

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**School of Higher Expectations**

**Elementary School 066**

**1001 Jennings Street  
Bronx  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Thomas DeGrazia**

**Dates of review: March 2 - 3, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez**

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

### **Information about the school**

Community School 66 is an elementary school with 639 students from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24% Black, 74% Hispanic, 2% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 12% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 92.6%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is well developed.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school designs engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula including the Arts aligned to key State standards for a variety of learners, which results in improved student outcomes.
  - The leadership works as a team with the whole school to align curricula to the new State standards focusing on high school and college-readiness skills and as a result are closing the achievement gap. This is evident in the curricula maps in all grades and in class lessons which consistently include high level thinking skills in questions, tasks and assessments.
  - In all the grades, the use of Bloom's taxonomy and English language learners vocabulary acquisition strategies, are consistently embedded in class lessons and in student work which target the lowest and highest performing students, as well as English language learners and special education students. This results in increased levels of performance for all students as evidenced in school and teacher data.
- Teacher pedagogy is based on a set of mutually accepted beliefs about how students learn best which is aligned to the curriculum and results in high student engagement, enabling all students to produce meaningful work.
  - All teachers share a set of beliefs about how children learn best, which is evident across all classrooms. This belief is seen in small groups with push in teachers which lowers the student to adult ratio in order to address the learning needs of the lowest and highest achieving students. Teachers are proficient in using the workshop model, and varied strategies such as differentiated text to engage students at various points in class lessons. The effective use of these strategies results in a cohesive set of teaching practices promoting learning for varied groups.
  - In all classrooms students are highly engaged in their own learning, within small groups, independently and in conferences with their teachers. This results in high quality work products, experiences and processes evident throughout the school in portfolios, workbooks and writing products.
- The school makes strategic organizational decisions to support student academic and social behavior goals which results in meeting students' learning needs.
  - The leadership, staff and parents have collaboratively developed a school which is inclusive, safe and very inviting. The school has analyzed intensively the learning environment survey (LES), suspension and attendance data, including community concerns that have resulted in a positive learning environment which supports student academic and social needs as evidenced by improvements in reading levels, and writing products across all grades and subject areas.
  - All students are known by at least four adults along with an assistant principal. They are grouped with several teachers who coordinate

teaching and child development supports, including a student council, and as a result there has been improvement in academic achievement and a decrease in suspensions and absenteeism.

- The school aligns assessments to curricula and analyzes information on student outcomes resulting in periodic adjustments of instructional decisions at the individual, team and school level to improve student outcomes.
  - All teachers and assistant principals work in teams and produce or adapt common assessments using key State standards agreed upon at the school and team level. Individual and teams of teachers share the outcomes of various assessments and provide feedback to each other, in collaboration with coaches and administrators, resulting in reflective practices about the effectiveness of instructional and curricula decisions.
  - Individuals and teams of teachers consistently supplement their data analysis for subgroups with varied classroom, Periodic Assessment and school data in order to identify strengths and weaknesses which lead to better tracking of their progress and resulting in adjustments of curricular and instructional decisions.
- The school uses classroom observations and the analysis of student performance data to improve teacher pedagogy which leads to improved student performance in all grades and subject areas.
  - The majority of the faculty shares a common instructional focus using data to drive instructional decisions for individual and groups of students, providing interventions in the classroom, and using varied levels of questioning to promote higher level thinking skills. Based on classroom observations and student data analysis, these common instructional foci are supported through intensive professional development and within collaborative teams.
  - The principal and assistant principals provide actionable feedback to all teachers every six weeks on student and professional goals. Teachers share performance data and anecdotes about individual and groups of students in every class, and the leadership uses these meetings to provide additional support and make decisions about each teacher's progress. New teachers and teachers who need additional support have set plans in which they work with peers in teams, through intervisitations as well as working directly with the assistant principals. This results in strategic performance decisions regarding teacher tenure, assignments and professional development needs based on student outcomes.
- All teachers and staff are engaged in structured professional collaborations using an inquiry approach that results in the development of teacher leadership and targeted focus on student achievement.
  - Teachers are effectively engaged in several team collaborations and support the development of an inquiry approach to study targeted groups. Teams are continuously developing and sharing common teaching strategies which have resulted in improved student performance in various assessments including reading levels, math skills, social studies, science and writing throughout the grades.

- The principal builds leadership capacity within the school, encouraging teachers and assistant principals to take on key decision-making roles which results in a highly trained faculty and leadership. Teachers play an integral role in curricular and school decisions within their collaborative teams and school leadership team which promotes a positive and professional climate for teacher academic and professional growth.
- The school has transparent and collaborative systems for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals which result in adjustments during the year which has improved student achievement.
  - The school strategically aligns its annual planning processes with key constituents on a multi year basis evaluating and monitoring current policies, goals and action plans throughout the school year. This results in a steady rise in academic performance for a majority of the students in reading and writing as evidenced in Periodic and class assessments.
  - School leaders have developed systems which are transparent and cohesive which include teacher leaders for measuring progress towards interim goals every six weeks which allows for genuine ownership when adjustments in professional development, team decisions and learning goals on the teacher, team and school level are made.

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

- Further enhance systems and structures to effectively involve families in student goal setting.
  - Parents receive several detailed data reports about their children's reading, writing, math and science goals, and many workshops are held to explain these reports, but parents who do not attend these meetings and do not have detailed explanations of strengths and weaknesses for next learning steps. Thus, more outreach is needed to involve parents in order to support them in moving their child to the next learning step.
- Continue to streamline and adjust the various data tools developed by the school to enable teachers and leaders to have the most accessible and useful data needed.
  - The school collects an impressive amount of data and the vast majority of teachers support the use of data to inform instruction. However, an evaluation of all data collection systems is currently being assessed to revise overlapping data tools and forms, so that there is a reduction in the redundancy in collecting the same data.
- Engage more staff in professional development targeting instructional technologies to continue to enhance teaching strategies and vary differentiation strategies.
  - The school has used its resources well to support technology instruction, and the leadership is providing professional development for the implementation of Smart Boards. However, there is an uneven use of technology across classrooms. This impedes the progress students need to prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup>. century.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The School of Higher Expectations P.S 066</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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				<b>X</b>
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?				<b>X</b>

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>