

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**P.S. 006 West Farms
Elementary school X006**

**1000 EAST TREMONT AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10460**

Principal: Juliet Young

**Dates of review: May 16-17, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

West Farms is an elementary school with 710 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 22% Black, 69% Hispanic, 1% White, and 8% other students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 88.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is developing a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes whereby students and adults are developing mutual trust and respect. (1.4)
 - The school has a new leader who is introducing the Positive Behavior Instructional Support (PBIS) program to improve safety, tone, and climate. As a result, students are developing improved social skills, there are fewer incidents reported on the On-line Reporting System (OORS) as compared to last year, and there is a culture of support for the academic and personal growth of students and adults.
 - The school is developing a team to target chronic absenteeism, providing incentives and recognition for perfect attendance and supports for families and students such as group meetings for chronic absentees. As a result, attendance has improved by 2%.
- The school gathers a range of summative and formative data and analyzes student outcomes in order to establish school goals by identifying strengths and areas of need. (2.1)
 - The leadership is reorganizing the school leadership team (SLT) and instructional cabinet so that they analyze State English language arts (ELA) and math assessments, attendance, and safety data, to identify the reading and writing needs of students and areas in which teachers need help. The focus is to improve instruction, thus positively impacting student academic outcomes.
 - The leadership is beginning to analyze data on some subgroups such as English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD) as evident in data reports that are shared with staff and action plans based on this data. Individual teachers are now assigned to work in classrooms with a targeted set of students, including SWD and ELL's, to lower the student to adult ratio so that students receive targeted assistance which is improving achievement towards meeting student learning goals.
- Families and students are offered opportunities to participate in decision-making and activities, and have open exchanges of information concerning student achievement of school and class goals and expectations. (2.4)
 - Parents shared in interviews that they are represented in the parent association (PA) and school leadership team (SLT), and as such are involved in decision-making processes. Connected to safety items, parents have the opportunity via the safety committee to help resolve concerns and help make decisions regarding safeguarding exits and tightening security in the hallways. As a result of ongoing participation, parents feel relevant issues are taken seriously; they are part of the process to resolve problems, and they have impact on their children's learning.
 - The school leaders and faculty provide parents with progress reports that indicate student reading levels and next steps for achieving higher reading levels, as well as goals for social studies, science, English, and math. Parents and students indicated that teachers are accessible before and after classes to

discuss student progress. Teachers and parents also communicate via telephone and emails about attendance, social behaviors both good and bad, assignments, and quality of student work products, which is helping students improve in academic and social areas.

- The faculty and administration are engaged in professional collaborations and the school is developing distributed leadership opportunities for teachers to assume key decision-making roles regarding student and teacher learning. (4.2)
 - Teachers meet weekly in grade teams and professional learning communities led by a school designated teacher leader. Additionally, teacher leaders meet with the administration weekly to both analyze student performance through the analysis of work products and share teacher team instructional decisions. The principal encourages teachers to take on leadership roles in the SLT, and professional development program, and encourages development of teacher leaders through attendance at out-of-school professional development. Those who attend Teachers College turnkey learning to their peers and help the administration develop future professional development. As a result, teachers have a vested interest in school-wide performance and in their own learning, as they are part of the decision-making processes in instructional matters.
- The school leaders communicate high expectations to students and adults and are developing supports to help students and adults achieve them. (3.4)
 - The school's new principal is working with the other administrators to create a culture of mutual accountability among all constituents. The developing of high expectations for teachers in instruction and professionalism is conveyed by the embedding of teacher team meetings and professional development into the school's schedule, and the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching to improve teacher pedagogy within a reflective environment. High academic expectations are communicated consistently to students and families by providing academic goals and next steps, such as the reading and writing levels and expected outcomes for each benchmark, including June goals. As a result, teachers, students, and families, express that they are fully informed of the school's expectations and are in the process of achieving them.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop strategies to support a diversity of student learners through the design of the curricula aligned to tasks in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). (1.1)
 - The school is developing the curricula in ELA and math by embedding Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning in order to produce higher order thinking skills. However, student work is not sufficiently rigorous. Even though in the early childhood grades student work demonstrates high levels of thinking and writing, in the upper grades the assignments in class or work products do not provide different points of entry for diverse learners, or provide challenging tasks for higher achievers. In some classes, students are not fully engaged because tasks do not include suitable vocabulary supports for monolingual and/or bilingual students. As a result, the achievement gap is not being closed for relevant subgroups.

