

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Vanderbilt School

31R014

**100 Tompkins Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10304**

Principal: Nancy Hargett

October 26th and 27th 2010

Lead Reviewer: Erminia Claudio

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Cornelius Vanderbilt School is an elementary school with 669 students from Pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 34% Black, 46% Hispanic, 10% White, and xx% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 18% 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 88.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and her staff have worked tirelessly and created a positive climate that welcomes collaboration, promotes academic growth and celebrates the importance of learning for all stakeholders.
 - In line with the school's anti-violence initiative, trained student mediator "peacemakers" support positive means of conflict resolution that has already lowered the incidence of bullying within the building. Students and parents comment that there are "very few bullies" and that they feel safe in the school.
 - The school's academic intervention support teachers not only address scholastic areas of need, but work closely with the guidance counselor to promote a character development focus which emphasizes positive behaviors and traits. This has resulted in a culture where students consistently state that they can talk to staff members if there is a problem.
- A wide variety of data from summative, formative and student work assessments is collected, disaggregated and evaluated to ensure that student needs are defined and addressed.
 - New York assessment results, attendance reports and occurrence reports as well as other student data is used to analyze and address school trends. This is evidenced by the implementation of phone outreach to latecomers and absentees that has already raised the daily attendance rate by nearly 3 percent.
 - The school has developed benchmark pre-assessments, administered at the beginning of each year to identify the needs of cohorts of students who have slipped in their progress or who need additional support. As a result teachers continually monitor and provide interventions to support student progress.
- The school has developed a number of successful partnerships with community and cultural organizations that help students and families in reaching social and academic goals.
 - In a partnership with the "Life Space Intervention" program, a large cadre of teachers and school leaders attended a series of five positive behavior workshops, held on Saturdays. This has resulted in a change in the tone of the building and helped teachers to interact more successfully with students who are disruptive.
 - The school is in its third year of collaboration with "Partnership with Children", a state program that houses five social workers and a supervisor in the building and successfully supports identified families and students in crises.

- The school's celebration of student achievement has led to higher levels of expectation throughout the community, increased teacher morale and engendered a greater degree of parent involvement.
 - The school hosts a staff catered dinner that honors students who have attended school regularly, and recognizes their parents for their role in their children's success. This has helped to raise expectations and lower the absentee rate.
 - The school community, inclusive of Parent Teacher Association, the parent coordinator and the principal, organize and facilitate numerous activities to promote and celebrate student success. The *Attendance Dinner*, *Author's Day* for all grade levels, bilingual outreach and *First Friday* classroom visits enhance parent participation and fosters pride in student achievement.

- School leadership consistently prioritizes academic needs and goals in the allocation of resources and teacher assignment placements that support student growth.
 - Recognizing a data defined need for structure in literacy instruction, the principal in consultation with the instructional team, used her resources to purchase a research-based, balanced literacy program which has encouraged student grouping and individualized center work.
 - Using reflective teacher programming, the principal has targeted early childhood grades for concentrated academic intervention by two specialists and has "looped" two teachers into the fifth grade with their classes. These strategic moves, aligned to school goals, have already shown increased levels of student achievement.

What the school needs to improve

- Utilize a careful analysis of student needs to prioritize key standards, which focus the curriculum and deepen the level of academic rigor in all content areas.
 - While the school reflects on the New York State standards and works to align the curriculum appropriately, the implementation of an extensive number of programs limits the focus on specific key standards. Consequently the depth of instruction is inconsistent in supporting higher level skills and somewhat limited in raising the level of rigor.

- Ensure that differentiation and small group instruction is data-driven and provides a wide range of entry points that engage all students, at all functional levels.
 - Although virtually all classes cluster students for small group instruction, lessons do not consistently reflect differentiation of modalities or a wide range of learning opportunities, especially for higher functioning students.

- While students are well behaved and actively engaged in most classrooms, assigned tasks do not necessarily produce higher order work products and are inconsistent across grades and content areas.
- Create a uniform standards based protocol to be used school wide to evaluate student work and plan next steps for cohorts of students and individual students.
 - Teacher teams utilize a wide range of assessments to evaluate student work, but the lack of common rubrics limits the reliability of the data or the ability of teachers to identify successful strategies.
 - Grade level and Inquiry teams meet regularly to examine student work, and discuss next steps. However, there is not a specified school protocol that enables teams to uniformly analyze the work of students across grades and content areas.
- Generate a coherent and individualized professional development plan that enables school leaders to consistently monitor teacher growth and align student achievement.
 - The staff consistently supports a common writing focus and professional development has been provided in the school's newly implemented programs. In addition, school leaders survey teachers yearly to identify their professional development needs, and accommodate those requests. Nevertheless, the school has not yet created an individualized professional development plan that monitors the success of implemented supports.
- Develop a comprehensive database that aggregates the information from the extensive array of data sources to enable all staff to accurately assess patterns and trends.
 - Though the school dissects a variety of assessments, and is beginning to work on incorporating the Common Core Standards into formative, school-based assessments, a universal database that enables the school to organize and disaggregate data in a consistent format, is not yet fully developed.
 - While teachers provide information to parents in various formats throughout the year, a system does not yet exist to evaluate the success of these protocols.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Cornelius Vanderbilt 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