



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

New Explorers High School

High School 547

**730 Concourse Village West, Tower B
Bronx
NY 10451**

Principal: Jacob Hobson

Dates of review: March 2 – 3, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Geri Taylor-Brown

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New Explorers High School is a high school with 351 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 28% Black, 66% Hispanic, 1% Native American students and 2% multiracial students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 83.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The Principal has established a classroom observation system that emphasizes improving instructional practices.
 - More than 50% of the teachers have one year of teaching experience at New Explorers. Those new to teaching have been assigned a teaching mentor. All other teachers have been partnered with more experienced teachers in their content area. In addition, the principal has developed an observation template which includes a section on teacher reflection and specifies next steps. As a result, teachers know exactly what is expected in their lessons and in their instruction.
- The improvements in school tone provide a climate where student and adult learning can take place.
 - The principal states that the school has a “culture that is evolving” in a positive way. Students agreed with this statement stating that the school has “a good atmosphere”. There has also been a significant decrease in incidents. As a result students eagerly arrive to class on time and want to improve their scholarship. Additionally, the school successfully partners with community organizations to support the personal development of all students. For example, The Career Visions Institute and the school recently sponsored a “Community Change Convention” where students attended workshops on bullying and teen pregnancy. Events of this nature help “develop young people into effective leaders and professionals”.
- School leaders have made some good decisions in allocating resources to areas that need additional strengthening and support.
 - The principal made some new resource allocations this year which mirrored a successful fiscal strategy that was implemented last year. Last year a math coach was hired who worked with teachers and improvements were evident as student math Regents exam scores improved. This year two interventions were implemented for ELA. A consultant was hired to work with all teachers on pedagogical skills and a double period of ELA was implemented. In addition, the assistant principals were assigned by content. Thus far these moves have more closely aligned resource usage with student learning needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Design a clear, standards-aligned curriculum in all subject areas that offers learning opportunities for all students.
 - The school has not yet established an appropriately rigorous curriculum that is clearly followed by teachers in each content area. Classroom visits showed evidence of academic tasks that were not diversified or

deep enough to challenge students at a level which prepared them for high school graduation or college enrollment. For example, in many classes students were working on “worksheets” filling in the blanks. Student assessment of these academic tasks included statements such as our class work is “too easy,” and, there is “no real challenge.”

- Develop teacher pedagogy to ensure delivery of differentiated instruction across classrooms so that all students receive rigorous and engaging classroom lessons.
 - The principal states that teachers offer, “more varied instructional activities than last year.” However, visits to classrooms showed that in most lessons all students were required to perform the same tasks. As a result student achievement has not significantly improved.
 - Students are attentive in classes throughout the school. However, lessons do not call for active learning. One teacher stated, “Everyone is on task today, “as students followed her directions in completing a worksheet. Work of this caliber disengages students and thwarts academic advancement.
- Establish a common system of assessment design and analysis that ensures alignment with State Standards that easily informs adjustments to instruction for continued student success.
 - Current assessment development is not consistent across classes. Exam formatting, test design and the quality of questions greatly vary across classes. In addition, there is a lack of clear alignment with State standards. This results in inaccurate judgments about student learning and incorrect analysis of classroom data.
 - Teacher teams have begun to discuss student data at team meetings. However, data analysis is primarily information from the summative assessments. Examination of insufficient amounts of data has resulted in an unclear picture of student academic growth.
- Ensure that classroom goal setting is strongly linked with student data and addresses the learning needs of all students.
 - Teachers attend regularly scheduled team meetings and discuss aspects of student work. However, there is only a general connection to student data. For example, one team stated that their focus was “improving scores on the data-based questions“. While this was loosely based on the failing Global History test scores, it does not address the differentiated learning needs of these students. Thus, student progress has not been sufficiently impacted.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers establish classroom goals. However, there are no clear connections between reaching these goals and improving classroom practices. For example, teachers spoke about improving Regents exam passing rates, but the only instructional remedy offered is afterschool or lunch time tutoring. This offer of additional practice has not proven effective in helping students achieve academic success. As a result, exam scores and class passing rates have not been sufficiently improved.

- Implement student goal tracking that promotes timely adjustments at the school and classroom levels to ensure a positive instructional impact on student achievement.
 - The school has an established set of five school-wide goals. Yet there are minimal linkages between these goals and the goals set by teacher teams. One team stated that they are focusing on “the target group...the lowest third.” This lack of coherence has impeded the possibility of correctly tracking student progress and correlating these improvements with interventions.
 - Parents and students receive information about academic progress through student reports cards which are disseminated six times a year. However, teachers do not provide regular frequent feedback between report cards that provides families with sufficient information about student progress and challenges. As a result families cannot provide regular and consistent assistance to help students reach academic success.
- Create structures that support the regular evaluation of curricular and instructional decisions to ensure appropriate measurement of student success at interim and long range benchmarks.
 - The Principal stated that “the school has not yet established a proven system” where teaching practices and student outcomes are examined overtime for the impact on student learning. As a result, most of the school’s academic supports are provided to students after they have not been successful.
 - Current school practices do not include regular and rigorous examination of curriculum. Teachers follow a similar pacing calendar of lessons, but have not engaged in a comprehensive inspection of what is taught and how it connects with current and future uses of resources. Consequently, staff members cannot assuredly state that the curriculum is appropriately rigorous to prepare students for life.
- Employ a coherent system of evaluating and organizing student assessments to ensure consistency in how teachers assess what students have learned and how revisions are made to support continued academic improvement.
 - The school has established multiple teams where faculty meets to discuss student information. The school has also developed an assessment calendar that includes all major testing dates for the school year. However, there is no structure in place that specifically monitors assessment practices and examines grading policies. As a result testing and reporting of grades to students and their families is uneven. As one student stated, “Some teachers give progress reports and some don’t.” In addition, the school has an attendance team which meets weekly. There have been some incremental improvements in student attendance. But, this data is not clearly linked with academic data. Thus, these improvements have not yet impacted student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: New Explorers High 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

