



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Albert Einstein School, JHS 131

Intermediate School X131

**885 Bolton Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Edward Leotta

Dates of review: March 22 - 23, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Elyse Doti

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Albert Einstein School is a junior high school with 870 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 58% Hispanic, 0% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 90.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals' work as a cohesive unit to create a safe and inclusive school culture where students are known well.
 - The administrative team models strong collaboration for the school community. Together they have worked to move the school culture to one that thrives and celebrates collaboration. This is seen in the emphasis on teacher team work as well as in classrooms where students often work in small groups to complete assignments. The school uses the School Wide Intervention System (SWIS) and Positive Behavior Rewards System throughout building to monitor, target and address student behavior concerns. As result there has been a 50% decrease in student suspensions this year.
 - The school is broken down into academies to help students feel connected and safe. For the 2nd year, 6 Evolution, the 6th grade academy, remains separate to foster community building and support smooth transition to middle school. As a result 6th graders are "happy" and feel safe and supported in their transition to a new school. Due to an increase in the number of holdover students, the Check and Connect program was developed to closely monitor and track the progress of these targeted students. Each Check and Connect student is paired with an adult in the building who meets with them multiple times a week to support their academic development. As a result course pass rates for this targeted group increased and nearly all students reported on a feedback survey that their mentor "inspires them to learn"
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across the school to support improvements in learning.
 - Creative scheduling allows Professional Learning Teams to meet on a rotating schedule and Common Planning Teams to meet weekly. The school invested a great deal of money to provide an extra period a week for ELA teachers to meet. Aussies support AP's in moving their department teams and academies toward improved student outcomes. As a result there is more structured "talk about pedagogy" amongst teachers across academies and the school is moving towards their goal around developing a culture of literacy with a 22% gain in the number of 3's and 4' over the past two years.
- Common assessments exist in every content area to ensure alignment and consistency in content exposure in all classes.
 - Common planning time has been used to develop common assessments which are used to identify larger trends across the school. For example, based on the item analysis of the result of the unit 1 common assessment the science teachers identified density as a topic for re-teaching. As a result of common assessments, instruction across academies is more aligned and there is consistency in the teaching and learning of skills and content.

- The principal involved the school community in using a range of data to establish a clear set of goals and action steps to advance student achievement.
 - The school community has been involved in developing a 7 year literacy plan to address the literacy needs identified ongoing assessments and the state report card. Examination of school safety data also led to the implementation of a positive student behavior reward system. These initiatives all came through the school's new Tier III cabinet which consists of teachers from all disciplines, deans, counselors, parent coordinator and administration. As a result of this inclusive structure, new programs aligned with goals have been initiated and are effectively communicated to the entire school community.
- The school has built strong structures to provide support in meeting the various needs of their student population.
 - The school has invested a great deal of professional development throughout the year to help teacher utilize the Pre-Referral Intervention Manual (PRIM) which was downloaded on all teachers' computers. School Wide Intervention System referrals help identify teachers who can use additional support in utilizing PRIM and meeting the needs of individuals and groups in their classroom. Throughout the school there has been a decrease in level 4 and 5 infractions compared to the previous year.
 - The school has worked hard to develop partnerships with Bronx DA's office to bring two programs, CONCEPT and GREAT aimed to increase awareness around cyber bullying and the law. Single sex classes in 6th grade exist in math and English as a result of a successful pilot last year. Current 6th graders in these single sex classes show great success demonstrated in higher credit accumulation rates during the first semester. The school works to support high level learners through an after school preparation program for specialized high schools. As a result the school had five students selected for specialized high schools last year, a record high for the school.
- The school has clear systems to evaluate instructional and resource decisions so that timely adjusts are made.
 - Representatives from all departments meet weekly as part of the Tier III team to reflect on initiatives, as well as examine goals and accountability tools. Nearly all major decisions and adjustments to schools systems including changing the schedule to build in common planning time to revise and build curriculum were generated from this team. As a result of regularly reflecting and evaluating curricular, instructional and organizational decisions the school has developed more consistent curriculum across the school that takes into consideration the evolving state standards.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to support teachers to develop their practices in providing rigorous curriculum for all students that is aligned to key standards.
 - Although rigor is part of the school's goals for this year, the work has not yet translated into consistent lessons or tasks that require students to think critically. Developing a literacy culture is another long term goal. Writing is said to be a focus in all content areas yet in science and math classes writing was not used consistently to explain thinking. There were many missed opportunities to use writing to learn or process learning and truly foster the culture of literacy across content areas.
- Strengthen the consistency of differentiated instruction that is aligned to the schools beliefs about how students learn best so that all lessons engage students and offer suitable challenge at their level.
 - Teachers are inconsistently implementing the Workshop Model across the school. Differentiation is seen in English Language Arts classes through independent reading and guided reading groups. In many classes, teachers were able to articulate a rationale for student grouping, yet the work for each group remained the same. There was an absence of a unified and consistent understanding of differentiation. In absence of a deeper understanding of differentiation to incorporate modifications of instruction in the classroom for identified groups of targeted students there is a missed opportunity to increase performance of targeted groups of students and provide suitable challenge for all students.
- Better focus and align the classroom observation tools to support the instructional goals of the school.
 - The school uses the Santa Cruz Professional Teaching Standards as a way to provide feedback to teachers. In formal observations across the school there is a great deal of feedback as each teacher is assessed in each of the Professional Teaching Standards. As a result teachers are given too much information to process and the feedback from all the assistant principals is not necessarily aligned to the school's goals for the year. The school does not currently target feedback around the key aspects of instruction connected to the school's goals, which can impede focus and clarity around expectations for teachers.
- Develop a system for teacher teams and teachers to set and track goals for targeted groups of students.
 - In most classes, individual students complete a goal sheet to assess where they are and state where they want to go. Students explained that they completed the sheets on Goal Day, a school wide event started this year. In English Language Arts classes, students regularly completed reflections and goal setting on their writing. In science and history they analyze the results on common assessments to identify next steps. Throughout the school there are targeted groups of students (lowest levels –science, holdovers, ELLS) but there are not clearly established goals with benchmarks to closely track and monitor interventions and progress. Without these structures, it is unclear whether or not teachers are meeting the needs of targeted students and how these goals have leveraged change in classroom practices.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Albert Einstein 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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