school population comprises 1% white students, 87% black students, 3% Asian students, 7% Hispanic students, 1% Native American students, 100% boys, and 0% girls. Currently, 3% of the student body are English language learners. The school enrolls 28% students with Individual Education Plans (IEP's). The average attendance rate for the 2010 school year was 86.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders effectively analyze a variety of data from the school and community, resulting in a strong overarching understanding of trends around student learning.
 - As a new leader, the principal, along with the faculty, looked at a diversity of data, including information about academic outcomes and the changes in the community. From the data, clear trends emerged around writing, pedagogical strategies, shifting realities in the neighborhood, and culture norms within the school, and these trends were used to determine the school's next steps to improve student outcomes.
- School-wide goals are aligned with instructional levers and clearly focus on practices that improve student learning.
 - The principal's review of data has led to a clear list of goals that are all significant levers for moving instruction. For example, the principal pointed to the goal of using writing as a means to build better writers and deepen understanding of content. By using data to shine a lens on the school's next steps for improving instruction, the principal is able to identify key targets for better outcomes for students.
 - The principal has moved goals into an action plan, which although informal, consists of multiple phases and reflects significant thought and revision over the course of the year. Despite the gaps in communication with significant stakeholders around the plan, the principal has used it to begin to carve a path around improving student outcomes.
- Families benefit from increased access to school leaders and ongoing roles in conversations about the school's direction and next steps.
 - A small group of parents work with the school in meaningful ways that allow them voice in the school. They cite roles in the Parent Association and the School Leadership Team, where they have had input around the school's next steps. The principal's accessibility has led parents to feel their voices matter in the school.
 - Parents and students both reference teachers and school leaders who "go the extra mile" to convey that they believe in students and will push them to succeed. Although both groups note that the classrooms do not consistently offer appropriate challenges, they point to caring adults that help to set a positive tone that helps them strive to achieve.
- Teachers and school leaders provide ongoing feedback to support families in understanding students' learning needs, allowing families to be active partners in the education of their sons.
 - Last year's school survey reflected a lack of communication that left families unsatisfied. Parents reflect that although there has always been an open door policy, this year has offered more contact between the school and families and easier access to key adults within the school. Parents have had access to

various trainings that allow them entry to Department of Education tools, but more important to them are the updates from teachers, who reach out to parents regularly in an informal and unstructured fashion. In this way, parents felt that they had a reasonable sense of the progress of their sons.

- Partnerships and the formation of a student support team have provided social and emotional resources to students so that they can focus on academic growth.
 - The school has forged some and continued to nurture other partnerships that have expanded students' opportunities. Urban Advantage, Lehman College Writing project and a partnership with NYU around special education and art have allowed the school to support students' academic needs. Other organizations have provided more social and emotional supports to students and families, including after school activities and even some Broadway shows. Finally a partnership with "Capturing Kids' Hearts" has supported adults by providing professional development around strategies for building a nurturing environment.
 - The school created a school-based support team this year, including guidance counselors and other personnel that focus on students' well-being. Team members meet regularly to review individual cases and review systems that ensure that the school is providing students with what they need for their social and emotional health. When they find gaps, they work on individual and school-wide solutions to make sure needs are met.

What the school needs to improve

- Support teachers and teams in the design of rigorous curriculum aligned to standards so that all students are challenged in ways that promote college readiness.
 - Teachers, in partnership with a professional developer, have begun the important work of developing curriculum maps and unit plans that center around essential questions, skills, and content that students need to be able to know and do. However, that critical work is in its preliminary stages and parents and students have serious concerns about current curriculum providing them appropriate preparation for college. For example, a parent noted that although his son is passing a Spanish class with a high grade, he cannot speak a word of Spanish. In other classes, students spent significant time copying work from the board or definitions from a dictionary. In one class, students were presented with a complex problem-based task but during the course of the period, they only answered low-level questions, copying definitions and sentences out of a textbook. At this time, high-level, standards-based curriculum does not yet exist across grades and subjects, and across classrooms. Consequently, students do not receive engaging work that addresses their learning needs.
- Create and implement clear expectations and supports around pedagogy so that across classes, students have opportunities to talk, write, and grapple with complex ideas that help to move them to their next academic level.
 - Overwhelmingly, students and parents spoke warmly about the dedication and encouragement offered by teachers. Teachers spoke about a lack of clarity about teaching expectations, though. They cannot articulate what the school's goals

are and they are not sure about the administration's expectations for classroom instruction. School leaders have provided a long list of behaviors that has not resulted in a unified focus or targeted, strategic approach that teachers could immediately begin to incorporate into pedagogy. As a result, across classrooms, students had little challenge and often could not articulate any reason for studying the lesson at hand.

- Develop or select tools that allow teachers and school leaders to aggregate student performance data so that in classes and across the school, that data is used to make instructional decisions that accelerate student learning.
 - Faced with a deficit, the new principal had little choice but to discontinue the online grade book that provided teachers and administration a means of looking at student performance data and trends. In the course of the year, nothing has been developed to replace that program and although one individual teacher demonstrated an excel sheet that helped her track data, teachers and administrators have no common tool to do this important work.
- Build opportunities and protocols for evaluating the school's data systems to ensure that the school is regularly aggregating and analyzing data in ways that clearly impact student achievement.
 - Because new data systems are absent or only just developing, there are no protocols in place to review and revise them to ensure that they are leading to a clear understanding of trends. For example, there is articulated grading policy, but tools are currently absent to aggregate grades and thus, the school cannot be sure that the grading policy has resulted in an accurate reflection of student progress. The discrepancy between course pass rates and Regents results is an example of how a lack of critical analysis may lead to inaccurate measurements of progress.
- Establish structures to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development and team inquiry work so that adjustments result in productive growth throughout classrooms.
 - Teacher teams show clear commitment to improving student outcomes but currently have no tools for tracking the work over time to measure the effects that their efforts are having on students' academic growth. In struggling with a difficult budget, school leaders have no way of measuring whether the investment they have made in this work is paying off or in what ways the work needs to be adjusted in order to ensure that these efforts are productive.
 - Teachers are willing to take on leadership roles in the school but currently see limited opportunity for significant roles. School leaders have a different perception but have not yet developed a feedback loop to collect and utilize information that can bridge this disconnect. Without a systematic way to articulate, clarify, and revise various roles, the school thwarts the creation of leadership paths clearly defined and agreed upon by the community to build capacity within the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Academy of Business and Community Development	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