



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Emily Dickinson

Elementary School 075

**735 West End Avenue
New York
NY 10025**

Principal: Robert O'Brien

Dates of review: March 23 – 24, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sara Carvajal

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Emily Dickinson is an elementary school with 689 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 51% Hispanic, 14% White, 5% Asian, and 2% multiracial students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 16% 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 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes data-driven organizational decisions across many aspects of the school to support improvements in student learning.
 - The principal is very resourceful supplementing the school's limited budget by utilizing volunteers to provide most students with a plethora of direct extracurricular services previously offered when the school employed coaches. As a result, the site has been able to sustain assorted tutoring and academic enrichment opportunities that prompt increased student achievement.
 - Due to the downward shift in student performance during the spring 2010 State tests, the principal strategically scheduled all students and teachers to loop together from third to fourth grade. In this way, the grade team and individual teachers could build on their past and present knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses to immediately address complex expectations of the new grade. To date, students demonstrate that they benefit from the looping approach, as per consistently increased outcomes on periodic assessments.
- Administrators and teachers effectively gather a wide range of assessment data across several subjects to understand grade-wide performance, progress, and learning needs.
 - Most individual teachers and teacher teams, across the grades, use a comparative view of data, which includes last year's State outcomes, periodic Acuity data, Reading 3D scores, running records, and conference notes. In this way, teachers develop well-informed portraits of individual students in their classes. Additionally, teachers manually highlight the English language learners of each class so that the sub-group's progress on interim assessments stands out allowing for a keen eye towards their performance and progress. Consequently, teachers confidently set targeted grade-wide cycle goals, which inform their planning for small- and sub-group interventions in English language arts and math instruction.
- The school consistently gauges teaching practice so that teachers benefit from well-matched supports.
 - Administrators and most teachers share the clear vision that increased rigor in writing across subject areas, via a workshop approach, is a key leverage point for increasing student outcomes. To this end, administrators use classroom observations to purposefully match all teachers with appropriate internal and external professional development opportunities, ranging from peer classroom visits to network conferences. As a result, grade teams are developing well-aligned, transparent expectations for high-quality student writing in English language arts.
- School leaders consistently enlist the support of multiple constituents to sustain a safe, trustful environment that supports student productivity.
 - Students, parents, and staff wholeheartedly agree that the school is a safe environment where mutual respect is continually celebrated, and progressive

discipline is the order for all who deviate from the school's positive climate. Students appreciate that they are well supported by the guidance team, which consists of a guidance counselor, community associate, and school aide, all of whom are highly visible and constantly accessible for individual consultation. As a result, the school positions students for a productive learning experience and increased academic outcomes.

- Extensive networks of specialized support personnel ensure that the academic and emotional needs of students are met.
 - The school exercises multiple layers of social and emotional support students via its Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS), which predicates the mantra of “respect, responsibility, and safety”, that is evident across classrooms. Teachers, who begin their professional development journey during a pre-service institute at the onset of the school year, build on their intervention strategies throughout the year, and receive suitable differentiated support from the community associate that further develops and sustains their adeptness in dealing with challenging student behavior. Also, a diverse cadre of several hundred volunteers, with varied professional backgrounds, provides a range of direct supports to students, including individualized academic tutoring and mentoring. Consequently, the vast majority of students benefit from rich opportunities for personal success.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop curriculum across subject areas that ensures increased alignment with key standards and tasks that are suitably challenging for all students.
 - The school's assorted teacher teams, including the core writing committee and assorted grade teams, engage consistently in evaluating and modifying curriculum for the writing units of study. In particular, teachers are shifting their planning to a “backward design” model that stems from key State standards and pushes writing across subject areas. At this time, however, curriculum maps and classroom practice reveal that there is a great investment in planning for scaffolded activities for struggling students via guided reading and small group strategy lessons. However, in several instances, little attention is placed in affording higher-achieving students with extension activities that stretch their thinking. As a result, several advanced students express that the work is a mere review, which lacks challenge.
- Maximize the use of resources in the differentiation of instruction across grades and subject areas in order to increase student enthusiasm and engagement, leading to increased achievement.
 - Many classes demonstrate a common belief that the framework of the workshop model provides multiple entry points for student mastery of the taught curricula across subject areas. However, at this time, not all teachers are optimizing the use of their available classroom resources, such as computer workstations and additional personnel, so that all students, including higher achieving students, experience suitable well-matched activities in a consistent fashion. As a result, there are varying levels of student engagement during English language arts and math lessons.
- Ensure that interim feedback to students includes precise next steps that facilitate their self-monitoring and ownership of accountability towards meeting cycle goals.

- School leaders use benchmark data that is aligned with the grade-specific cycle goals to review student progress on a quarterly schedule across subject areas, and then match said student progress against school-wide goals. However, at the classroom level, teachers are not yet consistently utilizing the evolving rubric grading structure to effectively provide “glow and grow” reports that validate students’ areas of skills, mastery, and inform students and their families of immediate areas for further improvement. Consequently, students across grades are uncertain of their academic strengths and areas of weakness, and they are unsure of the specific actions that will help them attain their goals.
- Refine current data systems for collecting and monitoring student data so that a common structure may be utilized effectively in collaborative inquiry and planning.
 - School leadership has worked diligently to assemble multiple streams of student data into a comparative structure. In this way, administrators and teachers may view the implications of attendance and formative English language arts and math assessments over time. However, although the leadership is planning for a periodic reflective check-in, the school has not yet formally evaluated the effectiveness of its new data tool so that revisions, including the addition of particular demographics and a common format across grades, occur as needed. Additionally, the school is currently discussing a check-in piece for evaluating the effectiveness of its current structures for sharing interim progress with students and their families. Therefore, at this time, the feedback loop, on multiple levels of the site, does not yet provide maximum achievement support to students or information for families.
- Expand the use of data analysis to guide the school in evaluating the effectiveness of teacher teamwork and distributive leadership so that adjustments may be made in a timely fashion.
 - School administrators rotate their participation in assorted teacher team meetings to support inquiry work facilitation and to remain abreast of the endeavors of individual teams throughout the site. However, the school is still developing a scheduled system for precisely evaluating the direct impact of teacher teamwork on daily classroom instruction. Similarly, administrators have not yet instituted systematic ways for gauging the effectiveness of evolving teacher leaders so that various supports, such as leadership mentoring, is provided, as needed. Consequently, the school is not able to identify the root causes of the inverse correlation between its great investment in teacher teamwork and the pattern of inconsistent student engagement across grades.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Emily Dickinson	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