

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The School for Human Rights
Middle School - High School 531
600 Kingston Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11203

Principal: Michael Alexander

Dates of review: March 1 - 2, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Melissa H. Silberman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The School for Human Rights is a middle school-high school with 385 students from grade 6 through 12. The school population comprises 85% Black, 14% Hispanic, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Teachers' practices are aligned vertically and across departments to ensure an engaging and differentiated approach to the school's curriculum.
 - The principal's technology plan led to a grant award putting Smartboards into all academic classes. Due to this commitment, the technology staff has already altered pedagogy to introduce technologically based course work to students through MY Access writing lab thus increasing the amount of student writing across all subject areas.
 - The belief that end-of-class summary is a meaningful tool for assessing student progress has resulted in all staff issuing exit slips at the end of each class session. Exit slip data is then used to inform future lesson planning.
- The principal and his cabinet make strategic organizational decisions well aligned to the school's instructional goals and long-range plans. .
 - Staff time and student time has been restructured this year to support teachers meeting every Thursday in grade team meetings that are designed to ensure vertical alignment of subject matter. As a result, courses reflect coherence and clarity and the school has seen a significant rise in pass rates for the math and English language arts Regents.
 - The principal and cabinet have incorporated regularly scheduled teacher intervisitations into the school program. This has led to teacher teams collaborating on classroom lesson planning and common assessments.
- The Principal and school leadership articulate a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in focused school-level goals that the whole school community supports.
 - The principal has established long term plans to improve writing across the curriculum. Teachers of all subject areas participate in actualizing this plan, resulting in an increase in English language arts course pass rates and improved English Regents' scores.
 - The school's theme of Human Rights advocacy permeates school plans and is addressed at all grade levels. This theme is linked to the belief that students' knowledge of the school theme will support their social-emotional growth.
- The school provides extensive and varied professional supports for staff to support and meet expectations that all students can achieve at high levels.
 - The principal and his cabinet utilize professional development surveys to determine and differentiate supports given to staff, resulting in the development of good pedagogical strategies which has in turn has led to a high level of teacher retention.

- Staff have regular opportunities to reflect on their growth and set goals and administrators use informal and formal observations to support teachers through regular feedback. As a result, administrators are able to monitor staff growth and identify suitable professional development to help teachers attain their goals.
- The faculty, led by the principal, communicates high expectations to students through well-varied means that supports improved outcomes.
 - The principal and staff consistently engage parents in the school's plans to raise expectations including school-level goal setting. Consequently, parents follow the lead of the principal and hold their children and other families to the same expectations.
 - The principal's belief that 55 is an unacceptable grade is deeply embedded in school improvement plans, and school course offerings have been adjusted accordingly. The school now offers four advanced placement classes and anticipates adding more next year.
- The principal and his cabinet provide faculty with professional development opportunities that promote reflection and encourage adults in the building to participate in meaningful adult learning and ongoing teacher collaboration.
 - The cabinet facilitates ongoing opportunities for staff to hone their skills around data analysis to improve student outcomes. As a result of the English department's work looking at pass rates, changes to staffs' program were effected. This resulted in an increase in student pass rates.
 - The principal and his cabinet support teacher leadership and have elevated teachers to leadership roles within the cabinet. Consequently, teachers take an active role in analyzing student data and designing interventions.

What the school needs to improve

- Design a cohesive approach to developing curriculum ensuring that all teachers utilize key State standards.
 - While the school has begun to organize resources with book lists, this practice is not embedded school wide, thereby making it difficult to measure coherence of academic tasks. The school has not yet aligned academic tasks with their curriculum approach to the core curriculum thus missing out on the opportunity to improve instruction in a coherent manner.
 - While staff participates in curriculum writing, the school has not chosen one standard template to ensure unity and coherence to how curriculum is written and delivered to students. This hinders staff's ability to fully collaborate on curriculum mapping.
- Create opportunities for teacher teams to utilize periodic assessment data with student subgroups to develop lessons that address the needs of student specific subgroups.
 - While inquiry teams use ARIS data to evaluate sub-group progress, they have not yet begun to systemically use this data to change instruction in a coherent manner. As a result, best practices of teacher teams cannot be replicated across the school.

- Although teams of teachers analyze student work this practice has not yet been drilled down to teach individual students, thereby making it difficult to support at-risk students with suitable instructional interventions.
- Improve the use of data informed processes to develop differentiated learning goals for student subgroups.
 - Teachers and teams of teachers do not regularly track student progress and adjust goals for student subgroups at appropriate intervals. Therefore, they are not able to ensure that student subgroups are experiencing suitable progress or benefiting from interventions.
 - Individual teachers set data goals for their classrooms to include annual and interim goals for groups of students for whom they are responsible. However, this is not a consistent practice across the school thereby limiting the leveraging of this established practice for greater impact school-wide.
- Support and deepen structures that measure progress towards interim- and long-term goals.
 - The principal and cabinet are beginning to analyze progress towards goals in weekly cabinet meetings but have not yet built systems for analyzing the successes that come from their hard work.
 - While a number of teachers in the English department are using student work products to alter lesson plans and plan for next steps, this practice has not yet permeated the entire faculty, as a result, staff don't reap the benefits of best practices leading to school wide practices.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The School for Human Rights	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
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