

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Success Express**

**Elementary-High School X168**

**339 Morris Avenue**

**Bronx**

**NY 10451**

**Principal: Rosa Nieves Green**

**Dates of review: May 16-18, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Carolyn Yaffe**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

PS 168 has 414 students enrolled in pre-Kindergarten through grade 10. The school population comprises 39% Black, 56% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 83% of the students enrolled and girls account for 17%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 88.6%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Across the school, classrooms reflect a cohesive set of beliefs connected to the differentiation of content, product and process as central strategies for improved student achievement.
  - There is a school-wide emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing skills through the Teachers' College workshop model. This emphasis is differentiated at a variety of different levels throughout the school. The model has been adapted in the alternate assessment classrooms, which constitutes a large level of differentiation. In addition, content, product and process is adjusted in each classroom based on the strengths and needs of small groups or individual children so that across classrooms students were working on the same skill with a different set of supports, and in some cases, an adjusted end product. As a result, there is a focus and cohesion to the conversations that faculty is having across the school to support their students' movement with these skills and students, particularly Level 1 and Level 2 students, are demonstrating growth based on predictive assessments.
  
- The school has effectively organized teacher, counselor and student groupings, resulting in focused work on the learning needs of all students.
  - After an assessment of data connected to achievement and incidents across all six school sites, the principal made a strategic and courageous decision to move the main site of her school to PS168 so that the largest population of students and teachers was being supervised directly by her. In addition, she continues to make strategic decisions across all six school sites regarding the placement of teachers, paraprofessionals and supervisors so that each site functions well independent of her direct supervision. Schedules are organized so that common planning time for alternate assessment and standardized assessment teachers who teach across a range of similar grades meet several times a week and this work is organized so that tasks and student work provide a regular loop of feedback regarding curricular and instructional decisions. This collaboration is yielding a common definition of rigor shared by faculty and the development of more rigorous tasks in both alternate and standardized assessment classrooms, resulting in increased achievement outcomes for both student groups, based on writing samples and predictive assessments.
  
- The school maintains a culture of support and trust that results in an environment of learning for students and adults.
  - In response to Learning Environment Survey (LES) data, the principal instituted the emotional literacy program to reduce the number of behavioral incidents that affect classroom environments and student learning. As a result, based on School Wide Information Systems (SWIS) data and OORS reports, the number of incidents have been reduced by

40% and teachers report a calmer learning environment in their classrooms.

- The school maintains a web of coordination and support of students' social-emotional, youth development and academic needs with the guidance counselor as the point person. There are formal and informal channels of communication between guidance counselor, classroom teachers and support personnel that ensure that each child's social-emotional needs are identified and being addressed within the context of the appropriate academic setting and focus. As a result, attendance has improved this school year and predictive assessment data demonstrates significant growth in Level 1 students.
- The principal and staff communicate high expectations to families and facilitate their meaningful involvement in the school community.
  - Parents praised the communication loop that involves the principal, counselors, teachers, the parent coordinator and the parents' association. They described how Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals are collaboratively formed and how the daily communication logs support their understanding of how to support their child in meeting his or her goals. The Parents' Association members work closely with the principal to identify and offer a range of workshops that were identified by families as needed; these workshops ranged from the implementation of emotional literacy at home to partnering with agencies to provide needed services. As a result, parents feel included as partners in terms of both their own individual child and as a decision-making body in the school.
- The school has effectively integrated youth development in alignment with school-wide academic goals so that students are supported in their growth
  - The school effectively provides professional development connected to both its Positive Behavioral Incentive System (PBIS) and its emotional literacy initiative. As a result of these initiatives and accompanying training, both of these systems are consistently implemented throughout classrooms and students are supported in their social-emotional well-being and are able to directly connect this to their academic performance. School-wide incident data, collected by both the School Wide Information System (SWIS) and OORS reporting, point to a fall in Level 4 and 5 incidents.
- The school has a strong structure to engage families in on-going communication regarding student growth so that families can effectively support their child's academic and social growth.
  - Parents speak enthusiastically about how the daily and detailed information sent by classroom teachers in the daily communication logs creates a dialogue between the parent and the teacher that not only allows parents to support school goals from home, but also facilitates their involvement in shaping and revising classroom goals as needed. In addition to the excellent communication families describe from teachers, they also cite the newsletter, school messenger, fliers and email from the parent coordinator as effective modes of communication that result in facilitating their role as partners in their child's education.

- The school has done focused work to create a common expectation for the design and use of rubrics as an assessment and reflection tool across classrooms. As a result, students are peer and self-assessing based on clearly outlined criteria across classrooms and using their assessments to identify next steps.

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

- Develop protocols to ensure that students are asked to engage in higher order thinking consistently across classrooms.
  - Although the school has a strong vision for and focus on curriculum development and several strong initiatives tied to the strengthening of curricula and tasks, including the examination of student work to create and refine tasks, the level of higher order thinking students are asked to engage in across classrooms is currently inconsistent.
- Systemize the observation and support process to ensure that a loop of actionable feedback, support, and accountability for growth is implemented to elevate school-wide instructional practices.
  - The cabinet has selected several strands of the Santa Cruz Professional Teaching Standards as a school-wide focus and conducts formal and informal walk-throughs using it as a lens. What is not currently in place is a structured and closely monitored system of goal-setting, reflection and assessment of growth using the selected strands. Furthermore, current observations do not consistently reflect actionable feedback based on the selected strands to inform next teacher steps. Without the implementation of such a cycle, further elevation of instruction across classrooms is hindered.
- Create clearer structures for the teacher team work to strengthen the focus on student learning.
  - While all teachers are engaged in professional collaborations that involve a focus on creating appropriately rigorous tasks based on examination of tasks alongside student work, there is inconsistency across teams in terms of the goals and structure of their work as well as the effectiveness of the facilitation. This inconsistency can impact how effective the work of the teacher team is in informing classroom instruction to push student achievement.
- Implement a system to effectively evaluate the impact of professional collaborations so that this work is maximized to affect student achievement.
  - Although school leaders periodically sit it on teacher team meetings, there is currently no systematic structure to evaluate the work of the teacher teams that includes clear goals and progress monitoring. This lack of consistency can result in uneven levels of impact of teacher team collaborations on classroom instruction.

**Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011**

<b>School name: X168</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>

<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.</b>							
<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>			
<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.</b>							
<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>			
<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.</b>							
<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>