

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Lillian Weber School

M084

**43 West 92nd Street
New York
NY 10025**

Principal: Robin Sundick

Dates of review: March 4 – 5, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Esther Friedman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 084 Lillian Weber is an Elementary school with 522 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population is comprised of 24% Black, 44% Hispanic, 23% White, 2% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 12% 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 93.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) permeates all curriculum areas, including the arts, providing students ongoing opportunities to build knowledge necessary for successful acquisition to further learning and achievement. (1.1)
 - All content areas stress project-based learning and the use of authentic tasks in their curriculum maps across the grades, this work heavily informed by the school's experience with the workshop model over many years. The work of embedding the Common Core Standards into this model has expanded in the current school year. The conventions within this work include extensive peer-to-peer learning opportunities within each lesson, stress on text-based evidence, the use of real-life contexts in performance tasks, emphasis on varied nonfiction text and its use in tasks in listening, speaking, reading and writing that align to the CCLS, and providing scaffolds to enable participation of all students which has led to increased student engagement and progress shown in interim measures, including data related to targeted subgroups.
 - The school employs a system of ongoing refinement of lessons and performance tasks. These include conferring, observation of partnership work and monitoring of benchmark attainment, including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students to ensure that instruction is responsive to student needs and is sufficiently rigorous. Consequently there has been an increase in lesson adaptation and unit refinement that is responsive to students' learning needs.
- The principal makes organizational decisions that are strategically aligned to the school's instructional goals in order to meet the needs of all students. (1.3)
 - The school leadership has made strategic decisions in grade assignments of teachers. Utilizing varied data sets, teacher assignments were changed for the current school year and team teaching partnerships were engineered to maximize teacher expertise and peer support. These changes were based upon low inference data related to teacher expertise in moving students in specific grade bands, providing them with opportunity to impact student achievement and provide peer support. As a result, these teachers are realizing greater student engagement and achievement on interim assessments.
 - Teacher team meetings occur regularly and frequently in both structured and informal settings. These meetings focus heavily on analysis of student work and on recording this data in a codified system which is then used for ongoing refinement of instruction. Teachers provide each other with critical feedback, as well as opportunities to norm observations and share in lesson development and adaptation tasks resulting in shared decision making in lesson and unit development, as well as in adaptation of lesson to meet student needs.

- Teachers use a variety of assessment tools, formats and recording mechanisms aligned to the curriculum that inform their instruction, in order to raise student achievement. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams meet in grade-level groups and have adapted and developed varied systems of assessment for ongoing monitoring of student progress. These include systems for conferring, use of curriculum-based assessments and use of rubrics by teachers for the purpose of ongoing refinement of instruction. Consequently, lessons and units are frequently refined and revised based upon student data yielded by these practices.
 - Teachers supplement summative and interim data with ongoing use of assessments such as conferring notes, rubrics, and Teachers College (TC) assessments to ensure that students' instructional needs are met. Data binders within classrooms contain information from conferencing notes, rubrics and other assessments. Teachers also analyze student work individually and collectively in teacher teams to add to the data available for a more detailed evaluation of each student's strengths and areas of need. Frequent unit corrections occur in the instructional path as a result of the feedback from student assessment data resulting in an ongoing system responsive to student outcomes from lesson to lesson that support the needs of all students.
- Administration and teachers have established systems to gather and analyze formative and summative data to identify school wide trends and inform instruction for the differentiated needs of all students. (2.1)
 - The principal engages in ongoing analysis of data in collaboration with teacher teams, as well as additional strategic planning work done by the administrative team to surface school wide academic trends. An evaluation of the data informs organizational and instructional decisions for the 'lowest third' subgroup of 50 students with more intensive and varied needs within English language arts (ELA) and math. For example, specific teachers are matched to students based on data analysis from year to year. In addition, the use of this information targets on-going adjustments to instruction and identifies areas where instruction must be differentiated to accommodate student needs. Data collection and analysis has provided for the identification of school wide trends and ongoing instructional shifts and refinements as well as the ability to closely monitor academically fragile students to ensure that they are on track regarding progress.
- Teacher teams meet regularly to review formative student data in a cycle of on-going unit and lesson development which provides a voice for lesson refinement that is responsive to instructional impact on students. (4.2)
 - All teachers in the school are involved in regular peer collaborations. They meet regularly to review student work from current units of study. Using a specific sorting and rubric system of analysis, teachers use low-inference evidence to determine gaps between student work and the applicable standard. This data is then further used to determine refinement of the ongoing and upcoming units of study.
 - Teachers facilitate teacher team groups and make key decisions for assessment protocols, instructional planning and refinement. Consequently,

teams are focused on topics relevant to their day-to-day instructional needs to improve student achievement. In addition, facilitation of each team by different members, builds teacher leadership capacity.

