

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Clearview Gardens**

**25Q209**

**16-10 Utopia Parkway  
Whitestone 11357**

**Principal: Mary McDonnell**

**Dates of review: May 19-20, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Danielle DiMango**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Clearview Gardens is an elementary school with 567 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 9% Hispanic, 46% White, and 37% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 8% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 96.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is well-developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teacher pedagogy focused on meeting individual student needs through meaningful learning tasks maximizes student engagement.
  - The staff is focused on incorporating Blooms Taxonomy, depth of knowledge levels and higher order questioning into all lessons. During inquiry meetings, teachers share effective ways they incorporate these educational theories into their lessons. Observations of classrooms show teachers school wide using strategies that address gaps in student understanding to target the needs of the diverse community of learners within the school.
  - The school embraces school wide research and writing projects in every grade that illustrate high levels of rigor. Students use multiple resources and technology to enhance the quality and authenticity of their research. In the upper grades, students are expected to present their work to an audience and receive verbal feedback. This process produces high levels of engagement for all students though the higher order thinking and complex questioning skills taught and expected within the peer feedback process and work products.
- The principal's strategic programming and effective alignment of resources supports the diverse learning needs of student and the schools instructional goals.
  - Thoughtful programming allows teachers to collaborate with colleagues during the school day to evaluate student work and to share ideas in regard to curriculum implementation, effective assessments and instructional strategies. In addition to weekly inquiry team meetings, teachers are scheduled to meet every Thursday for professional development and/or common planning time. As a result of this planning, teachers target student needs more effectively and communicate that they are tracking evidence of growth from both Acuity assessments and student work products.
  - The school has a plan of action in place to address the learning needs of student sub groups, particularly special education students and those in need of interventions and extensions. For example, parallel scheduling allows for movement of students where data reveals strength in particular subject areas and for interventions to be provided for other students who are struggling with particular skills or subjects. This organization of time allows the school to monitor student progress more effectively and has led to a decrease in student referrals and an increase in student progress on benchmark exams.
- Teachers strategically use key assessments to effectively analyze student learning and adjust instructional decisions that result in high levels of student performance.
  - On every grade level, teachers and teacher teams use a plethora of standardized, curriculum based reading and math assessments as well as other tools such as conferencing notes and exit slips to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. These allow the effective tracking of progress.

- Teams of teachers, with support from the school data specialist, meet weekly to compare summative data results with teacher generated assessments and student work samples to target the needs of English language learners and special education students throughout the school. As a result of this work, some teachers have supplemented the curriculum to include supports such as word cards, charts, web based programs and parent/child reinforcement tasks that address particular skills and positively impact students.
- The school leaders and staff consistently collaborate with students and their families to communicate students' strengths and goals and to articulate next steps to support student progress.
  - Parents expressed appreciation at the way the administration and teachers know their children and communicate their learning needs. They were well versed in understanding ARIS parent link and liked the school wide use of this program to assign homework that addressed areas of weakness within curricular units of study. In addition to ARIS and report cards, parents said they felt as though they "were kept in the loop" through monthly newsletters, bi-monthly unit assessment reports and quarterly student profiles that identify areas of strength and weaknesses and include next steps to support student learning. Throughout the school, teachers regularly conference with students to allow them to reflect on their progress. Students were able to clearly communicate their individual goals and articulate how the tools, such as school wide rubrics and weekly assessments, help them understand their next steps.
- Teams of teachers work well collaboratively to set measurable goals that meet the varied needs of students on each grade.
  - During inquiry team meetings, teacher teams decide on common instructional strategies to address the goals and benchmarks set for individual and groups of students. As a result of one round of study this year, one inquiry team set a goal of vocabulary frontloading and increased use of high frequency words to address skills identified in the item skills analysis for English language learners. They monitored their decisions by sharing results of instructional strategies within lessons, by looking at student work to evaluate student growth and by making instructional adjustments when necessary.
- The principal fosters a school community where commitment to achieving high standards is a shared responsibility and has had a positive impact on student outcomes.
  - The principal utilizes her staff and network support to effectively provide parents with supports necessary to fully understand and participate in school wide goals. Parents have attended training in areas such as: understanding common core standards, curriculum mapping, how to understand and support students in Impact Math, how to engage your child in reading and how to socially/emotionally prepare your child for middle school. Additionally, the principal has monthly breakfast and dessert meetings with the parents where she provides feedback regarding assessments and curricula choices. These meetings are well attended and enhance the home-school connection to support student achievement.
  - Currently, twenty five parent/guardian/grandparent Learning Leaders provide interventions to students, lead enrichment activities (such as Lego robotics), run parent workshops and have been trained through an Arts Works grant to be docents during school trips to museums with students. School support of

programs such as these foster meaningful intergenerational relationships and increase parent involvement in the school.

- School leaders and teachers use effective tools to evaluate teaching and learning outcomes that support the instructional vision through teacher growth.
  - Grade team leaders are selected to mentor teachers and support school wide growth in instructional practices within the school's instructional focus. This year, teachers are engaged in work to improve critical thinking skills using visual arts to better understand text structure and content area nonfiction text. Student work products throughout the school reflect these efforts.
  - During one-on-one meetings with the staff, the principal consistently asks teachers for classroom data that supports student growth. She follows up with classroom visits to assess student response to instruction. Feedback is then given to the teacher and supports are provided by pairing up teachers with their colleagues for coaching and/or professional development. This regular cycle of assessment and support ensures improved instruction to students.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen curricula alignment across grades in order to enhance academic tasks and work products school wide.
  - This year, teachers in grades kindergarten, first and fifth, along with network support, are working to develop curriculum maps that better align to the common core standards and the targeted goals of the school. However, this curriculum has not been implemented and does not include plans to scaffold vertically throughout the school. This limits the ability to close instructional gaps and accelerate student learning for student in all grades.
- Develop consistent benchmarks to organize and monitor school wide data trends to identify strengths and areas of need in order to evaluate and adjust school wide curricular decisions more effectively.
  - Although the principal and staff collect data consistently throughout the year, there are inconsistencies within the school as to how the administration, teacher teams and individual teachers come together to analyze and align classroom assessments and data tools such as Acuity to evaluate student progress and performance trends school wide, including those of special education and English language learners. Without systemic methods for capturing and examining student outcomes, teachers cannot scaffold instructional decisions or differentiate instruction to address all student needs effectively.
- Formalize and refine structures in the use of data to improve the evaluation of teacher teams and internal leadership opportunities.
  - The principal is currently planning to implement systems that will combine and organize the classroom walkthrough process with real time data collection to provide a framework for discussion and action planning that will support the work of teacher teams. However at this time, the principal assesses teacher and teacher team work by grade or through informal discussions with individual teachers. This current system does not promote sharing of the work of teacher teams nor does it build coherence between grades.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: Clearview Gardens</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<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>	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>