

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Aerospace and Science Academy

Elementary-Middle School 127

**98-01 25th Avenue
Queens
NY 11369**

Principal: Evita Sanabria

Dates of review: May 16 - 17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Aerospace and Science Academy is an elementary-middle school with students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 17% Black, 74% Hispanic, 1% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 14% 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 92.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer a range of positive learning experiences including the arts that fully engage and support student learning.
 - The school uses web-based instructional programs aligned to the State standards. Students access the programs from school or home. A variety of reports detailing individual student progress help teachers align instruction, especially for English language learners and students with special needs. Summative reports indicate there is an increase in student outcomes in math and reading across the school.
 - The music program focuses on the five strands from the Blueprint for the Arts Standards. Students in grade four learn to read and write music notation. In the fifth grade, students follow the Carnegie Hall Link Up curriculum. Sixth and seventh grade students learn to play keyboard. In eighth grade, students play drums, giving them the opportunity to study and perform the music from West Africa, Brazil and Japan. The students benefit from a rigorous arts integrated curriculum engaging them in challenging learning tasks that enhance their thinking skills, which is evident in a performance increase on unit tests.
- Teachers effectively use a wide range of classroom assessments to guide curricular decisions and inform planning, resulting in a clear understanding of the performance of students.
 - Teacher teams effectively align assessments with key learning standards to inform their instructional decisions. As a result, teachers revisit their work with curriculum mapping in all core subjects to meet precise student needs. They concentrate on providing specific strategies and using data more effectively to adjust their instructional practices. This revised use of resources supports efforts to improve student outcomes and learning which is evident in improved predictive assessment results.
 - Teachers across all grades use assessment binders to track student progress from standardized tests, student work and common assessments given over interim periods. The school uses Acuity to maximize teacher time for instruction to meet specific student needs. These practices result in appropriate adjustments to classroom instruction aligned to meet student needs.
- A wide range of partnerships successfully promote students' personal development and academic growth so that students succeed in meeting their learning goals.
 - The school has established and developed effective relationships with the community. They work closely with Oasis that uses school data, which provides students with an arts infused educational program. Students participate in extra-curricular activities such as theatre, music and

cooking. Consequently, students feel supported and enjoy coming to school and an increase in attendance has occurred.

- Advisory periods are set for one period a week. Middle school teachers in grades six through eight meet with their homeroom and address their class with the curriculum of “Overcoming Obstacles.” This curriculum engages students in motivational activities and lessons focused on communication, decision making and goal setting. Therefore, students’ social and emotional needs are addressed, which has led to a decrease in bullying and fighting as evident on the Online Occurrence Reporting System.
- The school strategically aligns its resources by making effective teacher assignments, and integrating technology into instruction thus, increasing opportunities to meet the learning needs of all students.
 - The school has purchased netbook computers. These netbook computers provide greater access to the web and software for students with special needs and English language learners. This alignment of resources to goals and instructional plans enhances efforts to address the needs of students. Thus, an increase in computer based assessment results has occurred.
 - School leaders have built in an inquiry period once a week in all teachers’ schedule. This provides time for teams to discuss strategies to support student growth. Teachers use assessment binders to analyze student data to track student progress. This promotes professional collaboration and guides teachers to take responsibility for student outcomes.
- The school uses effective systems to review and modify curricular, instructional and organizational practices that improve student learning.
 - School leaders purposefully examine a range of standardized test results, formative data, and student work to monitor individual, class and grade progress. The school uses school leadership meetings, faculty conferences and conversations to adjust practices, instruction and modify its use of resources. For example, grade teams at their weekly meetings study and reflect on the evolving State standards and incorporate them into their planning to improve student mastery of these higher expectations. This careful study to align policies and practices across the school builds instructional coherence to accelerate learning evident by an increase in the Instructional Targeted Assessments.
- The school effectively monitors classroom instruction with a clear focus that has resulted in improving instructional practices.
 - Classroom observations, walkthroughs, student work, meaningful conversations and assessments inform professional development offerings. For example, a non-tenured teacher network provides support and guidance in implementing practices that are specifically aligned to the Tenure Decision-Making Framework. New teachers meet weekly with the principal, assistant principal and experienced teachers to discuss classroom environment, learning centers and teaching strategies. These supports help improve teacher practice, their professional growth and the improvement of instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance goal setting for greater consistency in identifying precise short term goals targeted to meet the identified needs of students in order to increase learning outcomes.
 - Teacher teams use data to set goals for students in greatest need of improvement, such as English language learners, and students with special needs. Most teams and classroom level goals have leveraged changes in some classrooms. However, the practice of setting interim goals and the use of specific academic interim benchmarks to meet granular learning targets of identified groups of students is not yet fully embedded across the school.
- Refine teaching practices to promote greater consistency in differentiating instruction so that lessons challenge all students and maximize learning to meet their diverse needs.
 - Teachers plan lessons and use appropriate scaffolds to differentiate instruction in most classes in response to students' performance and interests. However, this is not a consistent practice across all subjects and grades. As a result, lessons do not always challenge some students, particularly high performers, to their full potential and instruction does not always fully address their learning needs.
- Improve the communication of academic progress and next learning steps with students and their families so that clarity of expectations will lead to acceleration of student learning.
 - The school provides students and families with interim individual progress reports. However, these reports do not specify students' next learning steps for improvement in their learning. Also, student work is available in well organized notebooks in addition to the bulletin board displays throughout the school. However, not all student work includes comments for improvement. Consequently, students cannot always clearly articulate what they need to do to guide their improvement and accelerate their learning. Additionally, parents do not have sufficient concrete information about their children's specific learning targets to fully support the improvement of student outcomes.
- Enhance the work of teacher teams to insure that all professional collaborations establish a clear instructional focus and result in the adjustment of classroom practice to improve outcomes.
 - All teachers participate in collaborative teams that share effective instructional strategies and recommend appropriate interventions to accelerate the learning of high need students. However, this process varies from team to team thus restricting efforts to maximize learning and improve outcomes. In addition, there are few opportunities for teachers on these teams to assume leadership roles, thus limiting their professional growth, empowerment and accountability.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Aerospace and Science Academy	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
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