

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

SHERIDAN ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LEADERS

Early Childhood School 457

**1116 SHERIDAN AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10456**

Principal: LISETTE FEBUS

Dates of review: May 15 - 16, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Evelyn Castro

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

SHERIDAN ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LEADERS is an early childhood school with 442 students from kindergarten through grade 3. The school population comprises 39% Black, 49% Hispanic, 1% White, 2% Asian students, and 8% other students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 13% 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 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school tone is one of trust respect, and positive attitudes toward learning that support academic and personal growth through engagement in a school model of student development. (1.4)
 - o The school's engagement activities allow students to participate in well-varied activities that address and promote both its academic and social goals. Through after school programs including Building Young Professionals, School Health and Wellness, Girls On The Run, Tai Chi , Leo's Sports Club, and community collaborations including the Morris Heights Clinic, the school's environment conveys a culture of caring and youth development. Additionally the school has adopted and engages in workshops regarding Covey's 7 Habits for Highly Effective People which enables students to set goals, sharpen skills, and engage in positive social development which further supports academic achievement.
 - o Activities in the school include a student council that allows student voice to be heard through elected members. In addition, mentoring by local high school students, a school mascot who reinforces good citizenship, school money that is used for the purchase of school supplies and books at the school store, special assemblies celebrating the culture of the community, all support positive interactions between the adults and students in the school. Furthermore, students stated in interviews that each of them is known well by at least one adult in the school. The Positive Behavior System Matrix is used to monitor student behavior, and school activities promote positive emotional learning and good attendance as evidenced by student interviews and school attendance data.
- Principal and staff gather and analyze relevant data to understand and make decisions to support student progress and make school wide decisions. (2.1)
 - o School leaders and teachers in designing an assessment system include analysis of summative assessment data as well as disaggregating data by gender, grade, emergent bilingual speakers, and students with disabilities. A drop box and spreadsheet include reading levels aligned to the Fontas and Pinell reading system. All teachers have access to this data, which enables them to plan more effectively as evidenced by the examination of lesson plans.
 - o School analysis of classroom and periodic data using the Student Assessment and Management System (SAMS) revealed a trend where grade 3 girls were out performing boys in English language arts and math. School leaders and teachers to support student learning differentiated activities for identified subgroups to improve student outcomes. Examination of teacher made assessments in classroom binders revealed an improvement in the male students' scores.
- The school leaders have developed a system for looking at data school wide on a continuous basis and use it to give actionable feedback to teachers. (2.3)
 - o School leaders and teachers aggregate data using spreadsheets and a drop box, which is accessed on a daily basis to gain information regarding trends in achievement of students by gender. As a result a decision was made to

- purchase high interest materials to engage both boys and girl students. Additionally the decisions regarding grading policies and focus of instruction became part of teacher planning as evidenced during the observation of the teacher team meetings.
- o Data from SAMS is used by school leaders and staff to develop student profiles that include attendance, results from English language arts (ELA) and math assessments, City, State, and teacher-made exams . School leaders meet with teachers one-to-one at the beginning of the year, mid-year, and end-year to collaborate on data analysis for each class' profile. These meetings help to monitor progress and plan effective instruction.
 - Professional collaborations occur several times a week and are monitored for effectiveness based on student outcomes. (5.4)
 - o School leaders regularly visit team meetings, review minutes, and collect agendas to monitor the impact of teamwork on classroom instruction. Evidence provided by the math team's minutes and observations revealed analysis of common core learning tasks and analysis of class data that affected teacher practice by ensuring the analysis of and modifying tasks to maximize student success. Some teachers in the group described adding additional steps to the learning task to provide more rigor to a math challenge.
 - o Evidence of minutes and agendas reveal that the ELA teacher team that meets several times weekly includes rotation of leadership. Teachers share best practices and effect decision making by their insights regarding school wide initiatives including a School Based Option for tutoring, a Renzulli initiative to challenge students and develop student interest and talent, and electing membership in the steering committee and the events committee. Thus, both new and senior teachers report feeling supported and mentored in their teaching practice.
 - Leaders make effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to align efforts to reach the instructional goals of the school and meet student needs. (1.3)
 - o School leaders collaborate with faculty at staff retreats and school planning meetings on the use of resources to improve student outcomes. As a result, the school purchased smart boards, invested in consultant services, and developed a data portfolio giving access to all teachers to help them plan more effectively.
 - o Schedules reveal grade-level teachers have lunch and preparation periods together in order to facilitate team planning several times a week. Teachers reported in interviews that the more time to plan lessons collaboratively helps them to create challenging and interesting lessons. Resources allocated for technology provide students with equipment to do a school wide video broadcast that is viewed by all students each morning in their classrooms, thus allowing for less movement out of class for a daily assembly and more instructional time. Additionally, the broadcast reinforces the school's expectations by emphasizing schools goals on nutrition and achievement, highlighting students and classes for exemplary work, and featuring special projects on community service.
 - School leaders do frequent observations of teachers both formally and informally using a research-based rubric to support teacher development and focus instructional practice. (4.1)

