

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Cynthia Jenkins Elementary School

Elementary School Q037

179-37 137th Avenue

Queens

NY 11434

Principal: Beverly Mitchell

Dates of review: October 18 –19, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Cynthia Jenkins is an elementary school with 581 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 89% Black, 6% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions that emphasize key evolving State standards aligned with curricula that result in improved student outcomes and engagement for a diversity of learners.
 - The school leaders and faculty place enormous emphasis on aligning the curricula with the State standards and have begun to incorporate the evolving State standards because of its increased rigor and higher expectations. Leadership and faculty have incorporated a new literacy curriculum for reading and writing because they were dissatisfied with the results of the previous material. Preliminary student writing and running records indicate increased growth over last year.
 - Teachers meet regularly by grade to distill academic tasks and assignments from the curricula. Each teacher's input is valued as they upgrade the level of challenge and rigor in their projects and assigned work. The third grade teacher team does not wait for formal meeting times but are constantly in each other's classrooms supporting one another collegially and making decisions about curriculum. An external consultant works with teacher teams to differentiate academic tasks so that all subgroups are challenged resulting in higher performance during this first marking period.
- School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to students and families in order to increase student achievement.
 - The principal publicizes the raising of the cut scores by the State, which resulted in lower proficiency scores through the school during monthly breakfasts with parents and at parent workshops. The school leadership has eliminated any excuses for poor performance by challenging the entire school community to embrace the higher State standards. As a result, teachers are pushing for better student performance in all class assignments, projects and assessments.
 - The school leadership actively supports parent participation in the school leadership team. Parents are integral in the shaping of school goals and expectations. They are invited to drill down into school data and contribute suggestions to the team. Learning leaders push into classrooms to work directly with struggling students. The leadership discusses essential school facts and data at PTA meetings and elicits parental support. This has resulted in a heightened awareness regarding the state of the school and the collaborative actions needed to improve. A parent commented, "This is our school and we are not giving up on the progress we're making."
- Teaching strategies and routines are embedded with differentiation across classrooms so that students have multiple ways to improve their academic performance.
 - Teachers have modified the workshop model because of its rigidity and select materials that are designed to teach literacy and math skills as the foundation for student mastery. Teachers have made differentiated instruction an absolute priority, using flexible grouping informed by student assessments and different processes, assignments and strategies to reach different students

according to their needs. This has led to student improvement across various subgroups as evidenced by student writing and unit assessments.

- The school leaders and the faculty share the belief that student writing elicits the deepest levels of comprehension of taught material. They have purchased a new writing program to increase the volume and stamina of student writing. As a result, student engagement and participation has increased this school year as demonstrated in student work products.
- The school carefully aligns the use of resources with instructional goals for continuous improvement in the delivery of instruction so that student achievement is accelerated.
 - School leadership has arranged for grade level teams to have common preparation time during the week. Additionally, part of the thirty seven and a half minutes of intervention time is dedicated to studying student work and preparing curriculum. The data specialist sets aside time blocks to meet with teachers to train them in technology, research and assessments. This has led to better selection of students for target groups and improved performance of struggling students.
 - Groups of teachers who work directly with English language learners, students with disabilities, and struggling students collaborate with network specialists to improve their craft. Through hands-on training with specialists followed by debrief sessions teachers have developed effective instructional strategies.
- Teachers consistently gather and analyze data to create a clear picture of students' strengths and needs to improve academic performance.
 - External consultants work with faculty to develop classroom assessments from student data with a direct link to key standards. Teachers have consequently developed systematic protocols for refining their methods of assessing students while teaching their lessons. This has led to a culture of ongoing assessment that has improved instruction for struggling students.
 - Teachers receive individualized, direct assistance from the data specialist in utilizing Periodic Assessment data. Leadership has designated special preparation periods during which teachers can drill down into data to carefully track their students' progress. Teacher team meetings have time set aside for looking at data and collaboratively designing interventions. This has led to the daily use of read-alouds and accountable talk to improve student achievement.
- School leaders make proactive performance evaluation and tenure decisions while providing feedback to teachers to increase their adeptness.
 - The majority of the teachers in the school support a culture of high expectations. Data assessment and student work have become a crucial part of teacher placement and tenure decisions. Teachers have been moved from upper to lower grades based on demonstrated efforts with different student groups. External consultants have been brought in to strengthen content knowledge and teacher team work. School leaders have modified the formal and informal observations to make them clearer and remove any element of surprise. All recommendations are directly linked to student improvement and are made explicit with a focus on refining instructional expertise. Post-observation conferences lead to deep discussion of effective strategies and

provide teachers with precise next steps in order to support and guide their professional growth.

What the school needs to improve

- Strengthen the school culture through expanding the use of data information to guide both academic and personal improvements for faculty and students.
 - The school leadership and main inquiry team utilize the learning environment survey, incident reports, attendance information, mobility rate and other non-academic school information to improve the functioning of the school. However, grade level teacher teams are not sufficiently aware of the importance of this data and do not use it consistently in their deliberations. In the absence of using this data, management issues persist with some students. School based support personnel are working towards knowing the students as well as their classroom teachers do in order to best address their social and emotional learning needs.
- Develop classroom level goals that leverage greater changes in instructional practice to accelerate student learning.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers develop group and individual goals based on assessment data closely tied to the curriculum but lack to set interim goals. As well, there is insufficient evidence that teachers develop ambitious goals that would extend students thinking beyond the curriculum. As a result, students do not benefit from academically challenging goals with interim benchmarks that would stretch their thinking and allow for tracking progress over time.
- Continue to increase the frequency and scope of professional development in order to enable faculty to sustain a safe, inclusive culture that fosters the social-emotional growth of students.
 - Teachers receive consistent and continuous professional development on data, curriculum and instruction, yet coaching and training on the social and emotional growth of students is less intense. This has resulted in teachers being less equipped to address the social and emotional needs of students and has led to some management concerns.
- Improve the structures that evaluate and adjust the process for assessing students and sharing performance data so that communication on students' learning is enhanced.
 - The school uses many traditional methods of outreach to communicate student performance with parents. The principal receives feedback from teachers in consultation meetings and faculty conferences regarding communication practices between the school and home. However, a limited number of staff members provide feedback in these structures since they lack anonymity. Additionally, reciprocal structures that adjust the ways in which data are organized and assessed have not yet fully evolved impacting on the growth of school improvement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Cynthia Jenkins 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