

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**Pablo Neruda Academy of Architecture
and World Studies**

**High School X305
1980 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10473**

Principal: Sabrina Cook

**Dates of review: February 9 - 10, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Grossman**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Pablo Neruda Academy of Architecture and World Studies is a high school with 364 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 25% Black, 70% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 82.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Expectations for teacher practice have been elevated as a result of a powerful, ambitious process of analyzing teacher performance.
 - The new administrative team has implemented an innovative approach to improving pedagogical practice, via a rigorous system of daily, documented formal and informal observations. These observations are aligned to the Pablo Neruda Academy Instructional Framework and rubric that facilitate rich conversations based on anecdotal and performance data in eight domains: engagement, understanding, tone and culture, physical space, academic rigor, assessment/data, direct teaching and differentiation. The clarity of this system has helped teachers identify a meaningful professional goal that is being tracked and measured throughout the year. Differentiated support and opportunities to develop leadership are provided whether the teacher is a novice or a veteran. Every single teacher supports the school's vision, and this is enabling the school to reach its goal of student centered teaching in every classroom.
- Resources of all types are harnessed effectively to ensure that all systems and structures align with the school goals.
 - School-wide teams focus on issues such as college readiness, grants and partnerships, and school marketing and recruiting have almost every member of the faculty working towards meeting the school's operational goals, for example, to increase the amount of computer hardware in the building. Early dismissal once a week provides time for professional development and the daily circular six time is entirely devoted to common planning for department and grade teams. This has enabled the school to work on cyclically updating their curriculum maps and share best practices in supporting students towards mastery on summative assessments.
 - Stagnated NYSESLAT performance led the school to create a collaborative teaching model to support English language learners (ELL). An extra writing class for ninth graders, an additional planning period for the English department, and the integration of ELL services within the English classes ensures seamlessness of service. All of these actions have already had positive outcomes for English language learners, many of whom are now on track to move up towards proficiency and are demonstrating this through their written and oral work.
- The role of school wide data has been redefined, resulting in a constantly updated understanding of trends and influencing ongoing decisions.
 - A simple yet profound system of using the colors red, yellow and green to indicate target ranges on performance data, from scholarship reports to Regents' results, to unit assessments, has unified teachers' understanding about what all the information means. The PNA Data Analysis Worksheet and Action Plan, is a rich process which details item analysis, and identifies students of major concern. As a result, there have been successful decisions made with regard to intervention, attendance support, programming, and teacher assignments.

- Benchmarked long term goal setting has raised expectations of the quality of student work and has engaged the whole community.
 - School leaders have developed complementary long term instructional and operational goals that are based on a thorough analysis of a multitude of data. These goals, include, for example, significantly increasing both the presence as well as the use of technology to improve student writing, and ensuring coherent curriculum design by engaging all staff in the cyclical mapping process. Because the use of data is so robust, teachers have been able to better understand and therefore work towards complete college readiness for their students.
 - The school is very clear that “Building and working in collaborative teams is a hallmark of our theory of action.” Parents, teachers and students have a strong voice in shaping school policy via their involvement on these teams. Thus, the development of school capacity is done via the vehicle of many collaborative teams or committees.
- The school has effectively rebuilt its entire internal structure, developing systems that have fostered significant instructional improvement.
 - In addition to daily meetings, the distributive structures of the various teams ensure that actions are taken swiftly when needs arise. Recognizing a need to bring about greater consistency in instruction, and to support the common instructional framework, the school developed a Workshop Model Lesson Planning Template for Differentiating. This has helped speed up the improvement of classroom practice and fostered greater engagement. The hiring of additional special education teachers, which in effect reduced class size, and the ongoing professional development provided to teachers are the result of the ongoing reflection.
- The school’s supportive approach to working with students makes them develop high aspirations and want to succeed.
 - Students and parents recognize the significant contributions the school has made towards their self-actualization on an individual and highly personalized basis. One student interviewed described in detail all that had been done to help him learn English rapidly, including intensive tutoring provided at the school; a parent described how the school took special care of their child when the family was in distress; the school also helps to match children with interesting internships, summer opportunities, and special programs to enhance learning. All students interviewed, both in groups and classrooms, expressed that they felt challenged and had hopes of attending college. They uniformly expressed that they trust the adults at the school and know that the school knows them very well.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that teaching consistently promotes student interaction and differentiation so that students can deeply engage with the content and one another.
 - Most classrooms reflected straight lecture style teaching with very little conversation, minimal evidence of meaningful grouping, or differentiated

process, product or content. Students identified that lecture is the most common form of instruction offered to them and that they are usually grouped for social purposes rather than academic. As a result, engagement varied across classrooms, and students were not fully aware of the purpose of the lessons.

- Continue to develop rich curricula that prepare students for college in literacy skills, habits of mind and higher order thinking skills.
 - The school has begun to develop curriculum maps that provide a basic foundation in ensuring that key standards are addressed. However, the quality of the curricula varies by department, and most of the maps do not yet contain key components such as opportunities for differentiation, or extensions. There is also uneven quality with regard to the rigorous nature of tasks and assessments. With these inconsistencies, only some classes afford opportunities for students to become critical thinkers and sophisticated writers.
 - The school's themes of architecture and world studies are, so far, loosely developed in the curriculum and in students' programs and there is no other rich, integrated component that substitutes for it. Some students expressed disappointment that after selecting this school specifically for these components, they are only minimally present. Although there are some partnerships to potentially support these themes, they are not impacting the overall curriculum at this time, which is diminishing the engagement level of some students.
- Deepen the work of teams by incorporating a fuller inquiry approach, to identify strategies that support student goals and improved teacher practice.
 - There is some analysis of summative data, including item analyses of Regents, mock Regents and periodic assessments, but not all teams are focused on classroom or grade level data that is used for influencing instructional practice and leveraging individual improvement in teacher practice. As a result, some teams are not yet serving as forces for instructional change.
 - There are some basic protocols, and incipient steps towards teacher leadership. However, both teams observed were not focused on determining next steps for a specific group of students or setting precise academic goals. As a result, there is no shared accountability for students.
- Determine school-wide expectations and systems for the delivery of precise feedback to support student understanding of their next learning steps.
 - A few teachers are effectively utilizing content-rich, rigorous rubrics to help students self-evaluate. Much student work shows basic feedback, and many rubrics were focused on technical requirements, not on depth of knowledge. Progress reports that are sent home to keep parents informed, do not offer specifics on the requisite skills or knowledge the student requires. As a result, neither students nor parents are fully aware of the precise steps they must take or the areas they must focus on to ensure student growth. Students spoke only in vague terms about what they need to work on, and attributed good grades in a course to the teacher giving it to them, rather than their earning it.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Pablo Neruda Academy of Architecture and World Studies	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