

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Lexington Academy**

**Elementary School 072**

**131 East 104 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Antonio Hernandez**

**Dates of review: December 5-6, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Maria Robustelli**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Lexington Academy is an Elementary school with 571 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 87% Hispanic, 1% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 23% 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 93%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school provides a safe, respectful and nurturing environment where students are engaged in their learning and are strongly supported in their academic and personal growth. (1.4)
  - The principal has provided resources to help staff foster emotionally responsive practices to increase academic performance and to support student success. One example is the use of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) model throughout the school to reinforce school expectations. The school has regular respect rally meetings to celebrate student success where students and parents are able to communicate monthly themes as well as the impact of the program on their learning and development. Students report feeling “very safe” in school. The attendance rate has increased from 91.89% in the 2010-2011 school year to 93.48% in the current year and suspensions and incidents have decreased to support a safe and respectful culture and positive learning environment.
  - Students are engaged in their learning and express a desire to succeed. One student stated, “I am not only getting a great education. It is the right education.” Another commented, “Our goal is to work hard and get the education we need to do better and have a great future.” Through Lexington Leaders, students are given opportunities to be leaders and have a voice in school-wide decisions as well as communicate school-wide expectations, celebrate the learning and personal growth of students and promote attendance.
- The curriculum is aligned to the State standards and provides students with rigorous instruction that emphasizes higher order thinking skills across grades and for a variety of learners to increase student outcomes. (1.1)
  - The principal, teacher teams and individual teachers have aligned curricula to the Common Core Standards and can articulate how it is vertically and horizontally aligned to support student outcomes, increase rigor and create consistency across grade levels and within content areas. The school has identified key standards to address based on data from a variety of sources and have aligned tasks to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). For example, assessment analysis identified an area of concern for third and fourth grade students in understanding place value in math. Within classrooms, student work products as well as teacher instruction and classroom activities reinforced the decision to re-teach this topic and address the needs of students.
  - Teacher teams and individual teacher use data from a variety of sources, including daily observations, Acuity results along with pre- and post-unit assessment results to identify areas of growth and plan tasks aligned to the curriculum that engages students in their learning while meeting individual needs. Students are grouped in classrooms based on their needs, student to student interaction is encouraged and the level of questioning and support is differentiated based on identified student

strengths and areas of growth. Across classrooms, students are actively engaged and participate in lessons.

- The school provides families with regular and open communication on their child's progress, resulting in meaningful partnerships and high expectations for all students. (2.4)
  - The school provides ongoing feedback and support to families regarding student progress toward goals to allow parents to monitor student progress, have informed conversations with school staff and share accountability for student outcomes and success. Parents receive weekly and quarterly progress reports that communicate information on what their child is learning, areas of growth and in need of improvement in academic and personal and social growth and attendance as well as next steps. Parents communicated that there is an “ongoing partnership between teachers and parents” that is facilitated through e-mails, letters, phone calls and school events. Teachers provide copies of rubrics to parents as well as bimonthly curriculum guides. The recent Learning Environment Survey (LES) reflects that 96% of parents feel that the school clearly communicates expectations for learning and 98% feel the school provides tools to support their children's learning needs.
  - The school offers a variety of outreach initiatives including monthly morning coffee sessions with the parent coordinator, prevention and intervention workshops, ESL adult classes, Cook Shop Family Program and Common Core Learning Standards and NYS testing workshops as well as parent/teacher conferences. Families are invited to an initial “Meet and Greet” session at the start of the school year to engage them in school activities and decision-making to support student success. Parents report feeling “welcome and supported” and believe their input is valued and as a result, they are supportive of school wide expectations and share a commitment with staff for student success.
- The school regularly conveys high expectations to the whole school community in order to support learning and improve student achievement. (3.4)
  - The principal and parent coordinator developed an action plan with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and School Leadership Team (SLT) to provide ongoing professional development opportunities based on identified needs, such as “Parents as Literacy Partners”, “ARIS Parent Link” and “Common Core Learning Standards.” These workshops have allowed parents to become active members in the school community while increasing their academic and social skills and proficiency to better support their children in achieving their goals.
  - The school communicates high expectations for attendance, behavior and academic performance to staff through annual retreats, staff conferences and professional development, informal and formal observations, one on one conferences as well as grade level meetings and monthly check in meetings with teacher leaders. Ongoing supports for the academic, social and emotional needs of subgroups of students are provided through specialized teams, such as the English language learners (ELL) team and Students with disabilities (SWD) team, which analyze data and

share best practices school wide through presentations and grade level team meetings.

