

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Lillian Weber**

**Elementary School 084**

**32 West 92<sup>nd</sup> Street  
New York  
NY 10025**

**Principal: Robin Sundick**

**Dates of review: October 27 - 28, 2010**

**Lead Reviewer: Sara P. Carvajal**

## Part 1: The school context

### **Information about the school**

Lillian Weber is an elementary school with 483 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 25% Black, 45% Hispanic, 21% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 12% 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 93.5%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school works diligently with external partners to provide staff and students with a safe environment that is conducive to steady learning.
  - During recent years, the school's collaboration with Peace First, a non-profit organization well recognized by most students for its 'Peace Games', has enabled it to adopt the organization's character education lessons as an unwavering component in its weekly instructional plan. Teachers effectively implement the periodic training received from Peace First on productive classroom culture and conflict resolution. As a result, suspension data indicates a significant drop for major infractions, all constituents echo that they love the safe climate of their school, and students are able to focus primarily on their learning in most classrooms.
- The school develops teacher craft through a balance of internal and consultant supports, resulting in a school-wide coherent philosophy regarding student-centered learning.
  - Most teachers across grades consistently utilize the workshop model as the framework for student-centered learning during English language arts and math instruction. During science lessons, students frequently engage in exploratory activities, such as the dissection of owl pellets in understanding the dynamics of food chains and food webs. Consequently, teachers' instructional practices allow students to have several opportunities to apply their new learning independently during the regular school day.
  - The administration works diligently to structure professional development opportunities that address teachers' varying needs. Teachers benefit from whole-staff meetings, workshop cycles at remote sites provided by contracted consultants, on-site support from Science in the City, targeted math coaching, tailored cohort discussions, and intervisitation between teachers. As a result, several teachers exhibit a solid understanding of content knowledge and grade-appropriate strategies that elicit basic student understanding.
- Teachers benefit from multiple opportunities for structured collaboration that enable ongoing instructional planning in teams and cohorts.
  - Administration has designed its weekly schedule so that teachers across grades have multiple common preparation periods for kid talk, data analysis, and lesson planning. In addition, the school has restructured its extended day period on Mondays so that teachers have yet another planning opportunity. During this time, administrators and teacher leaders consistently facilitate inquiry teamwork bimonthly, in-house turnkey sessions once per month, and other monthly cohort work, such as curriculum mapping or Peace First planning. As a result, the staff steadily learn about the Common Core standards, strategies for effective planning, and protocols for looking at student work.

- Multiple streams of communication between the school and parents have resulted in a strong sense of high expectations for families, leading to increased parental engagement.
  - Families share a high level of excitement over the varied ways that the school relays its high expectations for students' academic, attendance, and social/emotional progress. The schools' automated messenger service, teachers' personalized phone calls, periodic email messages, and monthly calendars are cited as being especially helpful in keeping everyone informed of the school's current foci. Parents also greatly appreciate the monthly coffee klatch meetings with school leaders, and the daily administrator accessibility in the schoolyard, as these opportunities facilitate increased communication allowing for greater involvement in the school and support for their children at home.
  - School leaders and the parent coordinator are highly transparent in communicating with families about school data trends, budgetary constraints and school wide needs. As a result, "a steadily increasing core of active parents with a pioneering attitude" has emerged over the past two years, both co-sponsoring and leading a vast range of major school committees and activities. This momentum in family engagement has exponentially increased the group's treasury, thereby funding valuable programs, such as the new science lab and the interactive science-learning garden, which benefit all students across grades.
- The school is working steadily on developing content area curricula that aligns with key standards and connects well with the arts and technology.
  - As part of a pilot project funded by the Department of Education, a select group of teachers from different grades convenes bi-monthly to engage in focused curriculum mapping for social studies. As part of its practice, the team has been utilizing key Common Core State standards as the entry point for the units developed thus far. Additionally, the team strategizes purposeful performance tasks, identifies debatable essential questions, and compiles resources for these units so that teachers ultimately immerse students in interdisciplinary, reflective learning, which capitalizes on the school's plethora of arts and technology resources.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Increase alignment between specific assessment tools and curriculum so that teachers develop a common language and understanding of standard proficiency and transparent targeted next steps for students.
  - Some teachers make an effort to utilize rubrics in the assessment of writing across subject areas. However, the resulting feedback seldom provides students with clear next steps. In addition, there is some incongruence between several of the rubrics used and the tasks evaluated. As a result, many students express uncertainty about the writing skills they have mastered and those that require further development.
  - Several teachers use mini-conferences as a means of regularly collecting anecdotal student data across subject areas to supplement summative assessment outcomes. However, a significant number of teachers do not consistently record the outcomes of these valuable instructional

opportunities. Consequently, teachers miss opportunities to use this valuable data stream during subsequent instructional planning as individuals and on the team level.

- Revisit the way instructional and human resources align with students' needs so that learning experiences across the school consistently engage all students in the development of higher order thinking skills.
  - Across the school, classrooms are equipped with two or more functional computer workstations for student use. However, students appear to use the computers minimally during the school day. As a result, the majority of students do not benefit optimally from this essential resource as a means of intervention or enrichment instruction.
  - Several classrooms demonstrate paraprofessional time invested in organizing the classroom instead of supplemental teaching to individuals or small groups of students. Therefore, students do not always receive multiple opportunities and suitable differentiated support to learn difficult content and skills despite additional adult presence in the room.
- Expand on differentiated instruction across the school so that all students benefit from rigorous, challenging learning opportunities.
  - Some teachers are highly adept at tailoring instruction with varied resources or groupings, according to students' demonstrated strengths and needs. However, at this time, the vast majority of teachers do not yet demonstrate such targeted pedagogy beyond their efforts during mini-conferences with students who require additional clarification or support. As a result, daily instruction does not sufficiently challenge many higher achieving students, as evidenced by the classroom instruction and the contents of student work folders and notebooks.
- Deepen inquiry work across teacher teams so that the school consistently utilizes the periodic analysis of student work to gauge the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches, innovative student groupings, and new resources.
  - Administration recently assigned the majority of teachers to their respective inquiry teams to focus on broad-stroked topics, including curriculum mapping and learning centers. Teachers appear passionate about their assigned projects. However, they unanimously agree that their inquiry work is at an early developmental stage in which student work and interim data are not yet formally analyzed during regular meetings. Consequently, teams are unclear of where their work requires revision.
- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks for structured teacher collaborations so that effectiveness is measured and modifications made systematically throughout the year.
  - The administrative team has established a series of large group sessions for individual inquiry teams to share out the progress of their work. However, school leaders have not yet finalized benchmarks for the evaluation of inquiry work and capacity building throughout the year. As a result, there is no clear indication of necessary modifications to either at this time.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Lillian Weber</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?		<b>X</b>		
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?		<b>X</b>		

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>					
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
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?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?		<b>X</b>					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>