

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**Environmental, Science, Mathematics, & Technology**

**Middle School 190**

**1550 CROTONA PARK EAST  
BRONX  
NY 10460**

**Principal: Diana Jade Santiago**

**Dates of review: February 02-3, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Environmental, Science, Mathematics & Technology is a middle school with 253 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 30% Black, and 70% Hispanic, students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school maintains a positive environment that promotes mutual trust and respect among all constituencies, resulting in a very positive learning environment. (1.4)
  - o The school uses well its data from the Learning Environment Survey, attendance, and incident reports, to set, review, revise and monitor identified goals. As a result of this environment, the school has data that students are demonstrating a steady upward trend in various assessments, which the community attributes to the positive learning environment.
  - o Students and families agree that they are well known by many of the faculty and staff members, including the coaches, parent coordinator, assistant principal, and principal. Teams of staff help to coordinate social-emotional, interventions, and special youth supports such as the Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS), a behavioral-academic program, which has resulted in improved student behavior as evidenced in the decrease in student suspensions compared to the prior years. The school was designated as a school with high disciplinary concerns, and in less than a year was taken off the Department of Education's list of schools with behavioral issues.
- School leaders and faculty consistently gather and analyze student data and develop tools, which allow them to make informed decisions regarding curricula and instruction. (2.3)
  - o The school uses ARIS and grade-keeping tools to provide them with instant data regarding student information. Accessed through various technologies, including computer and cell phones, the administration and faculty are aware of trends in student progress on a weekly basis, resulting in better school level decision making in the areas of revising learning goals and developing next steps for improving teacher pedagogy. Additionally, teacher teams use this data to develop teaching strategies by sharing best practices and visiting each other's classes to hone new strategies and techniques resulting in some improved student achievement.
  - o The school analyzed last year's Progress Report that indicated that 100% of their students achieved a passing grade in English, yet a large percentage of students did not achieve well on the State assessment. The school has developed uniform grading and common assessment policies, which emphasize student achievement in content and portfolio performance. As a result the school is able to accumulate data about student mastery and is guided to make targeted revisions in tasks and assessments to improve student work.
- The school's culture embraces family engagement in decision-making and provides for timely information on student learning outcomes, ensuring open communication and understanding of school initiatives. (2.4)
  - o An open door policy enables parents and students to work with teachers to understand and support meeting expectations and learning goals. Families have access to student performance data, attendance, and grades through N-grades a program that allows for instant access to a student's progress report via the internet or cell phone. This has resulted in better communication between the school and parents who are now fully aware of homework, tests, quizzes, and

- assignments on a daily basis, leading to a marked improvement in their children's behavior and academics.
- o School leaders regularly engage families and students in decision-making and school activities by empowering the Parent-Guardian Association to work with the school leadership team to help develop school policies in areas including dress codes, academic, and behavioral programs. These practices are helping parents understand how school decisions promote student progress over time.
  - The school sets goals for accelerating student learning and tracks progress at the school, teacher team, and class level, which results in improved student progress. (3.3)
    - o The school uses State, benchmark, class, and periodic assessment data to set learning goals and track progress of action plans. Teachers meet weekly with the literacy coach to review student work to ascertain progress towards goals set for each class and individual students. The school leadership meets every month to review data and recommendations of the teacher teams leading to revisions in school plans. As a result, adjustments to school plans and goals are made throughout the year and are communicated to the school community resulting in some improved student outcomes.
    - o Teacher teams and individual teachers use various tools including periodic assessments, State, and class data, to adjust learning goals for individual students and groups of students including English language learners and special needs students. As a result, student data, which includes class, periodic, reading, and writing assessments, shows that the school is developing an upward trend in progress of some of the English language learners and special needs students.
  - The school accelerates academic and personal growth of students through the integration of youth development supports and partnerships with outside organizations. (4.4)
    - o The school has adopted the PBIS behavioral intervention program to help accelerate student learning by changing social behaviors. The school offers targeted professional development and student activities around accentuating positive student behaviors. Students receive rewards and recognition periodically, and the data shows improvement in this area as evidenced in a decrease in suspensions, and a respectful school and classroom environments. The school's tracking of the academic progress of students who were targeted for behavior modification and the results show steady growth in reading and core subjects, such as English, math, social studies, and science.
    - o The school has developed a new guidance and academic intervention program for students to achieve the skills necessary to succeed in high school. Via the internal leadership capacity of a lead teacher responsible for initiating this program, students with behavioral needs are improving in behavior and academics.

