

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Connie Lekas School

75K811

**2525 Haring Street
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Antoinette Rose

Dates of review: February 14-15, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Khalek Kirkland

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Connie Lekas School is a middle/high school with 384 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 52% Black, 22% Hispanic, 19% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 84%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes informed decisions about resource allocations to best meet the unique needs of the school population and improve student learning.
 - Each classroom is equipped with interactive Smartboards and laptops, which are regularly used by teachers in every classroom. In addition, assistive technology devices allow students, including non-verbal ones, to communicate what they are learning. This use of technology has allowed more students to meet their IEP goals.
 - Hiring and teacher assignments are thoroughly done by the administration and include a hierarchy of teacher skills needed in order to best service children. These skills include familiarity with individual educational plans, applied behavior analysis, and experience with medically fragile students ultimately leading to teachers who are able to accelerate the learning needs of students.
- The school's partnerships strongly support students in building their vocational skills and promoting personal growth and development.
 - Every paraprofessional is provided professional development specifically around job placement, safety, emergency response training and allowing their multiple handicapped students the freedom to do the job on their own. These sessions enable the paraprofessionals to support the unique emotional and social needs enabling students to perform independently in their job placement opportunities.
 - Students are placed in a variety of job placement positions in companies where the school has formed long lasting partnerships. Students are paired based on a level 1 vocational assessment and given a transition coach that escorts them to the assignments. These positions allow the student to become responsible for their own growth, which often leads to stipends paid to the student.
- The school has well-established systems for monitoring teacher practice with a focus on improving pedagogy to develop more effective lessons.
 - Teacher tenure is defined as a "high priority" by the administrative team. Teachers are assisted in compiling an action plan, which lists their deficits and are subsequently assigned an assistant principal as a coach. Formal observations are done with the action plans in mind and ensure teachers are supported via individualized professional development with student outcomes as the priority.
 - Surveys are provided to staff at multiple times during the year in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the staff. School-based coaches along with District 75 coaches are then used to model best practices for targeted teachers, which produces improved instruction for students.

- The school leader has embedded the practice of respecting students at their entry point in order to engage students appropriately.
 - All teachers implement practices which reflect a belief that multiple modalities should be utilized to best reach the individual student. For example, Communication boards and Smartboards are used to help both non-verbal students and students who eye gaze communicate to have multiple entry points into the curricula. In turn, teachers are able to differentiate instruction and assure that all students are able to produce meaningful work products.
 - Across classrooms, teachers are using a curriculum every morning that involves relaxation therapy for various populations in the building. This strategy has led to more instructional time and consequently, better results on reaching each student's individual educational plan goals.
- Teachers use collaborative processes for setting individual goals for students to promote greater post-secondary outcomes.
 - A program entitled "A Day in the life of a 12:1:1 student" was developed to look at what stimulates learning in a typical student at the school. Based on this program, teachers are using creative programming that allows them to increase the time on task and therefore accomplish more goals on the individual educational plan.
 - Teacher teams use data collected from interim assessments and classroom observations in order to make decisions on next steps for students. In addition, teachers' use of AbleNet allows them to effectively plan with families the next steps for students after graduating from the school. The school has taken the steps to plan 2-3 years in advance to ensure a smooth transition.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop coherence in the planning and implementation of curriculum across classes within service categories to ensure that all students make progress in their learning.
 - Each service category in the school follows a different curriculum in order to support the individual education plan that is aligned to state standards. Teachers plan lessons with their teams, which include both paraprofessionals and service providers. However, rigorous habits are not consistently evident across all classrooms via lesson planning. Therefore, some students are not being introduced to higher order skills allowing them to make progress in their learning.
- Develop a cohesive system to ensure that all teachers know students' strengths and areas of need in order to identify key areas of challenge and adjust curricular and instructional decisions.

- Most individual education plans were updated and completed in a timely fashion. However many plans did not reflect an assessment for learning. In addition, many plans were done to reflect the needs of the entire class as opposed to the individual student. Consequently, efforts to differentiate instructional strategies are limited.
- Teacher teams have access to individual education plan data, New York State Alternative Assessments and Brigance data, which quantify proficiency levels for a unique subset of students. However, this summative data is rarely supplemented with periodic assessments in order to make timely instructional decisions based on sub-groups within the class.
- Unify the data collection systems relative to the progress of students in order to ensure the information is used effectively in collaborative inquiry.
 - A majority of teachers are using Google docs as a way of electronically documenting progress of students. However, the administration has yet to devise a system, which will allow the school community to bring coherence to the data in order to assess academic and behavior issues. Consequently there are limited adjustments made regarding the use of assessments. In addition, parents do not have access to the document or the information it contains and, therefore, are less involved with understanding the next steps in their child's learning needs.
- Provide consistent feedback to students and families with detailed accounts of their success and next steps in order to help them reach their goals.
 - Teachers are required to update the student's individual education plan four times per year where the parents either come in or are given notice via backpack. However, parents do not feel they receive enough interim feedback in order to assist their children academically.
 - The school is making strides to improve the instructional strategies throughout the building. However, some parents have not received training on ARIS to access information that could help them support these classroom activities.
- Align school-wide goals with Comprehensive Educational Plan goals in order to ensure a focus on student learning as well as social-emotional growth.
 - The principal has a short list of school level goals which include decreasing behavior issues warranting online occurrence reporting system (OORS) reporting, better communication of words and ideas for non-verbal students and respecting of children at their individual entry points. However, these goals are not aligned with the Comprehensive Educational Plan goals and do not include parental input consequently limiting the acceleration of student learning and social emotional growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: K811 The Connie Lekas School	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