

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Louis Desario School  
Elementary School 056  
250 Kramer Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10309**

**Principal: Dean Scali**

**Dates of review: January 5 – 6, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Michael L. Schurek**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Louis Desario is an elementary school with 780 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 8% Hispanic, 86% White, 4% Asian and 1% other students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.4%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and staff work as a unified team to create a calm, respectful and orderly environment where learning can take place and students feel supported.
  - All grade teachers regularly conference with students and work with academic intervention service providers to ensure that students are progressing. In addition, guidance and support team personnel conduct respect campaigns to maintain the school's affable milieu. As a result, students feel well supported and are known by multiple adults thereby facilitating steady reading level gains.
  - Due to learning environment survey data, the principal has strategically scheduled teacher teams so that he can participate in each team's work on a rotational basis to improve communication and mutual trust. Consequently, teams now use common protocol tools to look at student work and teachers feel empowered as evidenced by the remark, "Our opinions are truly valued."
- Leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
  - The principal and his instructional team carefully analyze school needs and allocate resources to improve outcomes aligned to school goals. For example, newly received Title 1 and grant funds are used to purchase literacy consultants, a coach and substitute coverage time for professional development that reinforces school-wide instructional practices. These decisions directly align with the school's goals of improving student literacy and developing teachers' abilities to utilize the workshop model across all grades in English language arts and mathematics, resulting in extra credit for closing the achievement gap.
  - School leaders carefully monitor reading level and math unit assessment performance and regularly meet with teams to discuss results and subsequent classroom adjustments. With the exception of self-contained special education classes, all students are grouped heterogeneously and teacher teams are organized so that teacher members share the responsibility for the progress of every student in their cohort. As a result, teachers are holding themselves accountable for their respective results, thereby improving collaborative efforts to accelerate student learning.
- Teachers are working effectively in collaborative teams to share good practice, develop tools to analyze data and plan curriculum and instruction.
  - Teachers meet regularly within their grade teams to examine student work and assessment results to identify student strengths and areas of need. This

information is used to differentiate support for students through skill-based groupings, conferencing and the use of leveled materials, tasks and thinking strategies. As a result of this on-going practice, teachers regularly adjust instructional practices in English language arts and Mathematic classes.

- Teachers utilize running record assessments to measure student reading level progress four times per year. This practice aligns with school-wide emphasized standards of inference and comprehension and provides feedback regarding the efficacy of instructional practices.
- The principal has created a learning community that is focused on student outcomes that continue to accelerate learning.
  - School level goals focus on improving student reading achievement by establishing reading, writing and math workshops in all classes across the school. All goal setting and action planning documents spotlight this endeavor and teacher teams discuss and plan workshop routines, resulting in steadily improving student reading levels.
  - Teachers and administrators conduct rigorous goal setting and action planning during two full days spent each spring analyzing reading and mathematics data for their respective cohorts. As a result, new curriculum maps are designed in these subject areas each year based on the needs of each respective grade and subgroup cohort.
- Effective student support services, collaborations and individual conferencing provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially. (4.4)
  - An outside consultant has been retained to supplement the school's respect campaign by conducting anti-bullying performances designed to provide teachers and students with explicit steps to take to discourage intimidation among students. These actions contribute to the school's overall security and ensure a tolerant and respectful environment.
  - The school partners with a community based organization that provides night center activities after each school day for students to support their social-emotional needs. In addition, parent volunteers assist teachers with classroom activities and school based support team and guidance personnel recommend outside agencies to provide child/youth services to students and families in need.

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

- Deepen academic rigor by consistently designing challenging student tasks and utilize effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking to enrich learning across grades and subject areas.
  - Administrators and faculty regularly examine robust amounts of data and use this information to emphasize key standards for students and adjust curricula in

literacy and math so that a diversity of learners is engaged. However, this practice is inconsistent across subject areas, thereby missing opportunities to challenge and engage a diversity of learners in the other content areas.

- Strengthen teacher pedagogy by ensuring that school-wide instructional practices and routines, including differentiation, are practiced by all teachers to enhance student engagement.
  - While administrators communicate a vision of student-centered classrooms utilizing the workshop model, some classrooms conduct teacher-directed lessons, failing to be reflective of a school wide belief for successful student learning. In addition, literacy and math classes utilize various levels of differentiation while content area instruction offers limited differentiation opportunities for students.
- Expand the use of the school's observation tools to include analysis of student data and work and encourage teachers to reflect on their practice and professional growth to support a coherent school culture.
  - The school uses both formal and informal observation tools to foster a commonality of instructional practice, nevertheless, a coherent school culture has not yet been established as evidenced by the fact that differentiation does not occur across all subjects and teachers sometimes leave out key workshop model components during lesson execution.
  - Observations and limited student data are used to make performance evaluations and tenure decisions however opportunities are missed for deeper analysis of teacher practice and more explicit feedback to improve the quality of student work.
- Extend the practice of providing consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons for their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics to help them set and achieve their goals.
  - The school utilizes rubrics for various learner assignments; however, these tools are inconsistently utilized to rate student projects and suggest next steps to improve the quality of submitted student products. It is not an established practice to provide students with rubrics before completing tasks thereby missing opportunities for students to reflect and self-assess the quality of their work.
- Refine structures to monitor curricular, instructional and organizational decisions and make as-needed adjustments to reinforce coherence of school-wide policies.
  - The school's new grade team meeting design, with the principal attending each team's meeting every six weeks and the instructional lead team meeting every week, serves as the vehicle to adjust curriculum and establish common instructional practices. This model does not include most cluster teachers thereby inhibiting school efforts to establish instructional coherence and hampering school efforts to build capacity.

<b>School name: Louis Desario School / R056</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 – AlignCapacityBuilding: 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**

<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>
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