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

- Design engaging, rigorous curricula and tasks, including the arts for diverse populations aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. (1.1)

- o School leaders and teacher teams are aligning their English and math curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and choosing key standards in literacy, writing, and math as part of their school goals. Class and assignment tasks, however, are not consistently as rigorous in higher order thinking skills across the grades, or effectively differentiated for the various subgroups in the classes. As a result, English language learners, students with modified educational plans, and higher achieving students, are not fully engaged at various times during lessons and are not accelerating their learning rates.
- Develop teacher pedagogy so that there is alignment as to beliefs on how students learn best that is shared by all teachers and reflected in teaching strategies across all grades. (1.2)
  - o Across classes teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curriculum and to a set of beliefs about how students learn best. However, rigorous and engaging tasks and activities that promote cognitive student engagement are not evident across all grades. In some classes the tasks require summarization or address basic skills, which do not enhance or augment student learning. Although students were respectful and quiet in all classes, the level of cognitive engagement was uneven across the grades because not all work responded to the needs of all students, including high achieving students. In some classes students indicated they had already learned what was being taught and had no challenging work to do during the lesson. Some students in various classes needed different entry points within the lesson in order to engage in the work. As a result of uneven teaching practices, groups of students are not engaged in learning at high levels.
  - o The school is working diligently addressing at-risk students in both behavioral and academic areas. Across classrooms however, there is little evidence of teaching strategies that offer diverse entry points, extension tasks, and high level questioning. As a result, the needs of groups of students such as English language learners and high achieving students are not being met.
- Further align budget, assignment of coaches, and technology resources to support school's instructional goals in literacy and technology to produce meaningful student work products. (1.3)
  - o The school is developing an alignment between its goals and resources, but there is inconsistency in the levels of student work products exhibiting higher order thinking skills, which is one of the schools instructional goals. Some assignments of leaders and coaches are not aligned to the professional development needs of all teachers as evidenced in teacher pedagogy and the uneven production of high-level work in some classes. The work in teacher teams and school professional development activities have yet to produce the high levels of student work that the school has set as one of its goals. The results are uneven teacher practices producing learning and work products that do not exhibit higher order thinking across all classes and grades.
  - o Alignment between the school's instructional goals and hiring practices and teacher assignments is developing. However, some teacher assignments are currently not supporting high levels of student work as evidenced in student work products and periodic assessment data. The school has reassigned and reevaluated some faculty and staff, but not all teacher assignments are leading to improved student outcomes, which the leadership has begun to address.

- Analyze student-learning outcomes across the grades to understand school and student progress over time to adjust instructional decisions at the team and class level. (2.2)
  - o Across classrooms teachers use entry and exit slips to check for understanding. However, during class time, assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of on-going checks for understanding and student self-assessment, limiting teachers' ability to adjust their teaching to reach all students.
  - o Teams of teachers and individual teachers use summative data analysis including benchmark, class, and periodic assessments to determine students' strengths and weaknesses and areas for improvement. During team meetings, staff use this data to determine what instructional techniques to use to improve student outcomes. However, the school is not yet sufficiently targeting high-level achievers effectively. Therefore, this subgroup is not achieving as rapidly as high achieving students in peer schools.
- Use the observation of class teaching and analyze student performance periodically to develop targeted professional development that will meet the needs of teachers and promote student achievement. (4.1)
  - o School leaders are very supportive of their teachers providing professional development and resources to improve teaching and learning. However, the impact of professional development is not yet evidenced in teacher practices in classrooms. Though the leadership provides feedback from the frequent cycles of observation and has developed a culture of reflective practices there are pockets of inconsistency in teacher pedagogy. As a result, student engagement in some classes is uneven and assessment results though improving are not as high across all grades or groups of students.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: <b>Environmental, Science, Mathematics, &amp; Technology</b>	UD	D	P	WD
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		X		
<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>	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
<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>	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	
<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>	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**

<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>
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------