



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Alfred J Kennedy School

Elementary School 193

152-20 11 Avenue

Queens

NY 11357

Principal: Joyce Brown Bush

Dates of review: April 11 - 12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Lori Bennett

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Alfred J Kennedy is an elementary school with 479 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 14% Hispanic, 63% White, and 19% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 14% 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 92.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders maintain open lines of communication that keep parents well informed about programs and instructional needs and make them meaningful partners.
 - Parents maintain constant communication with the administration and state that school leaders are very receptive and accessible and “it is not hard to be heard.” Parents are encouraged contribute in meaningful ways leading to the renovation of the school library and purchasing additional non-fiction books to augment and support student academic programs.
 - The school consistently communicates high expectations regarding academic performance and student behavior. Feedback to students is evidenced in work products and guide next learning steps. Clear and consistent structures are in place. For example, the student planner used in all grades facilitates home school communication and high levels of expectation for students and families leading to an increase in mathematics scores.
- The school offers a varied curriculum that aligns with State standards and meets the needs of the student population through engaging learning tasks.
 - The school curriculum is aligned to State standards and teachers utilize comprehensive pacing guides in all core content areas, which undergird the delivery of standards based instruction. Lessons promote student engagement and critical thinking. Standards based activities, and the regular monitoring of student performance result in a well-rounded academic program.
 - Strengthening students understanding of informational text and persuasive writing, the instructional foundation of the school, is embedded across all grades and drives the development of learning tasks. Rubrics are used throughout all stages of the writing process. Teacher and peer-to-peer feedback guide students toward rigorous writing goals. As one student stated, “Our teachers give us assignments that push us to our limits and really make us think.”
- The school’s strategic use of resources is effectively targeted to maximizing learning opportunities for students.
 - The timely use of the School Based Option Process, Circular 6-R and master scheduling results in increased common planning time. Teachers meet regularly to discuss instructional strategies, review student data and plan instruction. Teachers report that these collaborations have helped to enhance their instructional practices, foster communication and motivate them to continue improving instruction that ensures consistency and better prepares students.

- Recognizing through data analysis the need to accelerate the progress of special education students and English Language Learners, the school used resources to hire additional staff to work closely with classroom teachers and utilize a collaborative push-in model so that lessons are compatible and suitably differentiated. Consequently, students receive more targeted instructional time resulting in improved academic outcomes.
- School leaders use observation tools that improve school-wide instructional protocols and increase student learning outcomes.
 - The administration is very invested in the development of teacher practice. School leaders conduct regular formal and informal classroom observations and provide written feedback. The process is specifically connected to school-wide goals and promotes pedagogical development towards the vision of the school.
 - All teachers participate in weekly teacher team meetings. Team leaders facilitate the central inquiry, which focuses on how to push students to higher levels using higher order questioning techniques. Additionally, teachers hold valuable conversations around student work samples and constructive responses on state exams. This results in an increase in teacher engagement and deeper analysis of student learning outcomes.
- Teacher teams collaborate professionally using an effective inquiry approach that results in distributed leadership opportunities and improved student learning outcomes.
 - The school's investment in adult learning is evident in the commitments made to teacher team meetings. All teachers participate in inquiry work focused on improving student outcomes and pedagogical practices. Teachers hold valuable conversations around student work products and instructional practices, which lead to the implementation of effective teaching strategies to improve student performance outcomes.
 - The school greatly benefits from grade level and instructional teams facilitated by proficient leaders. Team leaders formulate the central inquiry question, plan intervention strategies, and engage in professional readings thereby embracing a culture of collaboration resulting in increased teacher engagement.
- Administrators regularly evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, interventions, professional development, and teacher assignments making adjustments as necessary to assure continued student progress.
 - Administrators and staff are routinely involved in end of year retreats reflecting on school success. Additionally, the instructional committee regularly examines benchmark exams and results of state assessments to determine data trends in order to determine requisite changes, thereby monitoring the schools' progress towards goal attainment.
 - The principal has identified potential leaders and provides them with additional supports such as access to internal and external professional development, which provides them with additional support to accelerate their growth. Teams regularly provide evaluations to determine

effectiveness. As a result, capacity for school change resides at all layers of the school faculty.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance pedagogical practices so that all students are engaged in differentiated and rigorous learning experiences that promote greater student achievement.
 - Classroom observations reveal inconsistency with the delivery of differentiated learning opportunities. While a few teachers show understanding of tailoring instruction beyond the practice of ability grouping, most teachers observed were challenged to deliver targeted instruction resulting in students not adequately supported in their individual needs. Additionally, although grouping strategies to address differentiated Instruction is based on ability level and is evident in most classrooms, some students, particularly high achievers, do not consistently receive instruction to address their specific needs.
- Extend and refine data gathering and analysis practices in all core subjects to provide a complete picture of students' progress across all aspects of the school community.
 - Teachers analyze both diagnostic and summative data for their classes providing a general understanding of students' content needs. However, the data is not sufficiently supplemented to identify the needs of individual students and there is evidence of inconsistency among teachers managing this information. This prevents the provision of specific targeted skill based differentiation that accelerates student mastery of needed content and skills.
- Provide differentiated professional development with on-going data driven feedback in order to promote the continuous growth of all teachers.
 - The school's professional development focus for all teachers is differentiated instruction, and plans have been developed to meet this need. However, analysis of teacher observation reflects the need for specific targeted supports based on individual teacher strengths and challenges. Consequently, school leadership is challenged to accurately assess teacher performance and growth.
- Refine the goal setting process at the team and classroom level to include rigorous, measurable, long and short-term outcomes, which effectively monitor student progress.
 - Teacher teams have created action plans and goals, which are monitored and revised, however, specific benchmarks to accelerate student performance are not prioritized. Therefore, those goals that will have the greatest impact on improving student performance are not always reflected. Also, while teams set student goals and implement teaching strategies the information, shared among team members, has not yet resulted in the development of instructional protocols that improve pedagogy throughout the school.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Alfred J. Kennedy	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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