

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S./I.S. 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community
Leadership**

K-8 school M210

**501-503 WEST 152 STREET
NEW YORK
NY 10031**

Principal: EVELYN LINARES

Dates of review: May 14th and 15th, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S./I.S. 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community Leadership is a K-8 school with 431 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 96% Hispanic, 0% White, 0% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 39% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a safe, nurturing environment that supports adult and student learning in order to improve student outcomes. (1.4)
 - o The principal promotes an inclusive, collaborative culture in order to monitor and support the learning needs of students and staff. The academic intervention committee, pupil personnel committee, inclusion committee and advisory team have been established to ensure that all aspects of student's academic and social development are supported. All committees analyze standardized and formative data, teacher and guidance counselor referrals to inform instructional and social-emotional recommendations for students. Teachers set yearly goals that are supported by the school's administrators and coaches to assure that all adults are making progress toward professional development goals. The principal meets with teachers on a regular basis to assess progress and provide support where needed. Interviews with parents, students and staff and results of the School Survey indicate that the school community feels that the school is a safe place that promotes collaboration in order to support student progress.
 - o Student attendance is closely monitored by the attendance committee, consisting of the attendance teacher, family worker and the principal, to improve the attendance habits of students. Lists of students who are absent or late are generated on a daily basis to allow school staff to contact their homes in order to ensure that parents understand the importance of attending school on a regular basis. The school supports perfect attendance by posting the names of students who have never been absent on bulletin boards throughout the school. These students also receive recognition and awards during monthly Parent's Association meetings. Advisory groups of no more than twelve students are assigned to teachers who stay with the same groups until graduation to assure that all students are well known and their academic and social-emotional needs are addressed.
- The school has systems and structures to support families in understanding student progress, resulting in shared responsibility for student achievement. (2.4)
 - o At the beginning of the school year, the school sends home a comprehensive report on the results of standardized reading and math scores to assure that parents are aware of beginning status of their children. This is followed by a curriculum night, where the academic expectations for the current school year are shared with parents in order to enlist their support in helping achieve student goals. The school closely analyzes student work resulting from Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) aligned tasks, administered to all students, in order to set learning goals and next steps. These results, outcomes of all predictive exams, as well as comparison reports, are shared in order to keep parents informed of progress. Teachers also communicate results of class level assessments through frequent meeting with parents, phone calls and e-mails, mid-year progress reports and monthly newsletters to assure that parents are kept well informed. Parents report that the principal is always accessible and open to suggestions in order to improve all aspects of the school. Parents are active participants in the school's School Leadership Team, Title I committee and Parents' Association, and as a result are well informed of programs and instructional initiatives of the school. During parent interviews, they expressed that their suggestions are valued and have led to improvements in school policy

such as improving the rigor of the instructional program in Spanish and the implementation of extra-curricular activities such as art, theatre and chess to promote bi-literacy and student engagement.

- School administrators and staff effectively communicate high expectations to families, resulting in wide support for achieving school learning goals. (3.4)
 - o The school fosters open communication with parents in order to promote support for student achievement of goals. School expectations for grade-level proficiency are transmitted to parents at the beginning of the school year during curriculum nights. Parents report that they look forward to these occasions as they lead to greater awareness of what students are expected to achieve for the grade as well as provide them with suggestions on how to support their children. The school provides support to high needs students by providing technological support, such as Imagine Learning for English language learners and targeted small group instruction during the extended day. Expectations for student achievement are communicated to parents at monthly Parent Association meetings, the Parent Book Club and workshops. Town Hall meetings are held on a regular basis to communicate academic and behavioral expectations to students. The school sponsors Career Week where invited guests speak to students about the benefits of attending college and possible career choices. Trips to high schools are arranged for seventh grade students so that they can make informed choices on which school to attend. The parent coordinator also makes visits to high schools with families of newly arrived students in order to support and orient them on the best possible choice. As a result of the school's regular outreach to parents, the School Survey indicates that a high percentage of parents are satisfied with the education their children receive and that the school has high expectations for student achievement.
- The school collects and analyzes summative and interim data in order to make curriculum and instructional decisions that support student progress. (2.2)
 - o Teams of teachers meet at least three times a week to review curriculum, develop tasks and analyze student work to assure that all students are making progress towards grade level goals. The school's curriculum maps in English language arts and math have been aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the Depth of Knowledge matrix is used to assure that tasks units developed are sufficiently rigorous. Results of performance tasks are used to adjust the curriculum, pacing and student groupings to assure that students are adequately exposed and supported in acquiring grade level content. The school's extended day program focuses on helping students improve the quality of extended writing responses in literacy and math. Results of student work, completed during the extended day, are analyzed on a weekly basis to help inform student progress and make adjustments in student grouping and instruction. In addition to the results of performance tasks, teachers use baseline assessments, reading levels in Spanish and English and end of unit tests to make decisions regarding student progress, individual and small group support to assure that the academic needs of all students are being met, as evidenced 80% of students making expected gains on reading level assessments and improved results on extended writing responses.
- The principal's use of resources and organizational decisions are well aligned to the school's instructional goals to accelerate student learning. (1.3)
 - o The school schedule allows teachers to meet twice a week in study groups and once a week after-school in order to facilitate curriculum planning and analysis of

