



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

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

# **Quality Review Report 2010-2011**

**The Elizabeth Blackwell Middle School**

**Middle School 210**

**93 – 11 101 Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11416**

**Principal: Rosalyn Allman-Manning**

**Dates of review: March 7 – 9, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Amy Jones**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Elizabeth Blackwell School is a middle school with 2,082 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 7% Black, 60% Hispanic, 4% White, and 28% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 13% 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 92.3%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school gathers and analyzes a variety of data, including behavioral, periodic assessment, and subgroup data, to address areas of need at the school level.
  - The principal and teacher teams are well versed in the school data, including subgroup results beyond State summative assessments and a thorough analysis of data related to the social-emotional needs of students. Learning environment surveys and other data have led to many improvements including a cross-school Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) committee with parents, teachers, and other staff whose work has positively impacted school tone. Teachers report that this committee has changed their outlook on the school and struggling students, and the team is poised to continue its impact as it launches a data gathering initiative reinforcing positive behaviors. In addition, careful study of recidivism, incident and attendance data for the school and subpopulations like African American males in special education led to school-wide changes, links to appropriate supports, and attendance improvements.
- A variety of teacher teams analyze school and classroom-level data and teacher practices to develop tools to strengthen instruction and school programs.
  - Teachers' participation in structured professional collaborations such as the PBIS team, inquiry teams, data-informed content area study groups, and the principal's book club, enables them to review student and subgroup data from ARIS, Acuity, and student work, and to share classroom resources and review materials used in classrooms. These groups have encouraged intervisitations and leveraged changes in teacher practices and unit assessments. As a result, the work of the teacher groups led to creation of student reflection sheets.
- A variety of assessments, aligned to the curriculum and consistent across classrooms and houses, enable teams and individuals to adjust instructional decisions.
  - The school assesses students monthly with on-demand tasks in all content areas related to selected New York and Common Core Standards. Teachers and administrators review the tasks, enabling the school to monitor progress toward key standards and adjust learning targets as needed. Students' receipt of feedback on these pieces provides them with a clear understanding of their next learning steps.
  - In addition to periodic data, teachers use a variety of assessment options to adjust classroom decisions. V-math and other programs offer immediate data, and school-wide weekly sub-skill checks, provide actionable data that teachers frequently use to group students for

classroom work and meet individual and subgroup needs. This has resulted in gains on the interim math assessments.

- The school has a safe environment conducive to student and adult learning, and students and adults treat each other respectfully.
  - School structures such as houses and looping of students create smaller communities in this very large school. In classrooms, the tone is positive, productive and school structures like the pupil personnel team (PPT) and the PBIS team support classroom work. Parents and students report that the school's high expectations and concern for students means staff become like a "second mom." As a result, students report they feel well known and have many adults to support them with issues.
  - Students are well versed in college options and report that teachers push them to achieve academically. In classrooms, students focus on their work and receive supportive feedback from the adults.
- The principal and cabinet set goals, based on a comprehensive data-driven needs assessment that are understood and supported by the school community.
  - Cabinet and staff teams study a wide range of summative and formative data (State results, subgroup performance, attendance, parent involvement, suspension, etc.), including feedback from parents, teachers and student council representatives, to create a list of focused goals and action plans to close the achievement gap for underperforming subgroups. Communication structures bring information to key places resulting in the school's overarching goals being well understood by teachers and parents. As a result, parents report satisfaction with the communication and planning for school goals.
- School leaders strategically align budget, technology, coaches, and make organizational decisions that effectively support instructional goals to ensure student-learning needs are met.
  - School leaders' commitment to finding ways to fund important initiatives is well appreciated by parents and teachers who stated that they had to "just ask" to get the resources needed. Computer-based learning programs, trade books, and dictionaries, are purchases that support English language learners and the implementation of differentiated instruction resulting in evidence of growth in student work products.
  - The school invests in its house structure to ensure varied professional development (PD) opportunities exist and that teacher' strengths and students' needs are aligned. This structure also enables looping so that teachers can get to know students over multiple years.

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

- Expand work on curriculum mapping and development of academic tasks to ensure students are consistently asked to engage in rigorous habits and higher order thinking.

- The school makes thoughtful decisions on which standards to emphasize and assess in portfolios, and all students are expected to reach these standards. However, the tasks and rubrics in English language arts, (ELA), and math do not yet consistently ask students to demonstrate critical thinking commensurate with the expectations of the standard. Thus, all students are not yet appropriately challenged with college-ready curricula at all times.
- Strengthen differentiation so that all lessons include multiple entry points to challenge fully all students and engage them in critical thinking.
  - The school demonstrates many efforts to ensure differentiated lessons are effected and include conferencing, PD on questioning, and resources such as computer-based differentiated texts. Differentiation for the highest performing students is resulting in high numbers of students passing Regents' exams. Differentiation for the lowest performing students, however, does not yet consistently support access to deep thinking or use tools to enable students to access rich content.
- Deepen professional development and teacher feedback work to push teacher practices to accelerate the pace of instructional change.
  - The school uses the Professional Teaching Standards as a framework for new teacher development, teacher goal setting, and retention and tenure decisions. Teachers report that they have PD opportunities that are helpful and timely. However, the next learning step for each teacher is not yet consistently and clearly articulated in observational feedback slowing the pace of instructional change.
  - Administrators link teachers to individualized supports when issues are identified during observations, and teachers report they have "never once been turned down" when requesting to attend relevant optional PD. Teachers have input via survey into the school PD plan. However, opportunities for teachers to request differentiated supports are not yet formalized and the work of the PD team is not yet transparent to teachers resulting in teachers receiving uneven levels of support.
- Further develop structures to regularly evaluate and adjust the process for sharing performance data with students and integrating the evolving State standards in school assessment.
  - Leaders embed informal reflection and feedback structures in all faculty meetings. The school incorporates feedback from the parent association and school leadership team in goals and action plans, resulting in parents saying that their ideas are heard and acted on. However, as these practices are not yet formalized, the feedback does not yet support a deep look at sharing student progress or grading information, therefore limiting sharing of information with all constituencies.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Elizabeth Blackwell Middle School</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>	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