

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Wade Academies

Middle School 117

**1865 Morris Avenue
Bronx
NY 10453**

Principal: Delise Jones

Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Dolores Esposito

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Wade Academies is a middle school with 795 students from grades 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 22 % Black, 75% Hispanic, and 1.0% Asian students. The student body includes 39% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 89.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Resources are well aligned to the school goals, allowing meaningful opportunities to share practices, plan collaboratively, and address students' needs.
 - English language learners currently use a computer-based program to target individual skills for language development. Two teachers, English language arts, (ELA), and English as a second language, (ESL), work with students to actively engage students in their learning and enable them to share their learning. As a result, teachers and students work collaborative to maximize use of this program.
 - Based on school data, the principal assigns two teachers to work with students during ESL and ELA instructional periods. Consequently, staff members are able to provide targeted instruction based on the needs of the students. Twenty smart boards assist teachers in the improvement of their instruction. Additionally, scheduled weekly opportunities for teachers allow for planning by content area and grade level to address targeted goals. As a result, of these practices, the school is seeing more evidence of student writing and engagement in classrooms.
- The school gathers data to set clear school wide goals.
 - The school collects data from both formative and summative assessments including content-based assessments. As a result, school leaders are able to formulate a general analysis to identify school wide goals and targets for students.
 - The leadership and staff gather three categories of assessments, which include content unit assessments, skill based assessments, and project-based assessments that inform the goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan and Principal Performance document. As a result, the school can formulate strengths and needs more effectively for relevant subgroups.
- The school provides parents with information about their children's learning needs and progress, which results in improved parental involvement.
 - The school's use of an online grading system called Snapgrades, provides parents with access to current information on homework, assessments, and grades, and opens lines of communication. Teachers and administration review this information every six weeks, which enables them to gauge progress. Consequently, parents have a more focused conversation with teachers regarding their children's work and progress towards meeting their individual goals.
 - Parents are appreciative of the yearlong support they receive so that they better understand the information available on ARIS, and the other tools that the school uses to communicate strengths and needs of their children. This has increased and improved parent participation in the school resulting in a more collaborative environment between staff and parents.
- The leadership provides teachers with focused support to develop content knowledge and plan curricula with an eye towards improvement.

- Most teachers understand and support the school's focus to improve literacy across all content areas, and meet voluntarily with colleagues to discuss their students. Consequently, a coherent vision and culture are embraced school wide.
- The principal's focused vision allows good support for teachers using a differentiated approach, based on a review of their needs and student data. Teachers receive needed additional support by the coach in differentiated instruction for guided reading, and the math coach provides focused help for teachers during planning meetings. The teacher center also provides a wide range of support based on the strengths, needs, and experience of teachers. Teachers welcome the targeted help and feedback as a mean for improvement. Additionally, these practices are resulting in the development of teacher goals that are used to inform a well-aligned professional development plan to the school goals.
- The school offers extensive opportunities to support the social/emotional growth of students and families with effective partnerships.
 - MS 117 is a Beacon school that affords multiple opportunities for students and families around academic and social emotional development. As a result of their partnership with COMP2KIDS, over 100 students in the sixth grade have received computers for their home. This fosters better communication, and provides web access for the entire family to access current information about the progress of their children.
 - A partnership with a community-based organization has enabled school staff to make effective referrals to counseling providers or outside health services. Teachers have been trained on Classroom Organization and Management Procedures, (COMP), aligned to the school's goals. As a result, suspensions have decreased and attendance has improved to 91.8%. Consequently, parent leaders report that parental involvement has also increased based on the number of Learning Environment Surveys completed thus far this school year.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop curriculum so that there is better alignment with New York State standards.
 - Although there is a set curriculum in English language arts, there is very little attention given to priority standards across grades. Additionally, there is an unclear alignment of the grade 6 English language arts curriculum, Voices, to the New York State standards. This lack of alignment, specificity, and unclear benchmarks, impacts on the lack of rigor observed during the classroom visits. Curriculum maps and academic tasks are not updated consistently to reflect the identified current needs of students. Consequently, there are not sufficient opportunities to engage all learners effectively.
- Further develop opportunities for students to engage in data driven rigorous tasks in order to address various learning styles.
 - The school's focus on literacy across the various content areas does not include effectively analyzing the data to identify strengths and needs of individual students and subgroups. Teachers show commitment to their practice and meet with their colleagues during grade meetings. However, a lack of consistent guidance from mid-level supervisors limits the coherence of practice across the grades and

subjects, resulting in an uneven implementation of effective strategies to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students.(b)

- Teachers and teacher teams do not analyze data sufficiently in order to set differentiated goals to improve their classroom practice. During teacher meetings, teachers share their data but have not yet developed rigorous student tasks across the content areas. Consequently, they were not able to identify high-leverage strategies for improvement, resulting in a lack of engagement observed during classroom visits and evidenced on the 2010 progress report. (c)
- Consistently develop assessments that are aligned to the curriculum in order to effectively evaluate the progress and performance of all students and subgroups.
 - The school has developed new mid-terms and mid-year skills and assessments given to grades 6 through 8 in January and March. During teacher meetings, they shared some examples but were not able to identify how this information enables them to target individual needs. Consequently, there is not sufficient information to track progress for subgroups and individual students. Therefore, the school is not able to effectively align the assessments to the curriculum in order to monitor progress effectively.
 - Teachers use data to develop common assessments in math, however in ELA, teachers are currently unable to design coherent assessments since the Voices curriculum used in the grade 6 is not aligned to the New York State standards. Therefore, teachers are unable to share information across grades or track progress consistently. Teachers are beginning to use the standards as a guide to set interim checkpoints, in order to effectively differentiate instructional strategies. However, this is not a strong practice. As a result, the school is unable to gauge progress of students effectively at the classroom or school level.
- Consistently use data to set goals for individual students and subgroups to improve teaching practices across the grades and subjects.
 - Teachers do not engage sufficiently in item analysis of summative and periodic assessments to set differentiated learning goals. As a result, performance trends of individual students, subgroups, and grades, are not deeply analyzed. Therefore, there are missed opportunities to target teaching strategies and set clear goals, based on the analysis of student needs as evident during classroom visits and conversations with teachers, students, and administrators. Skills that are referenced in the curriculum guides do not match the individual needs of students. Consequently, there is gap between the practice and addressing targeted goals for students.
- Develop and formalize cohesive assessment systems so that student progress and performance is tracked and adjusted efficiently throughout the year.
 - The principal is committed to developing a culture for improvement and meets with teachers and support staff to monitor student progress throughout the year to discuss their data; this is not a strong practice for the entire administration team. Therefore, timely adjustments towards interim school and classroom goals are not made effectively limiting monitoring of student progress at the classroom and school level.
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers have various mechanisms for organizing and measuring progress towards meeting goals for individual students

or cohorts of students. However, the school has not yet developed clear systems to effect this practice school wide. Therefore, many teachers are unable to gauge the progress of their students in a systemic and cohesive manner, as evident in the lack of progress students are currently making towards improving performance levels, as evidenced in their 2010 progress report.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Wade Academies	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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