

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Basheer Qusim School

Elementary School 053

360 East 168th Street

Bronx

NY 10456

Principal: Collin M. Wolfe

Dates of review: October 27 - 28, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Basheer Qusim School is an elementary school with 1311 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 34.5% Black, 62.5% Hispanic, 0.4% White, and 1.0% Asian students. The student body includes 26% English language learners and 3% 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 91.4%

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has made purposeful decisions in emphasizing key standards that are well aligned to the curriculum in order to address the achievement gaps.
 - The leadership is very proactive in identifying key areas of the new Common Core Standards that support rigorous habits of practice across their reading and writing curriculum for all subgroups. This has resulted in school wide practices that focus on non-fiction reading and writing, such as informational texts.
 - The assistant principal and teachers have developed tasks in math that align well with the eight strands of the Common Core Standards. These have been carefully infused in their math curriculum to emphasize higher order thinking skills.
- Resources are well aligned to the school goals in order to meet the needs of all student subgroups.
 - The principal has used the budget to hire an additional assistant principal and reading recovery teacher to support and supervise instruction. This is highly supportive of the immediate goals and long-range plans to build instructional coherence and carefully monitor the progress of subgroups. An allocation for technology, also a part of this plan, is evidenced during classroom visits where teachers use their smartboards to develop concepts in math.
 - The school's schedule affords teachers the opportunity to meet with their colleagues for 100 minutes weekly in order to improve instructional practices across the school. The schedule also enables vertical and horizontal conversations between classroom teachers and clusters. They are thus better able to plan and scaffold instruction, so that student tasks foster meaningful engagement.
- The school has developed a safe environment that supports student and adult learning leading to a collaborative school culture.
 - Staff and students feel safe and supported by administration. Parents also state that the school provides a safe and caring learning environment for their children. A respectful environment supports the academic and personal development of all members of the school community as indicated by members of the school leadership team.
 - PS 53's students are eager to attend every day as evidenced by the 91.4% attendance last year. Many students indicate there is always an adult that they can count on when they have a problem, whether it is about instruction or a personal matter. "We can always talk to someone if we are sad or upset."
- The school gathers data to set clear school-wide goals for improvement.
 - The leadership and teachers gather a wide range of formative and summative data to identify an overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This data is used in the design of the school's curriculum, units of study, and

lesson plans, and is reflected in the principal's goals and Comprehensive Education plan.

- This year, there is a greater emphasis on analyzing a range of data to understand the needs of all subgroups across the grades. Many grade conferences and lunch-and-learn opportunities support this work. This has led to more focused instructional initiatives, such as the new instructional framework emphasizing explicit teaching, based on current student data.
- The school communicates high expectations to students and families resulting in effective partnerships with parents and community-based organizations.
 - The school's functioning leadership team includes many parents who are active and supportive of the school's mission and vision. They have regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the school-wide goals outlined in the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan. Parents attend workshops where they are provided with tools to assist their children in their academics. .
 - The school provides opportunities for parents to learn English as a second language, which has resulted in their continuing their own education at a local community college. During a Saturday program parents learn how to use computers enabling them to access ARIS to follow their children's progress. Additionally, parents are inspired and encouraged to participate in opportunities to collaborate in the life of the school, as in attendance celebrations.
- Teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaborations in order to develop the school wide inquiry work.
 - The principal leads monthly conversations with the entire school to emphasize the school's priorities of targeting all subgroups. They carefully look at student work collaboratively, which is supportive of developing teachers' understanding of the inquiry process.
 - Teachers and teacher teams have multiple opportunities to discuss their data and review student work with colleagues and administration. They discuss student goals and ensure that there is alignment between content and data priorities. These practices ensure that the needs of all subgroups are clearly identified and targeted during classroom lessons to improve student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Consistently develop assessments in all content areas that are aligned to the curriculum in order to effectively evaluate the progress and performance of all students and subgroups.
 - Teachers use and create assessments aligned to the school's curriculum, based on priority standards, but the classroom level feedback to students is not consistently evident across all classrooms nor is it consistently aligned to standards. The lack of specificity around strategies that are data based precludes students from monitoring their learning effectively.
 - Teachers gather data and provide a general analysis of students' needs, which results in student tasks that do not consistently target specific strategies and skills that are needed to support the learning needs of student subgroups. Therefore, student learning is not maximized during instruction.

- Formalize cohesive assessment systems so that student progress can be tracked and adjusted efficiently throughout the school year.
 - Although the school uses different metrics to track progress, these systems do not allow administration to sufficiently monitor and track progress consistently so that goals and instruction are adjusted in a timely fashion.
 - Classroom visits and conversations with parents indicated that there are inconsistent opportunities for students and parents to receive feedback about their child's progress from the school. "All of the teachers do not call us right away for good reasons or problems." Therefore, parents and students have different levels of understanding of the strategies needed for improvement.
- Expand the systemic development of data tracking systems in order to evaluate and adjust student progress and performance for all students and relevant subgroups.
 - Although the leadership has been very proactive with integrating and infusing the Common Core Standards into assessment practices, they are still developing structures to evaluate their assessment systems. Therefore, adjustments are not always made in a timely manner so that cohesive grading practices are limited across grades and subject areas.
 - Currently, administration and teachers do not yet have formalized systems and structures for sharing information about progress with students and their families. Therefore, the quality of conversations and student engagement is not yet an embedded school-wide practice with all members of the school community.
- Further develop opportunities for students to engage in data driven rigorous tasks in order to effectively address their various learning styles.
 - Although the school is following a new instructional framework that plans for differentiation, it does not yet utilize the data so student tasks are more rigorous and strategically differentiated for all learners.
 - A clear vision and instructional framework are aligned to the school goals. However, during the classroom visits, there is inconsistent evidence of higher order thinking skills in teacher questions and student tasks. Teachers are working diligently to refine these practices during grade meetings with the goal of meeting the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Basheer Qusim 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	W D			
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	W D			
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	W D			
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