- Work to improve teacher pedagogy to ensure that it is aligned to curricula, engaging, and differentiated, to ensure that all students are exposed to rigorous tasks that produce high-level work products. (1.2)
 - Teaching practices reflect the school wide set of beliefs that children learn best using the workshop model, where the teacher models expected outcomes, students work in groups to master concepts, and share learning with whole class. These practices are not evident in all classes, and in some lower grade classes, students spend time filling in worksheets and have few opportunities for peer-to-peer conversations, revisions, or sharing of knowledge. As a result, school-wide student engagement is limited and there are uneven levels of high quality student work and student improvement.
 - The school is developing strategies to address a variety of learners, such as using ELL strategies of repetition and vocabulary building for all students, and assigning extension tasks for higher achievers, but it is not yet evident across all classrooms. Additionally, diverse groups of students receive the same tasks, regardless of specific needs, thus hindering their full engagement or success in the work. As a result, improvement in students' performance and progress is not sufficiently accelerated as evident in the data and authentic student work.
- Align organizational decisions, especially those regarding resources, with the school's instructional goals to meet student learning and social/emotional needs. (1.3)
 - The leadership is using its resources to address the low levels of attendance and social behaviors. As such, the school is developing activities, such as student incentives in the form of a school store so students are able to trade-in certificates received for good behavior for awards. Although resources to support public recognition in the form of assemblies and awards for perfect attendance are being developed, they have not yet impacted substantial change. Attendance and social behaviors are still a concern as demonstrated by only a small rise in attendance and excessive (OORS) reports. As a result, students with low attendance rates and/or social behavioral concerns are not sufficiently present in school to be engaged in learning or held responsible for producing acceptable work.
 - The school teams meet weekly and are developing strategies to address student needs through the analysis of student work products. However, teacher teams have not fully developed the necessary strategies that effectively engage students in challenging academic tasks. As a result, across classrooms the potential to improve instruction is reduced because teacher teams are not developing high levels of student tasks, which results in uneven levels of student engagement and improved student work.
- Ensure that analysis of student learning outcomes includes the needs of student subgroups, and that teacher assessment practices consistently reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers and individual teachers analyze class and individual student class and periodic assessment data to assess strengths and weaknesses but do not sufficiently analyze data for the varied subgroups in the school including students in temporary housing (STH), high achievers, and students with mid-levels of attendance. As a result, these students are not targeted for specific

supports or extensions, which affect their class grades and attainment of academic goals.

- In many classes, teachers assess student learning by checking for understanding. Students are asked to use varied techniques such as pads to write answers to questions posed, or fingers to indicate the right answer. However, these practices are inconsistent across the grades, and many times checking for understanding is simply asking students as a group if they understand and the responses are in choral form. As a result, as the school is still developing strategies for checking for understanding, teachers are not fully aware if students comprehend content or concepts and often continue with lessons. Thus, students are not adequately supported in meeting learning targets as evident in student work products.
- 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 (4.1)
 - The leadership engages in short cycles of observations, with mentoring supports for new teachers. However, the leadership does not aptly provide detailed strategic feedback to teachers or substantial support for teachers to improve teaching strategies and routines. In some classes teacher and student routines are not strategic or organized to allow ample teaching time. Observations do not include essential elements of good instruction, often missing out on highlighting pacing and timing of activities, references to student routines and classroom organization. In many classrooms students spend time waiting for directions, distribution of materials, or for new directions, which result in lost student learning and academic improvement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: West Farms	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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------