

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The School of Journalism and Technology

Elementary School K506

**303 59th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11220**

Principal: Elizabeth Waters

Dates of review: April 12 - 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Debra Spivak

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School of Journalism and Technology is an elementary school with 779 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 75% Hispanic, 4% White, and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 11% 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 94.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's innovative use of resources, time, teacher assignments and budget is evidence of her commitment to student success and supports student learning across the school.
 - The weekly schedule allows teachers to collaborate and plan with their grade level colleagues a minimum of one period each week. This opportunity is also afforded to teachers who teach during the many extended day programs as these have built in common planning time which ensures that teachers work together to offer a seamless instructional program and increase student achievement as evidenced by interim assessment results.
 - Strategic budgetary decisions have preserved the extensive enrichment opportunities provided to students which include: guitar, violin, dance, theater, visual arts and journalism. This alignment of resources and instructional programs enhances efforts to support the school's instructional goals and address a range of student interests and needs and is treasured by parents.
- The school's student population is nurtured by a caring and harmonious culture that honors diversity, is welcoming of all constituents and provides a safe and inclusive school community
 - Children are greeted by name each morning, bid a personal farewell each afternoon and teachers work together to share what one parent referred to as "a complete educational picture" that guarantees proper support services. These sentiments exemplify the personal and academic commitments made by staff to the students and their families that result in students' desire to attend school and achieve their goals as evidenced by a high attendance rate.
- Teachers across the grades embrace opportunities to participate in collaborative inquiry and differentiated professional development which strengthens instruction and improves learning outcomes for students
 - Despite the budget cuts which resulted in the loss of two full time coaches, the principal ensures that each teacher's program includes time for collaborative planning using an inquiry approach and encourages teachers to attend additional professional development sessions provided by the network. Teachers stated that they make curricular and instructional decisions together which are supported by the administration and they are expected to share their learning with colleagues thus building leadership capacity within the school. An analysis of the student data has demonstrated that the use of strategies learned through inquiry practice and at professional development sessions has had a positive impact on student achievement.

- The school provides multiple opportunities for teachers to emerge as leaders and to manage their own professional growth resulting in a very dedicated and effective staff.
 - Revised curriculum maps and units of study are under development. Having adopted the Teachers' College (TC) methodology four years ago, the principal has made a purposeful decision to work with her staff and TC staff developers to outline the incorporation of the evolving State standards into the TC units of study in order to manage the impact these standards will have on the teacher's implementation and mastery of these standards.
 - School leaders encourage and ensure that the staff has multiple opportunities to engage in professional learning both within and outside the school building. Through collaborative planning sessions, inter-visitations, in class demonstration lessons and a full time Magnet Resource Center, the staff is able to sharpen their content expertise which has improved instruction and student outcomes, as evidenced by individual classroom interim assessment data.
- The school conveys high expectations to students and families through consistent communication, enabling families to be active partners in their children's learning.
 - The principal hosts a Meet 'N Greet with parents bi-monthly where she sits with parents to provide updates on the schools progress and listen to their concerns.. These meetings, along with school sponsored Lunch 'N Learns, monthly Parent Art Nights, parent feedback and Title I budget surveys create an atmosphere where parents feel welcome and informed about school policies and expectations and that their concerns are listened to.
 - Workshops on academic and social topics enable parents to become actively involved in their child's holistic development. Many parents were eager to share the various workshops offered by the school to deepen their understanding of what their children are learning as well as advance their own skills. The varied timing of and translation services available at all workshops and PTA meetings enable optimal participation by a high percentage of parents and caregivers.
- The principal evaluates and monitors instructional practices and makes adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school.

School administrators conduct purposeful visits to classrooms, provide feedback on instructional practice, and make purposeful decisions as evidenced with the decision to split one of the fourth grade classes in need of additional support into two, and to explore additional literacy options in alignment with the tenets of the common State standards. These decisions contribute to a coherent school culture where teachers feel supported and willingly share best practices in multiple venues, including via videotaped lessons played repeatedly on the flat screen monitors posted on each floor of the school building. This allows teachers to implement exemplary practices in their classrooms which yields improved student outcomes as evidenced by individual classroom interim assessment data.

- Classroom pedagogy reflects a consistent set of beliefs and consistently engages students in high levels of critical thinking that produces meaningful student work products
 - Across classrooms, students experience the workshop model as the method of delivery for instruction. High-leverage strategies are in place that provide multiple access points for writing and math instruction. In classrooms, students were able to articulate what they were working on, why they working on it and work products required critical thinking and demonstrated multiple revisions to show mastery of identified content and skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the use of student work to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher team work.
 - While the analysis of student work products is an on-going practice in teacher teams, school leaders are currently developing their vision around how student work will be used to assess the impact of teacher team work on classroom practice and the resulting student work products.
- Refine systems for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals so that adjustments can be maximized to push student achievement.
 - While the school currently has a system to develop goals and measure progress towards those goals, a more defined system for sub-group students, which include students with disabilities and English Language Learners could create additional opportunities for more targeted instruction is not place. What is currently not systematically in place is the analysis of student work to determine short and long term goals to inform instructional next steps for all defined sub-groups.
- Reinforce the emphasis on higher order thinking skills within academic tasks to ensure that these are embedded coherently across all grades and classrooms so that students reach their maximum potential.
 - Staff is keenly aware that rigorous habits and the integration of higher order thinking skills are to be incorporated into each daily lesson and this is even included in the school's lesson planning template. However, the current implementation of academic tasks which emphasize these vital skills and target a diverse student population across all grades and subject areas was not consistently evident across all grades and subject areas, thus limiting opportunities for all students to maximize potential as critical thinkers.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: School of Journalism and Technology	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>				
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>				
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