- student work. Teacher study groups are arranged so that teachers spanning three grade levels can collaborate on developing school wide initiatives in order to gain an understanding of how the work of subsequent grades builds upon each other. Data analysis by teacher teams of standardized exams and periodic assessments have surfaced the need to improve student's extended writing responses in English language arts and math. In response, the school has made curricular shifts to focus on the explicit teaching of writing to help students improve in the identified areas.
- o The inclusive culture of the school is further supported by involving teachers in the hiring process. This assures that all teachers entering the school continue to support the collaborative spirit of the school. Student achievement data, formal and informal observations as well as teacher compatibility is used to make grade and departmental assignments. In the middle school, observations, student work products and student achievement data are used to make grade and content area assignments. As a result of the school's thoughtful planning of staff assignments and staff selection, teachers report that their continued growth is supported not only by administrators but also by colleagues.
 - The school regularly evaluates data gathering systems to assess and revise curricular and assessment practices to assure that they lead to improved academic outcomes. (5.1)
 - o The school reviews various sources of data to inform and adjust instructional decisions to assure that initiatives lead to student academic gains. All teachers are engaged in study groups to continuously analyze curriculum maps to ensure that key concepts are incorporated in the curriculum. The school has developed systems to allow it to aggregate student achievement data and compare growth over the school year to guide academic interventions provided to students. The principal uses data gathered from formal and informal observations to evaluate implementation of school initiatives such as, the explicit teaching of vocabulary, rigorous learning objectives and language objectives for all lessons. Classroom observation and analysis of student performance on formal and informal assessments also informs organizational decisions in order to maximize the talents of staff and programming. Student performance on interim and end of unit assessments are closely monitored to inform grouping of students for targeted instruction during the day and after-school program. As a result, the school is able to make curricular, instructional and programmatic adjustments in a timely manner to assure the progress of all students.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the rigor of curricular units, tasks and questioning techniques to promote higher order thinking skills in all students. (1.1)
 - o The school's curriculum has been aligned to the CCLS with a focus on non-fiction reading and writing. Interdisciplinary and multi-grade level teams plan units and tasks to ensure that students are prepared for the challenges of the next grade level. Teachers consistently use the Depth of Knowledge matrix to develop tasks at various levels of complexity to assure that all students are challenged. Teacher teams also plan essential questions for all lesson and strategies on how to help students develop questioning techniques to promote comprehension. However, across classrooms questions posed by teachers generally only require a yes or no answer and tasks do not require students to think critically, leading to the disengagement of students and missed opportunities to challenge students to explore concepts deeply and develop new understandings.

- Ensure that lessons are consistently differentiated across classrooms to challenge and engage all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. (1.2)
 - o Across classrooms it is evident that teachers believe in the delivery of instruction using a mini-lesson, followed by student discussion and then grouping students for targeted instruction. As a dual language school, the school has a large population of English language learners and has provided staff with various opportunities to engage in professional development on how to differentiate instruction for this subgroup as well as students with disabilities. As a result, teachers regularly discuss the use of graphic organizers, realia, guided reading and leveled books to differentiate for these subgroups. However, across classrooms, lessons tend to be teacher-dominated and student groupings and tasks are not always differentiated using student data. As a result, student engagement is low, leading to student compliance rather than their assessed learning level.
- Improve the quality and consistency of feedback provided to students to deepen understanding of individual student performance and promote student independence towards achieving learning goals. (3.3)
 - o The school closely monitors data regarding student progress in order to make instructional decisions. The principal and teachers use ARIS to closely analyze individual and whole class results of standardized testing and interim exams. In addition to standardized test scores in English language arts and math, results of science exams, New York State English language assessment exams are used to provide the school with an in depth understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of students. Skill analysis of literacy and math exams are used to group students for targeted instruction at the beginning of the school year. Students are regrouped midyear, using results interim and classroom level assessments to assure that the academic needs of students are being met. The school provides students and their families with regular communication regarding student progress through progress reports and comparison reports between beginning of year, mid-year and end of year results of interim assessments. Student writing is graded using rubrics developed by teacher teams in order to assess student progress towards mastery of unit goals. However, the feedback provided to students is too general and does not provide students with specific next steps. As a result, students are not sure how feedback provided can help them improve in areas that need further development.
- Further refine feedback provided to teachers as a result of cycles of observations to improve teacher practice in order to increase student performance. (4.1)
 - o The school has provided professional development for all staff on the components of the Danielson's Framework for teaching and learning in order to develop a common lens for evaluating teacher effectiveness. Administrators have provided feedback to teachers through cycles of short, informal observations. Feedback provided to teachers is aligned to the school's chosen components in an effort to build proficiency in designing coherent curricula and establishing a culture for learning. Additionally, teachers also provide each other with feedback on the school's chosen components as a result of learning walks. However, the feedback provided is not specific enough to help teachers improve in the identified components or to develop a cadre of teachers who consistently implement effective teaching strategies across all classrooms.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S./I.S. 210 - Twenty-first Century Academy for Community Leadership	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	
1..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
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