

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Crescent
Elementary School 057
2111 CROTONA AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10457

Principal: EDSEL PHILIP

Dates of review: January 11-12, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Crescent is an elementary school with 512 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 26% Black, 65% Hispanic, 1% White, and 6% other students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 18% 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 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty align the curricula to the new State standards and aim for all learners to improve student outcomes. (1.1)
 - The school is integrating the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for reading, writing, listening and speaking through the work of the inquiry and teacher teams. Writing across the curricula provides a framework within each subject area. As a result, students are developing their writing stamina.
 - Faculty who revise subject area curriculum maps use them to examine student work and to develop lesson plans that address student needs. Academic tasks reflect planning for a variety of students, which results in student engagement in some classes across the grades.
- The school leadership makes organizational decisions that support the school's instructional goals to improve student outcomes. (1.3)
 - With a tight budget the principal maintains the Arts via the teacher's integration of art with literacy using the CCLS and Blueprint for the Arts standards. Students in both small and large groups expressed how important it was for them to be able to produce artwork that results in their being more engaged in the curricula and in their own learning.
 - The scheduling of common planning time once a week and attending volunteer lunch meetings makes it possible for teacher teams to refine lessons and units. The English language arts (ELA) teachers develop units using more non-fiction texts, which has resulted in more challenging academic tasks and assignments for students.
- The school has a vision of its future development that is evident in its short list of goals that are shared and supported by the faculty. (3.1)
 - The school goals that include the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards in English and math are informed from data including State and periodic assessments. Teachers share and support these goals in their professional learning team meetings by developing action plans to integrate the CCLS into their lessons, resulting in plans that are beginning to accelerate student learning.
 - The school communicates and involves the faculty, staff, and parents, through the teacher teams and school leadership team meetings, resulting in a shared vision for the academic development of students. Parents indicated that the teachers take the time to speak to them after school and call them throughout the year reinforcing what the school's goals are for each child, thus reinforcing the school's vision and mission.
- The school uses collaborative and data imbedded processes to set learning goals for students in need of support. (3.2)
 - Teachers use a system of conferencing with individual students to inform them of their goals, thus providing students with a focus around achieving high levels of work in English, math, science, and social studies. Consequently, teachers group students, using data to inform instructional goals. Analysis of authentic student work guides discussion at the team level.

- Teacher teams meet weekly to collaborate on setting goals for targeted students and share best practices in order to support them to achieve. Each team targets and groups about five lower performing students, and strategizes how to teach them relevant concepts. As a result, some of the targeted students have been achieving at a steady pace.
- The school is developing a tracking process at the school and classroom level to ensure the achievement of learning goals. (3.3)
 - School leaders collect monthly assessment and student work from all classes to track progress towards school-wide plans and goals. The findings are discussed by the administration, and results in conversations with teachers who have students not suitably progressing. This leads to targeted recommendations to teachers on how to improve results including encouraging peer intervisitations to share and learn best practices.
 - Individual teachers and teacher teams use various data, including class and periodic assessments, to track progress of students on whom they are focusing, and use this information to adjust and revise student goals. This helps teachers to identify skills that still need to be taught, and as a team develop teaching strategies to address specific student needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop systems for sharing information with students and families making periodic adjustments as needed to ensure that they are engaged in the learning process. (5.2)
 - The school does not evaluate its grading policies. As a result, grading policies vary across grades as well as from class to class, which does not allow an accurate assessment of student learning and teacher effectiveness.
 - Parents are formally informed through report cards and parent conferences about their children's progress. However, overall the school sporadically evaluates and adjusts the format for sharing performance data, although parents said that many teachers do it informally when approached by them to discuss their children's progress. This results in uneven access to information for those parents who do not have this opportunity.
- Ensure the development of instructional leadership and capacity building to ensure that structured professional collaborations are effective. (5.4)
 - School leaders inconsistently use data to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams engaged in structured collaborations. The teacher teams meet weekly but there are no formal structures, such as protocols or agendas. Teachers are highly professional and meet on a volunteer basis during their lunch periods, but there are no plans or systems to provide suitable training so that lead teachers ensure the professional collaborations are highly effective.
 - The school leaders inconsistently promote the school's leadership development opportunities and structures to support distributed leadership. Although there are lead teachers on school teams, there are no formal structures for them to meet with the leadership, thus minimizing their role in instructional decision-making.

- Develop teacher pedagogy from a shared set of beliefs about how students learn best ensuring that curriculum and lessons are engaging and differentiated so that all students produce high-level work products. (1.2)
 - Across classes questioning and teaching strategies offer limited differentiation learning opportunities such as varied entry points for English language learners and other subgroups, and rigorous extension exercises for higher achieving students. In some classes, this results in uneven levels of cognitive engagement for these groups.
 - Across classrooms teaching strategies and questioning lead to uneven levels of student thinking and participation. In some classes, students are very engaged in high level thinking tasks. However, across the grades and classes, questioning leads to one word answers and though the school aspires to achieving accountable talk, there is little evidence of high levels of vocabulary building strategies. As a result, students do their assignments out of compliance, but not because they are always cognitively engaged which affects the caliber of their work products.
- Further analyze and share information on student achievement to track school and student progress. (2.2)
 - Individual and teams of teachers use various data including class assignments and assessments to analyze student data in order to group students and determine teaching strategies. However, they do not identify strengths and needs of some subgroups such as English language learners and higher achieving students as evidenced in the teaching strategies employed throughout lessons in many classrooms.
 - Across classrooms, on-going strategies to check for student understanding and learning were limited and inconsistently reflected the use of student self-assessment. As a result, in some classes teachers do not make the necessary adjustments during instruction to assure that all students are learning.
- Observe classroom teaching and analyze student-learning outcomes in order to implement strategies that promote professional growth. (4.1)
 - School leaders support teachers' development but feedback and next steps from classroom observations and student work/data are not effectively articulated in terms of targeted professional development, thus hindering improved teaching practices to promote student achievement.
 - School leaders use infrequent cycles of classroom observations to provide feedback and next steps, but this process is not sufficiently effective to change teaching strategies. To date, one informal and one formal observation for each teacher has been effected, but there is little evidence that feedback and next steps are targeting school learning goals such as elevating teacher practices in differentiation, higher order thinking questioning, and rigorous tasks for all students. As a result, student engagement and achievement are uneven throughout many classes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Crescent	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
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