



**Department of
Education**

Cathleen P. Black, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Early Childhood School

08X304

**2750 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10465**

Principal: Joseph Nobile

Dates of review: February 7- 8, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Early Childhood School is an elementary school with 545 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 41% Hispanic, 43% White, and 4% Asian students and 4% not reported. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school offers rigorous standards based curriculum that meets the varied needs and interests of a wide range of students that has increased student performance.
 - Technology is infused into content through common themes which develop interdisciplinary links between social studies, writing, and the arts. Common rubrics assist in developing student habits that reflect academic rigor to increase higher order thinking skills. Students learn through the internet and work with classroom and cluster teachers to complete project based assignments. As a result, there has been an increase in the performance of students on formative assessments for levels three and four, as well as their written work.
 - The school incorporates an enrichment model to purposefully empower students to develop higher order thinking skills and high levels of engagement. One group of students chose a, “Thats Entertainment” cluster study, using selected high interest books, and produced a film to improve comprehension skills. Another group of students chose a cluster engaging students in Zumba dancing. Student performance has increased as reflected by their use of the independent investigative method to complete reports and projects.
- Teachers share a common focus, align lessons to the curriculum, and differentiate instruction in order to support all learners, for increased academic performance.
 - Teams of teachers continually reflect and differentiate instruction for groups of students according to their learning abilities and skill need. They also include grouping by the affective dimension supporting students’ learning and expression styles. Curriculum maps are consistently revised to provide instruction that provides multiple points of student entry. A result, there is on going improvement of instruction to meet the needs of students.
 - The school uses an enrichment model to provide flexible grouping which enables students to be organized according to their learning abilities, areas of improvement, and learning styles. Student portfolios revealed how teachers evaluated and re-evaluated their teaching in response to student progress and interventions. As a result, students are engaged and making progress as evidenced by work products and increased independent reading levels.
- The school makes strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals to meets the needs of all students.
 - Teacher teams review current data, lesson planning and student work to ensure that they are aligned to the school’s instructional goals. Curriculum maps are revisited to improve rigor and higher order thinking skills, and are aligned to the evolving State standards. This has resulted in the creation of exemplar lesson plans to improve student outcomes.
 - An eight period day allows for an extra period per week for teachers to meet. Teams of teachers meet to review current data and student work to develop

engaging and challenging tasks aligned to the evolving State standards. This has enabled teachers to develop new units of non fiction study which are implemental throughout the school to improve student performance.

- There is a warm positive culture characterized by mutual trust and respect where a collegial faculty affectively supports student learning and success.
 - To meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of its students the school attended The University of Connecticut Renzulli program team building retreat. Enrichment programs support the needs of students to enhance school culture. Students are well supported and motivated, creating an inclusive educational atmosphere of respect and a safe environment.
 - Students acknowledge the respect teachers give them, and the principal's approachability. Students stated, "This school is very educational, amazing, and you are welcomed". The school celebrates student success through letters, assemblies, and culminating activities. As a result, parents state they are able to assist in their children's academic and social-emotional learning.
- Teacher teams effectively share responsibility for manageable cohorts of students on each grade and successfully plan together, improving instructional coherence and learning for all students.
 - Collaborative teacher team work is manageable and meaningful, leading to action research. Teachers effectively analyze student assessment data to determine best instructional strategies, resulting in adjustments to their craft. Student work products are examined by identifying what they can do, almost do, and cannot do. Teachers take ownership of two to five targeted student groups, implementing instructional strategies focused upon needed skills to produce performance gains.
 - All teachers are involved in collaborations using an inquiry approach. Each grade team meets monthly to engage in school wide collaborations to share best practices, materials and resources to improve student learning throughout the school. As a result, steps toward closing the achievement gap are narrowing.
- The school uses data to track the progress of goals, at all levels, in order to make adjustments which enhances student performance.
 - The school uses an extensive array of data such as state exams, Periodic assessments, unit reviews, projects, conferencing notes and ARIS, to track the progress of students across grades and classes. This enables the school to reflect on school wide trends and instructional goals, to monitor and revise curriculum. Parents receive an interim progress report to advise them of any adjustments. They attend monthly assemblies, publishing parties and academic fairs, to better understand and assist with their child's progress.
 - Teams of teachers track the progress of targeted subgroup populations of special education and No Child Left behind students through the use of classroom assessments and Periodic assessment data. Instructional practices and curricula are adjusted so that students are able to meet their goals.

- The principal's positive leadership and goal setting is fully embraced by all staff and is a driving force for continually improving student achievement.
 - The principal has developed consistent and cohesive goals that are adjusted over time. Each grade is working on a skill set that supports school wide goals. Implementation is evident by new instructional programs (Foundations and Great Leaps) and teacher lesson plans that reference the evolving State standards. As a result, teaching practices are shared as part of a collective practice to improve instructional coherence.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the use of the school's observation tool to identify best teaching practices to ensure continued student improvement.
 - Throughout most classrooms, focused mini-lessons, conferencing and ongoing assessment are shared instructional practices that establish a coherent school culture, which have elevated student learning, as evidenced by the majority of students performing at levels three and four in core subject areas. Smart boards in every classroom are an additional instructional tool. However, not all teachers are currently taking full advantage of the potential for this technology to enhance their lessons. Thus; this limits opportunities for teachers to engage all students in additional instructional support.
 - Across the school administrators conduct formal observations that provide feedback to teachers to promote professional growth and best instructional practices. However, this practice is not consistent for all administrators. Consequently, some teachers are missing opportunities to receive support on best practices to improve student work.
- Refine consistency in communicating school-wide goals with the school community, thereby positively impacting student learning outcomes.
 - The school has a list of school wide goals. However, they do not regularly evaluate and adjust the process for sharing information for its closing the achievement gap population. Resulting in limited efforts to accelerate growth for this population.
 - Members of the School Leadership Team are well informed of the objectives the school has set to focus on and the plan to achieve those goals. However, the Learning Environment Survey reveals the need for more timely communication with the whole school community, so that all constituents are informed during the goal planning process in order to support student growth.
- Continue to enrich and support individual and teams of teachers to effectively analyze a range of data to meet the needs of all students that leads to increased learning outcomes.
 - The school has selected writing as one of its key standards of focus. Writing rubrics set clear expectations that provide meaningful feedback to students and inform adjustments to instructional decisions. Consequently, writing has improved as evidenced by student work samples and test results. However, the school has not evaluated Periodic assessment trends to support the academic challenges of the No Child Left Behind subgroup. Thus, instructional strategies targeted toward the strengths and needs of this group are limited to close the achievement gap.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Early Childhood 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 e 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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