



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**The James Baldwin School**

**M313**

**351 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10011**

**Principal: Elijah Hawkes**

**Dates of review: April 11 - 12, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The James Baldwin School is a transfer high school with 247 students from 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 35% Black, 51% Hispanic, 7% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 8% 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 78%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and school leaders make strategic decisions around the use of a variety of resources, including student and teacher time in order to thoughtfully respond to the learning needs of students.
  - Recognizing the unique needs of their transfer school population, the school leaders strategically reach beyond their walls of their school to find a space for students to build stamina and concentration skills while fostering an interest that would motivate them to come to school each day and focus on their academic work. A yoga course run through a studio several blocks from the school offers students strategies for dealing with stress and anxiety. This deliberate decision aligns to the school's effort to improve school culture and character through deepening students' commitment to being present in the school community. The school's research demonstrates that students enrolled in the course, experience a higher course pass rate than students not in the course.
  - The school's creative schedule allows students to meet in extended 90 minutes blocks for in-depth, differentiated, inquiry-based work leading up to performance based assessment tasks. Teacher time is carefully orchestrated to allow teachers to work with smaller cohorts of 50-75 students and meet with their colleagues weekly as a department and a whole school. As a result of these collaborations, teachers have a clear sense of the skills and knowledge students should be able to demonstrate in their performance based assessment tasks.
- The school community works hard to maintain a safe environment and inclusive culture where individual student's needs are known so that students are supported in meeting their learning targets.
  - The school's Crew (Advisory) program is the heart of the school. Parents explain that their child's Crew teacher is "their second parent." Crew advisors maintain regular contact with families and closely monitor the students' academic performance in all classes. Student's echo that Crew is their "family" and a space they can talk about their issues. Additionally, the school offers PM tutorials in all content areas as well as a range of extra curricular activities such as visual arts, theatre, music, mens' group and womens' group to address students' interests. In creating a caring and supportive space for students, the school has noticed a 50% decrease in the number of incidents logged into the Occurrence Reporting System as well as a decrease in the number of behavioral contracts. Last year the school averaged 13 behavioral contracts per semester. This fall only 5 were required.
- The school develops course offerings that are aligned to key learning targets that connect to students' life experiences and engage a variety of learners.
  - Each department aligns their performance assessment around carefully selected key standards which focus on college readiness skills of reading and annotation. Across the content areas these key standards in literacy provided consistency and alignment. As a result 20 of the 29 students

that took the English Regents exam in January 2011 passed with a 65 or higher.

- In department meetings teachers share tasks and student work to thoughtfully review curriculum and provide ideas for strategic interventions to challenge and engage a range of learners. Formative assessment data is regularly examined by classroom teachers to modify instruction for particular groups of students. As a result 16 of 25 juniors and seniors with Individual Education Plans passed their Performance Based Assessment Test (PBAT) in the fall. Eight of the 12 English Language Learners (ELLs) passed their PBATS as well. In addition 9 ELL and IEP students went beyond fulfilling basic requirements by completing an additional PBAT in an area where the requirement was already met.
- Across the school, department teams create learning targets aligned to the schools key chosen standards which serve as formative assessment data to identify strengths and areas of needs of individual students.
  - All teachers include learning targets in their course syllabi. Learning Targets are also included in every lesson plan and student task. Teachers use student work to monitor progress towards learning targets and to guide lesson planning. Together at department meetings teachers share students work samples to look at progress towards mastery of student learning targets. Some departments collect the data on Excel spreadsheets to track general trends in the progress. As a result of careful attention to student skill mastery and teacher moves that would better support skill mastery for pockets of students, credit accumulation in the fall increased by 4% from the previous fall term to match the highest pass rate the school has had in the past five semesters.
- The school community effectively collaborates on the development of the James Baldwin Strategic Plan which includes a clear vision and rationale for thoughtfully constructed data -based goals that are supported by the school community.
  - The entire school community is involved in a cyclical process of analyzing school data and developing meaningful goals and work plans. In June the staff works together to reflect on the past year and start to plan the next year. The goals are continuously tuned as new data sources become available. Changes or modifications to the existing plans are explained to school community through thoughtful correspondence and reflection. The implementation of new literacy strategies is high on the list of goals for the school this year. Through strong communication and community buy-in, 60% of students reported annotation or other reading strategies (T-charts, sticky notes, word walls) were in use by one or more of their teachers. This has translated to higher course pass rates in the fall term. Focused phone calls from Crew Advisors raised attendance 2.5% from last year.
- The school has systematically supported staff in their ability to sustain an inclusive and respectful culture through internal and external support that accelerates academic and personal growth of students.
  - Crew is a safe space is where students' needs are intimately known and students feel supported by their teacher and peers and in their social and emotional growth. Teachers are provided with extensive professional

development including Undoing Racism to enable them to develop and maintain a collaborative and compassionate environment for their Crew. The attention to the social and emotional needs in Crew has led to a decrease in incidents logged into the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) and credit accumulation in the fall increased 4% from the previous term to the highest pass rate the school has had in 5 years.

### Areas for improvement

- Build on teachers' understanding of the school's beliefs about how students learn best to ensure that there is consistent and deliberate implementation of practices and that all students are regularly cognitively engaged.
  - Across classrooms lesson are typically differentiated to provide multiple entry points. There is currently not consistent strategic differentiation across classrooms that push more advanced learners further through the use of extension activities or more cognitively engaging tasks.
- Deepen the existing practice of student self reflection across the school and engage families in a reciprocal and on-going dialogue regarding student strengths, weaknesses and next learning steps.
  - Students are well aware of their progress in classes and their learning targets. Through regular contact with Crew advisors, parents are well aware of their child's social and emotional growth and credit accumulation, however, less aware of the specific instructional progress their children are making. Currently, there are limited opportunities for parents to understand the learning targets and no systematic structure to include parents in PBAT presentations. This can limit parents' ability to support academic goals at home. Throughout classrooms there is consistent use of student self-reflection through the use of sticker dots and poster charts. In some classes there are systems to measure class progress over time. What are currently not in place are more guided reflections to make those self-reflection opportunities more actionable for teachers.
- Strengthen the work of teacher teams to include data informed processes to set measurable goals for targeted groups of students in order to accelerate learning.
  - Although school-wide goals are strong, there was not clear evidence of the goals of each department teacher team and how the team was directly or systematically supporting the school wide initiatives. Department teams do not have clear goals for groups of students and therefore are not able to measure progress with interim benchmarks for the team and for students, and determine how the work of the team is having an impact on student achievement.
- Further align the school's vision, mission and goals to a framework that identifies effective instruction at the school in order to differentiate support for teachers.
  - This year the school has transitioned to having three instructional leaders, a principal, co-director and an instructional guide. The additional support of these three instructional leaders is a strong foundation; however there is currently no consistent framework used as a lens among these 3 leaders and across classrooms to provide feedback that messages similar beliefs about what effective instruction looks like at James

Baldwin. As a result their in a lack of focus in the feedback that could strategically move professional practice in more targeted ways towards meeting the school wide goals.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: James Baldwin	UD	D	P	WD
<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>	

**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>	<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>	

**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>	<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>

**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>	<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>	

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

<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>
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