

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Frederick Douglass Academy V111

19K452

**1400 Pennsylvania Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11239**

Principal: Yolanda Martin

Dates of review: January 5 - 6, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Rose-Marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Frederick Douglass Academy V111 is a middle school with 215 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 77% Black, 16% Hispanic, 1% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders have created a strong, nurturing, and caring learning community with a climate of respect that is communicated well to the school community, resulting in a positive learning environment.
 - Small class size augmented with an advisory program creates an individualized setting in which every student and their need is well known. Advisory teachers focus on students' academic performance and socio-emotional needs. Additionally, administrators work in tandem with staff to ensure that an abundance of youth development activities are in place to accelerate student growth and reinforce the optimistic learning environment.
 - Students rave about the extraordinary supports that the school provides. They articulate the push for college success and the various college trips, and high school activities that are made available. In addition, the student government affords them a strong voice in school decisions. As aptly stated by a new student, "this is almost like a private school and we know we have to succeed." The structures in place push students' to be successful.
- Strategic organizational decisions result in the successful alignment of school resources that are effectively used to enhance student performance.
 - Decisions around the use of resources strongly support both the school goals and the learning needs of students. Administrators skillfully use the budget to hire extra staff to ensure the maintenance of small class size. Teachers and parents indicate that this support is critical to the advancement of student and school improvement.
 - Students are programmed to receive instruction in the 37.5 minute instructional program based on their learning needs. Students receive guidance in mathematics, English language arts, or in both subjects. Additionally, all students are programmed for elective courses based on their choice, and grade eight students are individually programmed for core instructional courses based on their mastery level. The meticulous use of resources promotes accountability and enhances school-wide goal attainment.
- The strategic implementation of a standard-based curriculum, augmented by school-designed and advanced courses, effectively engages all learners and meets the diverse needs of students.
 - Students benefit from a wide range of courses during the school day. All students benefit from standard offerings that include an elective of their choice. Elective courses include an array of arts courses, and a foreign language. High performing students are given the opportunity to participate in integrated algebra and living environment Regents courses. These opportunities ensure that all students are engaged and their needs are met.
 - Academic tasks embedded in school-wide monthly tests emphasize higher order thinking skills and requires students to fully explain their thought process. Projects on display require students, across grades and departments, to explain

concepts, present to their peers, and reflect on the task. These practices result in consistent engagement of students.

- The establishment of a culture that promotes learning result in instruction that fosters engagement, thereby propelling student growth.
 - Planning documents, as well as school structures, embodies the belief that students learn best in a small, nurturing environment. Students learning groups are in place in small classroom settings, and teachers' lessons reflect careful thought regarding the individual needs of students, creating a consistent instructional focus school-wide.
 - Across classrooms, students are engaged in learning activities. Work products on display range from individualized activities to group projects and presentations. As a result, students indicate that teachers want them to succeed and provide them with opportunities to engage with their peers in activities that require thoughtfulness.
- The frequent review of school-wide, classroom, and interim assessment data to monitor instructional practices, promotes improvement in student performance.
 - Teacher teams collaboratively create monthly assessments that mirror NYS assessments. The items on these assessments focus on key standards that the school focuses on during the prior month, hence the result provide meaningful information on instructional practice.
 - Periodic Assessment results are carefully analyzed by school staff. Groups of students who require intervention work with staff during lunch and afterschool tutorials resulting in their needs being addressed.
- School leaders have established performance accountability structures, which support teacher development thereby ensuring commitment to the achievement of school-wide goals.
 - School goals are well supported by the devoted staff. Teachers indicate that the small, individualized setting fosters the learning environment that allows them to tailor instruction to meet the needs of the students. Consequently, students and families rave about the high level of commitment by staff in ensuring that the school is successful.
 - Teachers clearly understand that they are held accountable for the performance of students. Students performance on assessments are tracked and accountable conversations are held with teachers. Additionally, classroom observations feedback guide staff in ensuring that instruction provided is meeting the needs of students thereby boosting school goal attainment.

What the school needs to improve

- Raise the level of communication with students and families to deepen involvement in the education process, thereby increasing ownership of the learning process.
 - Although the school provides students and families with progress reports, along with end of marking period reports, these documents do not detail curricula

- achievements. This reduces opportunities to fully engage students and families in ongoing, reciprocal discussion regarding learning.
- The practice of engaging students in reflective practices, though an aim of the school is not yet embedded practice. In some classrooms, students are required to reflect on their learning specifically after assessment, while other classrooms do not afford this opportunity. The result is not all students being able to articulate their next learning steps in meaningful ways.
 - Ensure that all constituent groups are involved in goal setting that includes higher levels of challenges in order to accelerate student progress.
 - Whereas the school has established teacher teams, these teams are beginning to infuse the inquiry approach in the work they do. Goals are emerging, thereby reducing the ability to gauge their effectiveness.
 - Students are involved in personal goal setting during advisory. Additionally, some teachers have embarked on guiding students in setting SMART instructional goals. The inconsistency of this practice does not facilitate student advancement.
 - Engage teachers in creating meaningful goals for student subgroups and ensure consistency in the quality of feedback given in an effort to deepen student and parent engagement in the learning process thereby accelerating student learning.
 - Teacher teams are embarking on setting goals for sub-groups of students. The absence of consistency across the school inhibits the ability to access their effectiveness.
 - The school has clearly established protocols for providing meaningful feedback to students, however the practice is inconsistent. In a grade six classroom, feedback provided to students range from none to ones that clearly guide students as to what was done well and areas in need of improvement. This inconsistency practice does not fully integrate students and families in the learning process.
 - Enhance professional development by tailoring activities based on the individual needs of staff so as to improve pedagogical practices, build capacity, and accelerate students' learning outcomes.
 - Despite the fact that teachers complete a self-evaluation and set individual goals following the Santa Cruz model, professional development activities are not tailored to their specific needs. This results in missed opportunities to foster pedagogical development, thereby hindering learning opportunities.
 - While the school has budding teacher leaders, opportunities for them to enhance their leadership skills are limited. The result is the absence of a strong adult-capacity building structure that assures continuity.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Frederick Douglass Academy V111	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