

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**The Louis Desario School**

**Elementary 056**

**250 Kramer Avenue**

**Staten Island**

**NY 10309**

**Principal: Dean Scali**

**Dates of review: May 9 - 10, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Kathleen A. Burgess**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Louis Desario School is an elementary school with 783 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population is comprised of 87% White, 8% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 1% Black, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 52% and girls account for 48% of the students enrolled. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 is 95.8%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Teachers use instructional practices that reflect a set of beliefs on how children learn best to promote student thinking and enable them to produce meaningful work products. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms, teachers generally engage students in mini lessons supported by instructional moves such as 'stop and jot' or 'turn and talk'. There is a focus teaching point, small group instruction 'seat work', or independent practice, followed by a 'group share' summary. Fifth graders synthesized information on immigration to deepen their thinking about the differences between steerage and first class experiences. Students then moved from whole group sessions to tiered independent and small group activities. The coherence of this practice that is aligned with the curriculum results in a consistency of the school's belief about how students learn best.
  - Teaching strategies and routines based on the Workshop Model are consistent across most classrooms and lead some students to think about the content under study. In triads, students took turns reading different versions of Cinderella or the Three Little Pigs. As they read, their peers listened and framed questions for them. Responses required students to cite evidence from the story leading to discussions comparing and contrasting their stories, and developing logical arguments, resulting in a meaningful learning experience that reflects students' thinking.
- School leaders use resources and structure time to make decisions that support the school's instructional goal to engage student learning through common academic tasks. (1.3)
  - School leaders use resources to maintain a literacy/math coach, assign the coach from Teachers College for instructional continuity, and hire an F-Status part-time teacher to support identified students via academic intervention services. They purchased Smart Boards and informational texts to help teachers optimize and extend lessons to integrate academic tasks. Thus, there is some evidence of the alignment of resources to the school's instructional goal to engage student learning through common academic tasks.
  - Administrators structure time for staff to meet to address an instructional cycle of developing, implementing, reviewing, and revising academic tasks as they work to improve instruction and outcomes for students. Common planning time on every grade, additional periods for inquiry work, scheduling for a vertical team to meet, and utilizing a School Based Option for an additional 100 minutes 'for inquiry and planning' indicate the school's commitment to improve instruction and engage students in their learning.
- The school maintains an environment that is conducive to student and adult learning, where staff and students want to increase knowledge and grow professionally as learners. (1.4)

- Teachers engage in a range of internal and external workshops that are aligned with the school's instructional goals., Workshops, institutes and professional opportunities offered by the network, Teachers College, and external consultants, leading to the building of staff's capacity to improve the quality of the delivery of instruction. Students engage in enrichment and intervention activities that balance their instructional and developmental needs, resulting in the school's commitment to create an environment that supports adult pedagogy and promote student achievement.
- School leaders provide an after-school program that offers additional academic support for identified students. Sports and band are an option for some students, while others engage in community service and become sensitive to the needs of adults with disabilities. Students know their academic strengths and learning needs and articulate their feelings about school and learning. Students indicated that their teachers support them, resulting in their desire to do well and be successful in school. One noted, "I use the teaching points to help me focus on what I am learning." Another indicated, "I need to improve on mechanics when I write so I proof read my work to eliminate errors and I know my work is good when I grab the reader."
- Teacher teams participate in collaborative planning that is fostering conversation to strengthen consistency across grades and plan academic tasks to enhance curriculum development. (4.2 )
  - Teachers and coaches participate in collaborative planning teams on grade level or on a vertical core instructional team with administrative guidance and support. Teachers focus on looking at student work as they develop, review, and modify academic tasks, so that there is consistency across classes. In response to the need for students to maximize their ability to write about what they are reading and apply that knowledge and content, second grade teachers met to design a content-based unit that would result in the development of science journals. Teachers selected hands on experiments that would interest students but maintain the integrity of the workshop model resulting in the school's focus on developing units of study to improve student learning.
- The school's internal capacities prepare some students for grade level transitions that provide academic continuity and support their personal growth and development. (4.4 )
  - Established procedures are providing instructional support for students as they transition internally to the next grade and externally to middle school. Teachers focus on grade-to-grade movement by integrating elements from curriculum of the upcoming grade into their teaching at the end of the school year. Second graders are beginning to use editing marks consistent with third grade to deepen their writing skills and scaffold their understanding of the mechanics of grammar. Reciprocal visits prepare fifth graders for their transition to middle school as they develop an understanding of the culture and requirements of their new environment. These experiences are focused on providing continuity and a seamless transition to the next level.
  - School leaders have developed a partnership that provides identified students with academic support throughout the year. Activities offered

after school, during school breaks, and for seven weeks during the summer enable students to engage in academic as well as recreational and philanthropic activities to encourage academic and personal growth and development. These opportunities lend support to the school's vision developed by the leadership team 'to see a community where students not only improve academically but socially as well'.

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

- Refine the development of curricula and academic tasks to address student trends and emphasize rigorous habits and critical thinking skills so that diverse learners are cognitively engaged. (1.1)
  - The school has collaborated with the network to develop units of study and adjusted their curriculum maps to address the Common Core Learning Standards and meet the requirements of the citywide instructional expectations for all students. However, across grades the units do not consistently incorporate tiered activities that include the full spectrum of critical thinking skills that engage and challenge the varying levels of students in classes, reducing the school's ability to optimize learning outcomes for all students.
- Deepen the analysis of school level data to pinpoint causal trends in student progress and extend an identification of relevant subgroups to address the learning needs of all students. (2.1)
  - School leaders review assessments to understand student and school performance and the related strengths and areas for improvement. However, the school has not engaged in an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of year-to-year data to accurately identify trends in performance, make significant school level instructional decisions, and appropriately determine subgroups of students. As a result of not fully understanding the underlying causes that affect student progress over time, and identifying subgroups of students beyond reading levels, the school is minimizing its opportunity to sustain educational improvements for all students across all content areas.
- Expand classroom level assessment procedures that identify and align the strengths and needs of students with instructional strategies to strategically adjust practices and accelerate student outcomes. (2.2)
  - Teachers conduct multiple assessments in literacy and math, and across grades, they use data binders to monitor student learning and progress. However, the process of creating customized rubrics to address the data-defined needs of subgroups of students and make instructional adjustments to accommodate their learning needs is not an embedded practice. As a result, the alignment of curriculum to identified groups and subgroups of students is minimized, reducing the school's ability to explicitly impact and accelerate student outcomes.
- Improve classroom-level goal setting practices in order to target the deficits of student groups and advance student learning. (3.2)
  - Teachers in teams and individual teachers review assessments to set goals for their assigned students. However, the process to develop data driven goals and target the needs of individual students and relevant sub-

groups of students is not consistent across classes and grades. Consequently, teachers' ability to successfully make instructional decisions that effect change in their practice, develop suitable goals, and improve outcomes for targeted groups of students, particularly those in need of additional instructional support, is reduced.

- Enhance feedback practices that explicitly capture trends in teacher pedagogy along with next steps to deepen instructional practices and improve student performance. (4.1)
  - School leaders conduct cycles of observation that focus on specific competencies using a research based common framework that provides salient information on teacher performance. However, aligning the results of the observations with an analysis of student data and work products is not integrated in a systematic way to provide a focused and informed picture of the trends in teacher performance, resulting in missed opportunities to effectively target teacher support and provide professional development to improve outcomes for students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: The Louis Desario Elementary School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?		<b>X</b>		
<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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		<b>X</b>		

<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>