- School leaders and staff use a variety of strategies to monitor, assess and adjust curricular and instructional practices to improve student performance. (4.2)
  - Teacher teams meet 4 to 5 times per week to revise curricula and assessments based on student work and data and to identify individual student strengths and areas of need. Currently, the third grade team is examining math baseline assessments to identify and surface gaps for SWD's and ELL's to plan a math unit of study aligned to the CCLS. School leaders have a monthly check in with teacher team leaders to discuss concerns and provide additional support. As a result of this work, classrooms have demonstrated cohesiveness in curriculum, assessment and classroom instruction that is aligned to the CCLS.
  - Professional development and support is differentiated based on identified needs through staff input such as surveys as well as ongoing observations and classroom walkthroughs by school leaders. As a result, teachers are consistently reflecting on their ability to provide instructional expertise as well as the goals and benchmarks of individual students aligned to the expectations of the CCLS and share their needs for additional professional development so that the school wide plan is revised as needed to meet their needs and improve student outcomes.
- School leaders have developed external partnerships and school supports that meet the social and emotional needs of students and families to support student achievement. (4.4)
  - The school has several external partnerships with mental health agencies, including Institute for Family Health, NYC DOH, East Harlem Asthma Center for Excellence and NY Academy of Medicine, which provides special outreach and therapy to students and families resulting in improved success for students while meeting their emotional, social and health needs.
  - The school is currently using PBIS to address the social and emotional need of students. This initiative is monitored by staff and supported by a student team called the Lexington Leaders. Lessons based on character books and traits that promote a positive learning environment were observed in classrooms and conversations with students.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Increase the alignment between available resources, and the school's instructional goals including the use of technology and coaches to enhance and expand student learning opportunities. (1.3)
  - The school currently uses its resources for a variety of purposes to meet student needs, such as the use of coaches to provide professional development and individualized support to teachers and the receipt of a technology grant as well as regular teacher team meetings (4 to 5 times

per week). However, there is limited use of coaches within classrooms to provide modeling and support to teachers as well as increasing the use of technology to support the needs of various subgroups. The absence of resources to support interventions for teachers and students in the classroom limits the ability of staff to strategically differentiate instruction aligned to the school's instructional goal for all students to increase opportunities to extend student learning.

- Build upon the existing system to align assessments to curriculum in order to identify trends and patterns for all relevant student subgroups, and make effective instructional decisions to improve student outcomes. (2.2)
  - Teachers consistently review and discuss student data at team meetings to identify trends and areas in need of improvement. All teachers have student assessment binders that provide information on both summative and formative assessments. Individual teachers can articulate strengths and weaknesses of students as well as placement of students within groupings to provide differentiated support. Classroom observations reveal consistent use of ongoing checks for understanding as well as student self-assessment. However, although teachers have developed a variety of assessment tools to measure and report student progress and identify areas in need of improvement in math and literacy, this data needs to be examined more closely in order to target specific individual, student based instruction for goal setting and evaluation of progress for ELLs and SWDs to improve their progress.
- Deepen and strategically differentiate instruction for student subgroups to include a wide range of supports to maximize student learning potential. (1.2)
  - Teacher practice is aligned to the curriculum and shows evidence of the articulated belief on how students learn. Across classrooms, various strategies and levels of questioning were observed to support the learning needs of various student subgroups, including ELLs and SWDs. Specific strategies included small groupings based on teacher observations, pre unit assessments and grade level inquiry work, modeling with manipulatives, charts with visuals, written and verbal support in children's native languages and peer support such as reading partners. Although teachers consistently use a variety of data, resources and strategies, they are not using student data to provide targeted learning opportunities to individual students that is strategically differentiated at their entry levels, resulting in limited growth for some students.
- Use a research based framework to develop effective pedagogy in order to promote instructional practices that lead to professional growth and improved achievement for all students. (4.1)
  - The school has a common understanding of effective teaching that is articulated by leaders and teachers and the administration spends time observing and collaborating with teachers, however the school is still developing a system for providing frequent cycles of actionable feedback on best instructional practices and clear expectations to teachers that identifies next steps to improve their practice. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity and support that identifies next steps for teachers to improve their practice.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Lexington Academy	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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
<b>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.</b>				
<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	

<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?		<b>X</b>					
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?				<b>X</b>			
<b>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.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>