

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Alexander Humboldt

Elementary School 115

**586 West 177 Street
Manhattan
NY 10033**

Principal: Angela Rodriguez

Dates of review: December 9 - 10, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Martha Madera

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Alexander Humboldt is an elementary school with 654 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 97% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 47% English language learners and 6% 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 92.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school maintains a safe and orderly environment that is conducive to student and adult learning.
 - The staff encourages high expectations for all students and is committed to continuous school improvement. The school's support team consisting of counselors, intervention teachers, a therapist and psychologist all support students' social emotional needs. Teachers know their students well and make referrals to the team when they identify a need to do so. Teachers report that the team's response to their students' needs supports their academic success.
 - Students' efforts are celebrated by parents and staff. The student of the month and perfect attendance initiatives recognizes students for academic achievement, effort and punctuality. Students are also offered an array of enrichment programs; they participate in chorus, drama classes, choir, basketball, and cheer leading. These activities further contribute to students' social emotional learning and academic progress.
- The school engages families regarding their children's progress towards meeting academic expectations, in order to increase student progress.
 - The school provides parents with grade level expectations and information indicating their child's reading level and goals for the year. Upper grade parents receive progress letters indicating students' current reading level and next benchmark grade. In the lower grades, the home school connection folders are sent home weekly with class assignments and suggested ways parents can support their child at home.
 - Parents give high marks to "coffee with the principal" meetings, which provide a forum to address concerns and share ideas. In addition, they participate in various parent workshops provided by the parent coordinator. In particular, parents reference the support they received understanding the school's budget and as a result state that they are able to contribute informed ideas on the School Leadership Team to contribute to their children's academic success.
- A vast majority of teachers participate on teams to monitor student progress and make curriculum adjustments, in order to ensure students' needs are served.
 - Teacher teams meet weekly by grade with a focus on improving students' writing skills. They have developed grade level rubrics to assess student writing and identify patterns and trends across the grades. As a result of their collaborative work, teachers have developed a common language which facilitates instructional conversations allowing for more effective planning across the grades.
 - Teacher teams consistently analyze a variety of data. Using the state assessment results, an item analysis was conducted, key standards were identified and grade level goals established. In addition, teams revised

their newly adapted literacy curriculum to incorporate key standards in order to hone in and maximize students' academic progress.

- The principal provides a range of differentiated professional development that result in improved teaching strategies to support student needs.
 - The professional development plan is driven by the school's instructional goals, results of students' data and input from staff reflection surveys. In addition, teacher observations are conducted and feedback is provided on their instructional practice. New teachers are further supported through the mentoring program which pairs them with an experienced colleague to support improving student performance and learning outcomes.
 - All teachers participate in differentiated professional development activities that aim at strengthening their knowledge base and support them with the implementation of Balanced Literacy. Funds have been appropriated to hire consultants and provide release time for classroom teachers to attend lab sites and grade level sessions. These sessions equip teachers with strategies around planning for students of varying skill levels.
- Tools have been developed to aggregate and organize data so that trends in student performance are accessible for making instructional decisions.
 - The school has developed data spreadsheets which capture the results of running records assessments as well as reading levels. The color coded charts facilitate the viewing of skills students have mastered or need further support with. To further refine data monitoring, the school is currently transitioning to using a web based system that captures all the data and highlights patterns and trends across the grades, in order to inform instructional practices to improve student outcomes.
 - The school has adapted a math progress check list for teachers to record end of unit results. The data is then transferred onto a grade analysis spreadsheet in order to compare with the results from Periodic assessments. Consequently, teachers are provided a holistic view of the progress students are making so that next steps are determined.
- The principal evaluates the effectiveness of teachers engaged in professional development and provide opportunities that support distributive leadership.
 - Administrators meet weekly to review relevant data on student progress and classroom observations. This enables them to monitor the impact of teacher teams and identify which teachers need additional assistance. Hence, there is an on- going focus on supporting teams, and evaluating teacher performance to ensure they are able to support their students' instructional needs. To further build capacity and support a collaborative environment, teachers are encouraged to take on leadership roles. They participate along side coaches and administrators on the instructional committee, serve as mentors for colleagues and are members of the principal's extended cabinet.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a rigorous curriculum that emphasize higher order skills and supports a variety of learners in order to close the achievement gap.
 - The school curricula in literacy and math reflect a focus on the school's key chosen standards as well as strategies from Bloom's Taxonomy that support and promote higher order skills. However, teachers are still refining their teaching practices and as a result, rigorous habits are not yet embedded in a coherent way across grades to challenge all students, in order to close the school's achievement gap.
 - Teacher teams review student work in order to adjust the curriculum and plan instruction that meet students' needs. However, the data reflects additional supports are necessary in order to adapt strategies that meet the needs of all subgroups, so that they are further challenged and engaged to develop higher order thinking skills.
- Further develop lessons that offer differentiated learning for students so that they have multiple entry points into the curricular across all classrooms.
 - Teachers plan differentiated lessons and flexibly group students based upon data so as to meet individual students' needs. However, consistency in the effective use of English language learners methodology when differentiating instruction for this target group is not yet developed so that it leads to a high level of student engagement.
- Sharpen the instructional practices of aligning organizational decisions to include all students in support of the school's instructional goals.
 - The alignment of resources to ensure meeting the school's instructional goals are evident in the decisions made to implement a new literacy curriculum, hire literacy consultants and employ a math coach. However, further refinement of the curriculum is needed to ensure the language allocation policy for English language learners is consistent across the school in order to ensure the academic success of this sub-group is met.
 - The principal has promoted an environment of collaboration among faculty. Teachers work in teams and share responsibility for meeting the needs of their students. However, refinement of teacher assignment to match the needs of specific subgroups is needed in order to continue closing the school's achievement gap.
- Align assessments to better identify students' needs and track progress so that adjustment to curricular can be done at the classroom level.
 - Teams of teachers use assessment that is aligned with the school's key chosen standards. However, teams do not yet create common assessments that offer an in depth portrait of student needs across the grades. As a result, the school cannot yet identify areas for improvement to differentiate instructional strategies for all students.
 - Classroom teachers consistently review a variety of data including student work to track progress and alignment to Periodic assessments. However, this practice does not yet capture individual students' strengths and areas of needs, which limits their progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Alexander Humboldt 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