

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Anna Gonzalez Community School

K296

**125 Covert Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Maria Barreto

Dates of review: October 18 - 19, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Lillian Druck

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Anna Gonzalez Community School is a middle school with 556 students from 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 42% Black, 54% Hispanic, 1% Asian students and 3% other students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 88.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is under developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school provides opportunities for students to engage in activities with outside partnerships and school guidance supports which enhance their academic, social and personal development. (4.4)
 - The school invites speakers from high schools and outside agencies to inform students of available programs and advise them of options that prepare them for their next level of schooling. Students find that these presentations motivate them to plan for high school and post secondary education. High performing grade 8 students are programmed for Integrated Algebra and Living Environment. These advanced courses offer this subgroup of students the opportunity to earn two high school credits, engage them in accelerated work in math and science and prepare them for future academic success.
 - The school's guidance counselors meet with individual and groups of students throughout the school year to support their academic, social and emotional development. Boys participate in a Character Education program that fosters social values and provides youth development supports. The school's Beacon Program and other partnerships offer sports, homework help, dance, English as a second language for parents and social services for families after school. These internal and external supports engage students in real world learning opportunities and in taking responsibility for their actions, resulting in a sharp decrease in suspensions as noted in the school's occurrence reporting data.
- School leaders gather data to gain an understanding of the performance of students to improve learning outcomes. (2.1)
 - School leaders gather summative data such as State assessment results, attendance trends, safety reports, and school surveys to look for positive and negative school trends. The school plans to administer periodic English language arts and math simulation tests in late October and mid November, respectively. An outside agency assists the school with the analysis of periodic assessments to supplement summative data. The analysis of this data will provide school leaders and teachers with a fuller understanding of the strengths and challenges of students, thus leading to adjustments in classroom practices for individual and subgroups of students to improve their learning.
- School leaders communicate the school's goals with the community so that there is a shared commitment to improve student outcomes. (3.1)
 - The school leadership team sets goals and action plans based on data that pertains to assessments, safety, attendance, discipline and academic performance. The goals and action plans, which are outlined in the school's Comprehensive Education Plan, are intended to accelerate student learning and foster personal growth. The goals and school's beliefs are posted throughout the building, disseminated to families through monthly newsletters and shared at various school meetings with students, staff and parents. In response to the need for additional

support with test-taking strategies, the school developed and disseminated an assessment plan which delineates the timeline for simulated assessments across subjects. As a result, the school community is informed of upcoming periodic assessments and is part of a coordinated effort to improve student achievement.

- The school shares academic feedback with students and families to inform them of their academic performance, thus promoting clear expectations for learning. (2.4)
 - School leaders and teachers provide feedback to students and families related to academic achievement, discipline and attendance during fall and spring parent teacher conferences. Prior to these conferences, the school sends home interim progress reports to inform families of students' performance in class and their progress in meeting subject requirements. In addition, parents have access to a computer station in the parent coordinator's office to navigate ARIS. As a result, they familiarize themselves with the available data in the system and acquire a better understanding regarding their child's performance in school.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish a rigorous curriculum across all subjects and grades so that academic tasks promote higher levels of thinking and cognitive engagement for all students. (1.1)
 - The school's planning team revised curriculum maps and developed up to two sample unit plans aligned to State standards during the summer. The documents were uploaded electronically for access by teachers. However, the curriculum is not delivered in an effective and rigorous manner across grades and subject areas. In addition, academic tasks do not promote positive work habits or push student thinking, resulting in limited opportunities to develop higher order skills.
 - In most classrooms, learning tasks consist of worksheets, textbook activities or charting from existing work in student notebooks. Although the activities are different for the various groups, they do not reflect the planning of cognitively demanding learning experiences for all students, resulting in uneven levels of student engagement across classes.
- Develop teaching practices in differentiating instruction so that lessons fully challenge all students and result in meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - The school is attempting to instill foundational routines of the workshop model, such as mini lessons, independent practice and share time. Nevertheless, inconsistencies and misconceptions are evident in instructional practices as teachers make an effort to implement the workshop components. For example, in most classrooms, students work in groups during the independent time. However, instructional strategies, questioning and lesson routines are not differentiated to meet the needs of all students. As a result, students are not always challenged to their full potential during the independent work time as evident by limited opportunities for group discussions and low quality work products in folders, notebooks and bulletin board displays.

- Develop a strategic plan to ensure that resources and staffing decisions are fully aligned to accelerate student learning and support the school's goals. (1.3)
 - The school's choice to adopt a new literacy program provides additional consultants to guide teachers in their planning and implementation of monthly units of study that support the school's goals. External math and English language arts (ELA) consultants engage teachers in back-mapping to improve their understanding of the Common Core Standards. However, the alignment between resources and the school's instructional goals is developing as these newly adopted structures are not fully impacting student work.
 - The school programmed gender specific classes in math and ELA based on the school's belief that this structure will enable teachers to gear instruction towards the learning styles of the respective gender groups. However, instructional strategies and lessons did not reflect modifications specific to boys' or girls' groupings, and evidence on how these groupings are impacting student outcomes is not yet available. As a result, alignment between teacher assignments, program groupings and the school's instructional goals is emerging.
- Align formative assessments to key standards and the curriculum so that data analysis positively influences instruction for all students. (2.2)
 - Teachers use ELA, math and NYSESLAT summative assessment results, item analysis data and diagnostic test results to identify student performance levels. They use formative assessment data, including conference notes, checklists and running records, in some classes to assess learning. However, the data is not always fully analyzed to pinpoint the needs of subgroups or to make necessary adjustments to curricular decisions and classroom practice. As a result, instructional strategies and academic tasks are not strategically matched to meet the needs of all students to ensure that they succeed in their learning.
- Utilize the observation process to provide quality feedback to teachers and promote professional growth and reflection, resulting in improved instructional practices. (4.1)
 - School leaders use a research-based rubric to articulate expectations for teacher practice and provide feedback from brief classroom observations. Feedback to teachers captures strengths and challenges using the general language of the rubric. However, the feedback does not include specific next steps that identify what needs to be improved and actions for teachers to take to address the teaching gaps that hinder student learning. This limits opportunities for teacher growth and reflections that lead to improved instructional practices.
- Strengthen systems for reviewing curricular, organizational and instructional decisions to increase school-wide alignment of practices. (5.1)
 - The school is developing structures to regularly evaluate curricula, instructional decisions and the use of resources in response to students' academic needs and the expectations of the Common Core Learning

Standards. For example, with the support of outside consultants, teachers revise curriculum maps and make adjustments in pacing calendars and classroom practice so that lessons follow a logical sequence and address learning deficits. School leaders are developing structures to evaluate and adjust the use of resources in response to students' learning needs. However, protocols to evaluate the impact of these systems are still emerging. This hinders the school's ability to align practices that lead to increased school-wide coherence.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Anna Gonzalez Community 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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?		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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		X		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?		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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?		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