



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Cornerstone Academy for Social Action Middle School

11x462

3441 Steenwick Avenue

Bronx

NY 10475

Principal: Jamaal A. Bowman

Dates of review: January 26 & February 3, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Elizabeth A. White

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Cornerstone Academy for Social Action is a middle school with 222 students from six through grade eight. The school population comprises 59% Black, 38% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Strategic organizational decisions have resulted in increased supports to improve student achievement.
 - A variety of technological tools such as SMART boards, laptops and LCD projectors are used to support student learning resulting in effective resource alignment with instructional goals developed from the focus on key standards.
 - Block scheduling has been strategically programmed into the instructional day in addition to teacher pairs assigned to English, humanities and mathematics classes. This practice effectively enables additional time and reduced student-to-teacher ratio increasing teacher access and support for student achievement.
- Positive attitudes towards learning result in a school climate that is conducive to learning.
 - The high level of respect between teachers and student in classrooms has resulted in a school atmosphere that supports positive student outcomes and led to a lower student suspension rate this year as compared to last year.
 - Students are known by staff and have access to adult support through an expansion of teacher advisors and a dean who provide an advisory program that effectively supports of their social and emotional development.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams create assessments aligned to performance indicators to effectively identify and plan for groups of students with similar needs.
 - Teachers create assessments such as pop quizzes and performance indicator diagnostic tests enabling each content team to plan units of study aligned to chosen standards. Teachers effectively analyze math and ELA Acuity interim test data to pinpoint grade and subject-based strengths and deficiencies resulting in goal setting based on informed data review.
- The school provides professional development opportunities that promote teacher leadership aligned to school-wide goals.
 - Teacher development offerings such as Understanding by Design/Unit planning, differentiation and cooperative learning workshops have enabled teachers to adjust their practice in alignment with Common Core state standards to better support student achievement.
 - School leaders provide teacher coverages to allow cohorts of teachers to engage in professional development. In addition, capacity building practices of teacher first hand turnkey staff development has led to increased individual teacher and teacher team leadership and development.
- The school's systems for analyzing data effectively provide coherence in assessing student learning outcomes and progress across the school.

- The school's evaluative structure entitled, 'Data Days' allows administrators and faculty to review the school's progress towards meeting school-wide goals by analyzing data and embedding Common Core State Standards into assessment efforts. In between the calendared 'Data Days' the school uses *Engrade* as an interim reporting mechanism resulting in timely and specific feedback on student progress school-wide.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop curricula to provide sufficient challenge and engagement to meet the needs of students in all subject areas across grades.
 - Pacing is inconsistent across classrooms resulting in uneven levels of rigor school-wide particularly for higher achievers. Likewise, students are not consistently engaged in their work resulting in insufficient support and/or challenge for varied student learning needs.
- Continue to develop teacher pedagogy to reflect instructional practices that effectively support access to curricula for all learners.
 - Because teacher block scheduling and teaming is new and the school is in the process of identifying "the practices for improved student achievement", teaching practices are not yet aligned to support developing curricula.
 - Differentiated learning opportunities are beginning but are inconsistent school-wide resulting in lessons that are often generic.
- Provide consistent engagement with students and families in an open exchange of communication regarding student achievement resulting in informed student progress monitoring.
 - The school's communication policy is unclear and efforts lack coherence across the school resulting in irregular feedback to families.
 - The school is still developing opportunities to engage parents in forums to help them understand student performance tools and curricula. This limits parents' ability to partner in supporting student achievement.
- Ensure that school-wide, teacher team, and classroom data is suitably tracked to provide opportunities for adjustments as needed.
 - School leaders use data to track progress towards school-wide goals, likewise, teachers use data to track progress and goals for students. However, interim benchmarking and revision is not yet consistent practice at the teacher team or classroom level. In addition, common assessments are not yet embedded resulting in limited ability to effectively revise goals as needed.
- Formalize individual teacher professional development supports to bolster school-wide instructional practices that align with student achievement.
 - A system for memorializing regular feedback to teachers for formal and informal observations, and pedagogical conversations of support based on student data and work products is not yet established. Likewise a protocol for providing

targeted differentiated professional development opportunities, especially to support teachers of need and those new to the school or profession, is not yet evident limiting efforts to effectively assess improvements in professional growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Cornerstone Academy for Social Action Middle 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