



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Benjamin Banneker Academy

High School K670

**77 Clinton venue
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Majida Abdul-Karim

Dates of review: April 4-5, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Ron Feinstein

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Benjamin Banneker Academy is a high school with 829 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 86% Black, 9% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 42% of the students enrolled and girls account for 57%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The curriculum offers a wide range of rigorous experiences, including the arts that facilitate students' ownership of learning and success.
 - School leaders and faculty align curriculum to anchors for college readiness, developing rigor in questioning and critical analysis which has resulted in purposeful and planned standards-based instruction that yields success.
 - Teachers regularly use classroom level data including student work and writing conferences to ensure that academic tasks are rigorous, challenging and engaging for all learners, resulting in meaningful work products reflective of high order thinking and learning.
- Students are engaged in standards-based lessons, exhibit exemplary behavior and a desire for learning to reach their potential.
 - School leaders and faculty agree that students learn best when instruction conforms to reality and multiple entry points are considered for engaging students in provocative discussions. Instruction reflects explicit connections to past instructional and life experiences, resulting in relevant, contextualized learning designed for student success.
 - Thoughtful questions and think time for students to respond and pose new questions are evident in lessons. Students are encouraged to summarize and reflect as well as articulate a general level of engagement and desire to learn. One student offered that "learning about U.S. History and policy progression has inspired me to join the debate team." Careful design of authentic learning experiences results in high level work products across the school.
- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions that support improvements in teaching and learning.
 - School leaders and faculty align resources to support school goals. In response to data from regents essay samples, a consultant has worked effectively with teachers enhancing their ability to develop better questioning strategies and increase rigor in lessons. As a result, students are able to perform critical text analysis across content areas and are skilled in evaluating and defending a position orally and in writing.
 - Every teacher engages in common planning at least twice weekly, once with a direct supervisor and once with a peer. Intervisitations are scheduled and occur frequently. Collaboratively created agendas evidence the strategic integration of Bloom's taxonomy as a tool to develop challenging tasks and higher order thinking skills.
- The staff gathers a wide range of relevant data to understand individual student and relevant sub-group performance, progress and learning needs.

- The school strives to prepare students for college and career. While most of the school's incoming cohort performs below grade level, this data is strategically leveraged to create a school-wide pedagogy that accelerates these students to the highest levels of achievement. For example, only 16% of students initially were college ready as measured by the PSAT, but the graduating cohort had over 80% of students accepted to colleges.
- The analysis of June regents data led to a school-wide re-construction and build-up of regents classes. Students at the highest levels of achievement were placed into accelerated classes and students needing intervention were grouped accordingly, resulting in improved achievement outcomes for both student groups.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practice with a clear focus on improving instructional practices.
 - The school's instructional focus and culture, supported by the majority of the staff, are evident in classrooms. Relevant learning experiences, successful strategies to engage students, the use of a school-developed questioning tool, on-going assessments and an active share-out at the end of each lesson are present across classes. Students appreciate the wait time offered after questions and the multiple opportunities for collaborative work.
 - School leaders target professional development opportunities for teachers based on a needs assessment and through the implementation of Pedagogical Smart Goals. This collaborative process focuses on four competencies and informs interim goals as teachers plan units. The administrative team conducts intervisitations based on the "grow areas" for teachers and assists them in using protocols to make data-based instructional adjustments for increased achievement.
- The principal has created a learning community focused on student outcomes with a clear vision to accelerate learning.
 - School level action plans drive efforts to accelerate student learning through a focus on critical analysis, including writing and higher order thinking skills. Student entry points are tracked over time ensuring that instructional interventions produce expected results. Advisories structured to respond to socio-emotional needs of the school's lowest performers, resulted in significant progress with this population.
 - The school has a significant number of first generation college-bound students. Therefore, parents are effectively included in every step of the college planning process. The school's vision for future development is anchored in college readiness efforts, resulting in the large percentage of these college-bound students accumulating 12-15 college credits during high school.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a cohesive system that aligns assessments with curriculum to support targeted instruction in all content areas, resulting in rigorous tasks.

- Although the Common Core Team has begun to analyze the alignment of curriculum to summative assessments with a focus on identifying needs of the lowest and highest achieving students, common use of assessments in math and science is not yet broad enough to result in actionable use of data, minimizing opportunities for teachers to differentiate instruction for improved student outcomes.
- Extend teachers' understanding of collaborative inquiry to facilitate the consistent implementation of best practices that improve achievement.
 - As reflected in the CEP and aligned to the intent of the Common Core Learning Standards, the school engages in collaborative inquiry and provides professional development to increase teachers' capacity in asking critical analysis questions. However, reflective use of best practices around this focus is not consistently evident in all classrooms and the plan to address the impact of this work on improved pedagogy is still evolving.
 - School leaders with faculty have begun the important work of curriculum mapping and developing better questioning strategies, however, the link between classroom practice and student work products has not been clearly established, hindering teachers' ability to revise instructional strategies with end product expectations in mind.
- Refine action planning for interim goals so that progress can be regularly measured and adjustments made to ensure success.
 - The school has established smart goals for teachers and a system that utilizes school-developed goal sheets for interim planning. However, the artifacts of progress towards meeting these goals do not focus on student misconceptions, and therefore do not indicate implications for teacher practice. This hinders the school's ability to leverage action planning process to its full potential.
 - Teachers individually and in teams have developed and started to use a student assessment sheet and an electronic record book to monitor and adjust instructional goals. However, the process of using this information collaboratively is at an early stage, minimizing opportunities for timely revisions for teachers and students to consistently document their progress towards success.
- Expand the use of data analysis to evaluate effectiveness of programs, leading to more effective inquiry-based collaborations.
 - Ninth grade teacher team discovered that student achievement in the school's lowest third was stagnant in subsequent grades. However, this information has yet to be acted upon by other teams. This hinders the school's ability to effectively evaluate the impact of team-based decisions for adequate progress and achievement.
 - The principal meets twice weekly with cross departmental teams to assess leadership potential, build capacity and for teacher evaluation aligned to student assessment data. However, leadership development opportunities and structures are not fully in place, limiting school's ability to support distributive leadership development at the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Benjamin Banneker Academy	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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