

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Kathryn Phelan School

Elementary School 011

**54-25 Skillman Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11377**

Principal: Anna Efkarpidis

Dates of review: October 27 - 28, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Kathryn Phelan School is an elementary school with 1235 students from kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 2% Black, 43% Hispanic, 13% White, and 41% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 95.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The diligent principal fosters a learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a clear vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - Teachers meet regularly on common preps, during the 37 ½ minute one time a week and a half day every month to establish focused goals and fully analyze student programs to improve learning outcomes across all subjects. During this time, teachers share specific action plans and effective lessons to support the school's goals in accelerating student learning as reflected in 90% high needs students meeting their short term goals in reading comprehension.
 - School leaders work collaboratively with staff and parents to create school goals and develop action plans. This results in the school community working together effectively to support student learning. The consistent use of newsletters, calendars, progress reports, emails and other data, to notify parents, students and staff of the instructional plans and practices result in strong support for the school's direction.
- The school provides a very safe, nurturing environment in which every student is encouraged to grow both academically and as an individual, and where they feel respected by fellow students and adults alike.
 - The school supports students' voice and active participation through the student organization. The student organization meets once a month. A class senator from all of the upper grades attends along with the executive branch. School-wide issues are discussed and addressed at these meetings. As a result, the school environment is very positive and student concerns are effectively addressed as reflected in a decrease in student suspensions. Additionally, students highly value opportunities to plan and participate in activities that foster respect between adults and students.
 - Students feel strongly supported by teachers and other staff members. One student stated, "I feel connected to my teacher. My teacher always helps and encourages me to do my best." As a result, students successfully meet their personal and academic goals, which is evident in the results of their classroom assessments.
- As a result of the principal's strong belief in distributed leadership, staff is energized by the impact their collaborative efforts are making on student achievement.
 - All teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach, which results in teachers sharing best practices. One of the teacher teams shared the use of an instructional strategy to improve speaking by having the student cut out pictures of items containing the target sound or words and displaying them where they can be practiced each day. As a result, this practice is now being used across the grade to improve the oral language of identified students.

- School leaders and teachers align curricula to key standards and offer a wide range of positive learning experiences to fully engage and support student learning.
 - Students participate in a Heritage Foreign Language Program, which is aligned to State standards. This program provides instruction in English, with Spanish as the heritage language. As a result, this kindergarten through grade 6 program promotes a love of language and exposes children to two cultures.
 - The school community strongly believes in values education and integrates rigorous value lessons during the social studies period. Values education promotes critical thinking as students learn to make connections between judgment and action. Thus, students are given the opportunity to see and be part of a community where positive values are given weight in the daily interactions which give the school its family atmosphere.
- The school meticulously collects and uses a wide range of data to create a concise picture of the individual students' strengths and areas of need.
 - School leaders use data from ARIS, New York Start, Progress Report, Quality Review, standardized tests, informal and formal portfolio assessments to acquire a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of need. For example, the school determined that English language learners were lacking in their English language skills in writing. As a result, teachers revise their lessons to improve the writing skills of this subgroup.
 - The Teacher Center staff developer meets with teachers on each grade to analyze student work. They used data to plan for Common Core State Standards and the curriculum. The reading and writing team use teachers' guides and the standards which result in careful planning of instruction and the creation of planning guides across grades.
- Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams to share good assessment practices and utilize data to successfully identify trends.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers consistently supplement summative data analysis by examining periodic assessment and classroom level data on student subgroups particularly English language learners. As a result, they identify trends and adjust curricular and instructional decisions to improve academic achievement of this subgroup.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use student portfolios to create a clear picture of how well students are advancing toward meeting key standards and curriculum. As a result, teachers acquire important feedback related to their instructional decisions.

What the school needs to improve

- Use the observation tool to develop with teachers, goals and plans that reflect and support attainment of school-wide goals for their professional growth and the improved achievement of their students.
 - There is lack of teacher observations to support instructional guidance. As a result, constructive feedback on classroom instruction is inconsistent and not always available. Additionally, the professional learning needs of teachers are

not always clearly identified and addressed such that student growth may be inhibited.

- School leaders do not always determine a common focus of their expectations for instructional practices. As a result, school-wide instructional practices are not always aligned across all grades.
- Promote greater consistency across the school in differentiated instruction so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, challenging tasks and questioning to extend thinking and to maximize learning.
 - The school focuses on supporting high need students by offering academic intervention services. However, high performing students are sometimes unchallenged and their individual learning needs are not always addressed through differentiated lessons that further extend their curriculum.
 - The school offers an on-line enrichment program. However, enrichment programs are not always available to high performing students. Consequently, additional opportunities that lead to increased engagement and higher order thinking activities for these identified students are sometimes limited.
- Strengthen teacher responses to all student work to reflect guiding comments and levels of performance that convey clear next learning steps that students may use to improve on their own.
 - Student work is available in well organized notebooks in addition to the displays throughout the rooms and is used to celebrate students' best efforts and to inform instruction. However, not all student work includes comments for improvement. As a result, the teachers do not fully evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum decisions to consistently provide students with their next learning steps. Therefore, students are not always able to clearly articulate how to improve their work and narrow their learning gaps.
- Expand processes to monitor the progress of interim benchmarks for all improvement plans to enhance how progress is measured and readjustments are made.
 - The long-term plans for the development of the school are outlined in the Comprehensive Education Plan developed by the school leadership team. Additionally, the school monitors the performance of students at the end of each marking period and through interim progress reports. However, formalized practices, to determine the progress of improvement plans towards interim goals, are not fully embedded across all subjects. This limits the school's ability to consistently monitor progress in reaching goals for all student subgroups across all subject areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Kathryn Phelan 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