

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Bellaire School
Elementary School 135
207-11 89 Avenue
Queens
NY 11427

Principal: George T. Hadjoglou

Dates of review: March 19 – 20, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Bellaire School is an elementary school with 1102 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 34% Black, 21% Hispanic, 5% White, and 37% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school uses a rigorous, standards-based curriculum including the Arts that integrates Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks and meets the needs of all subgroups of learners to increase student achievement. (1.1)
 - Refined curriculum maps and accurate pacing calendars are aligned with the Common Core State Standards in literacy and math. Teachers frequently examine the curriculum maps to ensure that they are rigorous guides that will positively impact student performance. Accelerated classes from grades two through five are mandated to study a foreign language. In addition, all fifth grade students study a foreign language also. Students participate in either the performing or visual arts on a rotating schedule. There is an explicit character education curriculum which is taught by out of classroom teachers and is literacy-based. The CCLS tasks are implemented school-wide and the rigor has permeated the writing curriculum, as evidenced in the quality of students' informational writing displayed throughout the building by all students including English language learners and students with disabilities. As a result, the school is beginning to close the achievement gap as measured by student work products.
- The school has an articulated belief on how students learn best and differentiates lessons to engage students in increased participation and questioning to push their thinking. (1.2)
 - The school believes that students learn best through collaboration with peers in a safe and nurturing environment. Teachers emphasize character education and open demonstration of respectful behavior. Flexible grouping is a major method of differentiation with students working together as soon as the mini-lesson is completed by teachers. Students in grades four and five edit each other's writing pieces using a rubric developed by teacher teams. They take notes and use evidence from the work to identify strengths and challenges. Teachers devise higher order thinking and open ended questions which are used throughout the lessons to engage student thinking. Teachers use student work to plan differentiated lessons that address individual challenges and weaknesses. As a result, students have demonstrated steady progress on Periodic Assessments.
- The school makes strategic organizational decisions with limited resources and designs scheduling that support the school's instructional goals and improve student performance. (1.3)
 - The school leadership has built common meeting time into the schedule to provide opportunities for teacher teams to plan collaboratively and analyze student work and data. The coaches' flexible schedule facilitates on-going professional learning through study groups, lunch-and-learn sessions, and individual coaching with a particular focus on implementing the CCLS tasks. The school has developed full fledged dual language classes in English and Spanish on several grades complete with

materials in both languages. The principal purposefully adjusted the instructional time to incorporate lessons on character education which is taught to all classes a minimum of once per week. As a result, behavior management has improved along with student engagement in the classroom and performance on assessments.

- School leaders and faculty use assessments aligned to their curriculum and analyze data that informs adjustments in instructional decisions at the team and classroom level to support students' comprehension. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers create targeted assessments that follow the units of study and the pacing calendars. Grade level teams develop and refine rubrics for all the intensive writing done in the building. This writing includes document-based questions in English language arts and social studies and student reflections on their learning in math and science. Teachers use the analysis of written responses as teaching tools to facilitate student improvement. They make adjustments in their teaching based on student responses to their assessment questions. Additional texts were purchased last year that supported this systematic approach. This has led to an emphasis on the explicit teaching of grammar and writing structures that has improved the quality of student work across all grade levels.
- The school leadership has a strong, consistent observation protocol that includes the analysis of learning outcomes and promotes professional growth for all teachers. (4.1)
 - The assistant principals do the vast majority of short, frequent observations under the direct supervision of the principal. They use Danielson's framework to scaffold their work and Elmore's Instructional Rounds as the philosophical underpinning. They provide differentiated support for teachers including individualized coaching, collaborative learning walks and specific feedback both oral and written to strengthen instructional practices.
 - The administration uses student writing, projects and performance data to provide a more complete picture of teacher progress. Teachers have indicated during team meetings that they are aware of the next steps needed on their path of improvement. This has resulted in teacher growth as measured by student performance on unit tests.
- The school has a clear vision of its future evolution that is reflected in its focused, data-driven goals that are enthusiastically supported in the learning community leading to parental buy-in to support student progress. (3.1)
 - The school has clear goals that are discussed on the School Leadership Team (SLT) as well as in parent forums, workshops and meetings. The parents are aware of the general focus and direction of the school including the introduction of new reading materials and the upgrade of school and classroom libraries. They have engaged in fundraisers to support school needs such as copy machines and books. The CEP has been jointly developed with the participation of all constituencies. As a result parents express confidence in the direction of the school and volunteer in larger numbers than the previous years.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve family engagement in information-sharing and school decision-making to enhance student progress towards school expectations. (2.4)
 - Parents receive regular and systematic communication from the school on their children's progress. Teachers send information on students' attendance, behavior and academic performance through report cards, emails, letters and phone calls. However, parents rarely know how to help their children reach their individual goals, particularly with the integration of the CCLS tasks. The lack of support for parents on understanding the CCLS hinders some in providing help to their children in meeting their next steps. More specific, targeted communication between the home and school may facilitate engagement in school decision-making in order to lead to greater progress toward school expectations.
- Increase the tracking of student progress to maximize the impact on the achievement of student learning goals particularly among subgroups. (3.3)
 - The school regularly administers benchmark assessments to all students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. Administrators and grade level teams use Periodic Assessments and classroom unit tests to track progress towards school and class goals. The school uses this data to make adjustments in teaching strategies to meet its goals, such as bringing in additional ELA teaching and learning materials from McGraw Hill to supplement its lessons. However, instructional adjustments for subgroups are made almost entirely by the ELL and special education intervention specialists and not shared with the general education staff, resulting in a diminution of the school's plan for progress among general education teachers working with subgroups within their classrooms.
- Expand student development, support services and community-based organization partnerships to increase coherence in services to promote students' academic and personal growth. (4.4)
 - The school has embarked on an increasingly focused character education program. Six selected teachers provide professional coaching to the remainder of the staff on techniques to sustain a safe and respectful culture in the school. The guidance counselor and parent coordinator provide direct support to students and families on working to develop a strong foundation for secondary education and beyond. Parent volunteers are increasingly visible around the school building. However, limited external partnerships such as Scholastic are primarily academic in nature and do not directly support community services to families and students thus minimizing opportunities for students' personal and social growth.
- Refine the structures and systems for evaluating the effectiveness of teacher teams and leadership development strategies at the school to promote teacher improvement. (5.4)

- The administration reviews minutes, agendas and teacher feedback sheets after their regular meetings. The principal insists on teacher facilitation of all teams. Faculty and grade conferences focus on the sharing of successful strategies such as collaborative lesson planning and rubric development. However, the school has not yet refined their system to include the analysis of data to correlate with team effectiveness for example; teachers do not consistently rotate the role of team facilitator. Consequently, administrators are limited in implementing effective systems to monitor teacher effectiveness in order to support leadership capacity, leading to less ambitious teacher independence and growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Bellaire 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