

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

P.S. 161 Ponce De Leon

628 Tinton Avenue

Bronx, NY 10455

07X161

**Bronx
NY 00000**

Principal: Mark Weisman

Dates of review: May 16-17, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Debra Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

07X161 Ponce De Leon is a/an elementary school with 631 students from PreK through grade 5. The school population comprises 28.2% Black, 70.5% Hispanic, 8% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 160 English language learners and 185 special education students. Boys account for 54.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 91.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school makes strategic organizational decisions aligned to the school's instructional goals that result in improved student achievement.
 - In order to improve student performance outcomes, the principal strategically provides arts programs to enrich curricula, instructional coaches for teacher development, and common planning time for teacher teams to focus on instructional strategies that meet students' needs.
 - Leadership makes organizational decisions so that teachers hold themselves accountable for student progress. The principal assigns the school's literacy coach to the Teacher Center, continues AIS support for at risk students, and focuses the AUSSIE coach's work on improving student writing using mini-lessons and conferencing. This leads to improved written feedback to students on their writing, individualized goal setting, and results in improved student writing products on benchmark assessments.
- School leaders and faculty analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify strengths and areas of need at the school level, resulting in strong insights into student learning trends.
 - As a result of looking closely at a range of data, the school identified writing as an area for improvement. Aligned with this focus, the school extended the literacy coach's time for coaching and modeling, teacher teams visited lab sites to observe and debrief research-based writing strategies, and discussed their practices for using data around student writing to inform instruction. This resulted in Level 3 student work products in evidence throughout classrooms and hallways.
 - Based on analyzing a range of data the school focuses on differentiated instruction. ICT classes have been programmed into every grade and teachers and teams use formative and summative data to identify the strengths and needs of diverse learners. This data-based focus on instructional practices that meet the needs of student subgroups results in improved ELA outcomes for students with special needs on end of year assessments.
- The school uses data tools to monitor school-wide student progress, to identify performance trends, and to make instructional decisions that meet students' needs, resulting in increased student outcomes.
 - The Assistant Principal has created accessible data tools used school-wide to support teachers in identifying classroom and school level performance trends. Teachers use this information to group students and to implement differentiated reading strategies that meet students' needs. As a result, improved reading levels are in evidence in the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments.
- School leaders identify and communicate school-wide instructional goals and expectations that unify all efforts to accelerate student learning.

- Based on last year's data, leadership set a school-wide goal to involve all inquiry teams in data analysis to surface performance trends during team meetings. As a result of the focus on differentiated instruction, student engagement and outcomes began to show improvement as evidenced by differentiated student work products that meet standards.
- Leadership team examine formative and summative assessments, benchmark writing assessments, and standardized reading assessments in order to gain a deeper understanding of school's needs and set strategic action plans that accelerate student learning. Ongoing use of data to set goals and modify action plans result in teachers setting and tracking student performance goals, and, thereby, steady improvements towards meeting interim and annual benchmarks.
- Leadership uses classroom observations and student data to give clear feedback to teachers for improved instruction, resulting in professional growth and instructional coherence.
 - The school identified differentiating instruction as a school-wide focus based on classroom observation and data. Frequent classroom visits and the immediate actionable feedback that follows allow teachers to focus on instructional improvement efforts around differentiation and result in reflective practice and professional growth that improve teaching and learning for all.
 - Leadership provides a range of professional development support aligned with school wide goals for all faculty based on classroom observation findings and a professional development survey completed by all faculty. This year's survey findings and related professional development surfaced a growing need for strategies for engaging ELLs. Coaching, teacher teaming and professional development targeting instructional strategies for ELLs resulted in increased teacher capacity to differentiate instruction and better learning outcomes for ELL students.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish consistency in designing rigorous tasks across all grades and subject areas so that all students are appropriately challenged to meet higher levels of achievement.
 - Although some data-based, differentiated practices are in evidence in some classrooms, there is insufficient evidence that the most accelerated students are being pushed to their potential through consistent engagement in rigorous tasks that challenge them at their level. This hinders the school's ability to improve the progress of level 3 and 4 students.
- Increase teacher capacity for providing differentiated learning opportunities so that all students are able to engage in higher order thinking skills, producing meaningful work products.

- Although the school-wide focus on differentiated instruction led to more teachers using instructional strategies for diverse learners, there is still significant inconsistency in the levels of differentiated practices leading to uneven levels of student thinking and participation. This hinders the school's ability to consistently engage students in high order tasks, resulting in meaningful work products.
- Strengthen curricula-aligned assessment analysis at the classroom level so that a clear picture of students' strengths and weaknesses for student sub-groups allow for timely instructional adjustments that improve student outcomes.
 - Although individual and teacher teams use summative and formative data to make general instructional decisions, they do not consistently use classroom level assessment data to target instruction for the needs of ELLs and students with special needs, thus diminishing opportunities for instructional modifications that improve student outcomes and meet targeted goals throughout the year.
- Strengthen systems to regularly evaluate the quality of instructional decisions and adjustments that lead to increased coherence in school-wide practices and policies that result in improved student outcomes.
 - While the school focuses on differentiated instructional practices and tracks student progress on assessments, there is no established system to evaluate the effectiveness of this work on student performance over time and across grades. This limits the school's ability to meet the expectations of the State standards and increase student outcomes.
 - The school provides instructional support structures and leadership development for teachers through professional development, intervisitations and coaching. However, these structures do not have established norms and protocols, hindering school's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its decisions and expand the successful structures for capacity building.
- Develop structures to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development so that professional learning leads to accelerated outcomes at the classroom and school level.
 - School leaders create structures for teacher teams to regularly engage in professional collaboration around student outcomes, however, consistency in evaluating the success and impact of this work and making ongoing adjustments for greater effectiveness are less evident and, thus, limit school's ability to leverage structured collaboration to its full potential for increasing student achievement.
 - Leadership opportunities are available to faculty and are evidenced by teacher leaders who support school-wide initiatives and assume leadership roles in the school. Systems for evaluating the success of leadership development opportunities are developing and not yet consistent across the school, and thereby, decrease opportunities for teacher leaders to work to their potential.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name:	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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