

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Benjamin Franklin School

**Elementary School 55
450 Saint Pauls Place
Bronx
NY 10546**

Principal: Luis E. Torres

Dates of review: December 7- 8, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Gwen Stephens

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Benjamin Franklin School is an elementary school with 709 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 44% Black, 55% Hispanic, and 1% White. The student body includes 28% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school strategically uses its budget for staffing, scheduling, and programs, based on data, to support and accelerate the academic performance of students.
 - The school reassigned its three assistant principals into a vertical administrative model giving each administrator responsibilities and instructional accountability for students pre-kindergarten through grade 5. This wise move allows for the informal and formal monitoring of student data, building cohesiveness, and consistency of practice, across the grades. As a result, there has been an increase in the effectiveness of the school's ability to meet student needs.
 - The realigned master schedule provides opportunities for teachers to meet on teams, for 'Breakfast Club' activities before school begins, and 'Morning Smart' a small group reading support for targeted students in the early grades. An extra period of instruction in the afternoon for self-contained special education students provides additional instruction time. This strategic scheduling takes into account the needs of students and impacts the school by maintaining daily stability and continuity of programs.
- The collection of a range of data allows the school leaders and staff to create a clear picture of strengths and areas of need.
 - The school gathers and analyzes summative, formative, and diagnostic data, to monitor student progress. By looking at data from the English language arts exam, the school determined that students were struggling with comprehension. From this finding, the school refocused its goals to deepening students' comprehension skills so it now incorporates an emphasis on vocabulary development in the early grades.
 - The school carefully monitors the progress of English language learners and special education students, looks at school-wide attendance data, and reviews the number of families living in shelters, to help in evaluating the effectiveness of its instructional and organizational decisions on student achievement. As a result, a strengthened focus includes a continuation of a balanced literacy approach to meet the needs of students.
- School leaders effectively work with families to share information on learning needs and academic outcomes of their children.
 - Parents have opportunities to engage in reciprocal discussions about their children's progress and feel that they are regularly informed. Three progress reports and four report cards, along with a bi-monthly newsletter, assist parents to have effective conversations with teachers about their children's learning and progress.
 - Parents' comments indicate that the school strongly encourages them to utilize ARIS parent link that is facilitated by school-based training. This, along with parent workshops, and guidance from the Parent Action Committee and English as a Second Language Family Literacy programs, support parents in developing strategies to work with their children at home.

- The principal's leadership promotes a clear vision of school-wide goals to improve the performance and progress of all students and has the support of all members of the school community.
 - The principal consistently looks for ways to collaborate with all constituents of the school community and builds a shared vision, with a short list of goals, to accelerate student learning. In this spirit of collaboration the schools cabinet, worked together with staff and families to develop the school's Comprehensive Educational Plan.
 - After an extensive review of data regarding students at risk, the school has implemented a comprehensive case management approach to improve the quality of student services. An Instructional Support Team identifies resources, devises intervention strategies, evaluates, and facilitates solutions, to assess outcomes and ensure meeting students' needs.
- The school has developed effective internal capacity and successful external partnerships to support the social emotional growth of its students.
 - An extensive variety of partnerships addresses the educational and social/emotional needs of students and families. Partnerships such as Steiner Sports, Claremont Community Center, and Montefiore Health Clinic, offer workshops, assemblies for students, and bring resources to the school that provides real world learning during the day and on Saturdays. These services help to enhance and accelerate the school's progress by strengthening families' access to vital services that allows them to stabilize their children's growth.
 - Through a series of professional development, workshops, and hands-on daily support, a team of social workers, guidance counselors, and family workers, support the faculty in maintaining a safe and respectful environment and engage in positive interactions with students. Teachers in grade 3 through grade 5, loop up with their students, which provide additional social/emotional support and advocacy for the students and families. As a result, the school has improved attendance to 93% and dramatically reduced serious incidents and the numbers of new referrals for special education services.

What the school needs to improve

- Design curriculum that not only aligns to State standards but also supports rigor and incorporates academic challenges for all students across grades and subjects.
 - The school provides visible, clear, and coherent curricula in reading writing and math, but it has not yet extended this work to other content areas, specifically science and social studies. This results in low levels of proficiency based on the State assessments in these content areas.
 - Teacher utilization of curriculum maps and units of study is evident across the school. However, the highest achieving students are often under-challenged by the curriculum, particularly in the collaborative team teaching structures, as lessons do not provide extensions and development of habits that support ongoing and independent learning.
- Ensure that teachers are developing data driven strategies to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners.
 - The school provides teachers opportunities to meet on teams with coaching support to develop data-driven strategies to improve differentiated instruction in the

classrooms. However, there is evidence that while some teachers have internalized the work relating to differentiation of instruction, others have not yet incorporated the strategies into their teaching practice. Similarly, technology is present within the classrooms, but many teachers are not currently taking full advantage of its potential as a teaching tool to differentiate and enhance their lessons. Thus students are not engaged in a more active and well-matched manner in their learning.

- Develop teachers' expertise in designing, and aligning classroom level assessments, to capture the extent of student learning.
 - Teachers share and discuss student work products as a way to assess students' learning and instructional consistency across classrooms. However, the school has not established consistent protocols and expectations for teachers to translate this information into effective practice.
 - Teachers use data from conference notes, quizzes, projects, curriculum assessments, and running records to monitor student work. However, there is not yet a common assessment in place, across and between grades, to link teachers' understanding of student learning and provide a detailed picture of progress toward mastery of skills.
- Establish observation tools that include use of data, individual performance development goals, and timely feedback designed to strengthen instructional practice to improve student outcomes.
 - The principal supports staff with communications regarding the quality of instructional from informal observations. However, an interactive system of formal observations is not yet in place. As a result, missed opportunities for individual professional growth aligned to feedback are not changing instruction quickly enough to accelerate student progress. Further, it is unclear how observations effectively reflect on teacher practice relative to student data. As a result, performance evaluation, and retention decisions of staff inconsistently align with student outcomes.
- Refine systems for measuring progress towards interim goals and benchmarks for all plans so that progress measures adjustments and success accurately.
 - The school uses annual planning processes such as the Comprehensive Educational Plan to set goals. However, it has not yet fully developed formalized systems that set interim goals and benchmarks to target and modify instruction to meet the needs of students.
 - A collaborative system to determine progress of teacher teams toward interim- and long-term benchmarks has not yet been established to evaluate the effectiveness of teams.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Benjamin Franklin 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
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