- Teachers and teams use varied ongoing progress monitoring tools to measure growth and refine instructional practices in response to trends and patterns in the data. (3.3)
 - All teachers engage in work that involves analysis of a wide range of assessment tools. Because assessment is embedded in the instruction, current student data is continuously collected, analyzed, discussed, and used to adjust practice. The principal stresses analysis of trends and patterns in the data and teachers use this information within classrooms to differentiate small group instruction for all students.
 - The school engages students in self and peer assessment through use of rubrics. Students engage in and can explain the use of rubrics and checklists and receive feedback on their work through the use of these and other tools during conferring sessions and in written teacher feedback. Additionally, peer-to-peer evaluation is matched to teacher evaluation to model assessment behaviors for students. Students are thus able to explain how their work is evaluated and are able to use this knowledge to set and meet learning goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Connect existing systems of ongoing teacher feedback more directly to a comprehensively differentiated professional development agenda for each teacher to drive professional growth to improve student outcomes. (4.1)
 - The school leadership engages in daily walkthroughs and provides feedback to teachers that is aligned with a research-based framework. There has been a particular focus on building student engagement, particularly through the use of questioning. However, while there are systems of feedback in place, these are not sufficiently based upon ongoing student work and learning behaviors to fully support teachers in meeting the varied student needs evidenced in the school. Thus, teachers rely more on peer feedback to support their observations of student learning and potential next steps with less specific feedback in this regard coming from the school leadership.
 - There is a system for teachers to share information from professional trainings they attend. Teachers complete 'Share Sheets' which they use to turnkey information at grade and faculty meetings. However, the professional development they attend is not consistently tied to teacher feedback given during observations, nor is it explicitly connected to impact on student work in the specific area presented in the training so that teachers have a clear understanding of best practices to improve student outcomes.
- Establish an evaluation protocol using student data to evaluate effectiveness of the work of teacher teams as well as related capacity building activities. (5.4)

- School leaders participate in the work of the teacher teams and provide varied professional development opportunities provided through the network and other vendors aligned to evidenced student needs to support the teams' work. The leadership and teachers engage in careful analysis of student data and its instructional implications. However, there is not a fully developed system to consistently monitor the effectiveness of the work of individual teams as it relates to student growth and instructional practices aligned to the curriculum, resulting in inconsistent protocols for measuring direct connections between the work of the teacher teams and individual and cohort progress of students.
- Differentiate questioning strategies in lesson plans to provide instructional support to all students within whole and small group lessons at their entry levels. (1.2)
 - Lessons include teacher questioning as part of the instructional process and teacher questioning is embedded in all observed lessons. However, questioning strategies are not consistently differentiated for groups or individuals and the impact on student questioning behaviors is not fully evidenced in student partner work. Students evidence a range of ability in their own level of questioning behaviors and many have difficulty framing questions to match the task, resulting in inconsistent levels of student understanding.
 - Across classrooms, teachers utilize varied instructional approaches, including the use of scaffolding strategies and higher-level questioning to actively engage students and encourage higher-level thinking. However, questioning and other instructional strategies are not consistently targeted to group and individual needs resulting in inconsistent student thinking and questioning behaviors as evidenced in peer-to-peer work and in student work products.
- Create more transparent differentiation of long- and short-term goals within the collaborative planning process for groups of students such as ELLs in ways that reflect use of more targeted data and its implications for instructional practice. (3.2)
 - Teachers are engaged in a continuous system of monitoring student progress both within the classroom and in teacher team work. They use this information to ensure that all students engage in small, flexible groups for differentiated work, as well as to embed needed instructional strategies that ensure that all students are mastering learning. The assessments are typically curriculum based and are provided consistently and frequently, and are reviewed in a continuous cycle of analysis. However, for some students, the protocols to determine the full range of comprehensive supports and extensions requires further extension. As a result, some students may not have consistent opportunities for very specific differentiation of learning goals to support their identified needs.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School : The Lillian Weber 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