- o School leaders maintain an instructional focus by giving actionable feedback to teachers after formal and informal observations. New and senior teachers elevate practice with an embedded customized staff development plan designed for each of them. Professional development sessions, team meetings, coaching, and demonstrations aligned to the instructional program, enable the school to improve instruction.
- o Performance evaluation is part of an embedded system. Each teacher has an individual plan, the Danielson rubric is used as the context for formal and informal observations, and a tenure rubric is used over a period of three years to assist in tenure decision making. Professional growth and evaluation systems created at the school foster alignment of evaluation to the instructional goals of the school.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend consistent teaching of rigorous coherent curriculum that is standards based across all classrooms using teaching strategies that improve outcomes for diverse learners. (1.1)
 - o Common Core Learning Standards In English language arts and math are being integrated into the curriculum across the school so students are engaged in rigorous tasks and higher order thinking. Teaching teams collaborate on the (CCLS) tasks and plan for a variety of students. Some classrooms are exemplary in evidencing engaging and rigorous curriculum and are able to plan well for all populations including English language learner's and students with disabilities. All students in those specific classes produce high quality work. However, this is not consistent across all classrooms. Questioning in some classes did not always lead to high levels of student thinking or quality work products. Students were not always sure of what was expected of them, thus the school does not yet engage all students in a rigorous and engaging curriculum hindering closing of the achievement gap for diverse student populations.
- Expand the use of data analysis to further differentiate instruction, check for understanding, and support targeted instruction. (2.2)
 - o Data is gathered from a number of sources, analyzed and deposited in the school's drop box. Analyzed data is used during teacher collaboration and planning meetings to facilitate differentiation of instruction to meet student needs. However, data binders in grade 3 classrooms reveal that not all teachers were able to use rubrics to connect last year's data to focus this year's work. As a result this limits closing the achievement gap and increasing student performance, as evidenced by classroom assessments.
 - o Exit tickets that check for student understanding were observed in some third grade classes, however not all teachers observed in the lower grades created checks for understanding so students understood step-by-step how to create high quality work products. Currently, not all teachers are adept at creating authentic assessments that can supplement summative data, thus missing out on developing a deepened understanding of student learning, allowing for on-going checks for understanding, and improving instruction and student performance as evidenced by the State assessments.

- Refine action planning by developing interim goals and benchmarks so that adjustments can be made and progress toward goals can be measured and success evaluated. (5.3)
 - o Observations of teacher teams and interviews with school leaders reveal that a seamless method of developing authentic assessments tools to measure interim progress towards achieving goals across grades has not yet been accomplished. Thus the school misses out measuring progress toward interim goals impacting focused instruction and limiting student success.
 - o The instructional cabinet plays a role in the annual planning process as do school leaders and parents and teachers at each level. Faculty engages in a needs assessment process, end-year exit conferences, and use a multi-year action planning. Although the planning process, which uses the shared electronic data system, is transparent and promotes a culture of sharing progress toward school goals, there are still areas that are not yet fully measureable by interim benchmarks, therefore limiting suitable adjustments.
- Extend the schools belief and practice in differentiation of instruction and the teaching of higher order thinking skills to maximize student learning. (1.2)
 - o School leaders provided professional development to facilitate better understanding of student learning styles by having teachers engage in workshops that helped them understand their own learning patterns within a group. However, not all teachers used this information to improve their practice in grouping and regrouping students for effective instruction, therefore missing supporting suitable differentiation to target specific learning and skill acquisition for all students.
 - o Review of lesson plans reveal that many teachers use Depth of Knowledge levels in their lesson planning as well as indicating an essential question. However, further examination of lesson plans and observations revealed that individual teachers were not practicing “think time”, probing questioning, or scaffolding of lessons, therefore missing out on offering adequate choices for students to show their understanding..

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: SHERIDAN ACADEMY FOR YOUNG LEADERS	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
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