

Quality Review Report

2009-2010

Albert Einstein School

Middle School 131

885 Bolton Avenue

Bronx

NY 10473

Principal: Edward C Leotta

Dates of review: October 26 - 27, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Albert Einstein is a middle school with 910 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 59% Hispanic, less than 1% White, and 3% Asian and less than 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2008 - 2009 was 91.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school has a three-academy framework, which is effective in ensuring students have a sense of identity in an organized and secure learning environment. To support the motto, "transition to middle school is not an event it's a process, an evolution", the school created a new academy. The Evolution 6 academy supports what the school data purports that incoming sixth graders needs supports for emotional and academic success. Since its inception this year, attendance rates have improved and suspensions have decreased.

The implementation of this academy is a direct result of the informed vision and commitment of the principal, supported by effective and highly motivated assistant principals to move the school forward by creating a warm and nurturing environment. The school's curricula in all core content areas support the delivery of standards based instruction. The staff members collaborate well and assist each other professionally to align the school's goals to enhance instruction and student outcomes, as evidenced by improved reading and math scores. As the administration states, "We do whatever it takes". To increase parental involvement the school created a parental engagement center. Now parents have direct access to computers and can speak to the parent coordinator on an as needed basis. Parents speak highly of this initiative, which has resulted in greater attendance at workshops and parent-teacher association meetings. Parents state that the principal is a good leader who is always available to speak to them. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is a collaborative process where parents are stakeholders in the education of their children. The principal has prioritized professional development opportunities that focus on the implementation of SMARTboards into classroom instruction and how to maintain a safe environment and a respectful culture. Organizational decisions emphasize teacher collaboration by providing common prep periods.

The dedicated teachers are making significant strides in the strategic use of student performance data to drive instructional decisions. Interim measurable goals for students and staff are not yet fully developed. While the school is developing skills in further differentiating instruction to meet the needs of specific students, especially its subgroups, this is not yet consistent across grades and content areas. The collaborative inquiry teams do not define academic trends in student learning that would inform modification for instruction. A comprehensive after school program allows students to expand their learning potential by receiving support in a structured social environment.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The staff members collaborate well and assist each other professionally to align the school's goals to improve instruction and student outcomes.
 - In school teacher teams meet regularly to review assessment options and discuss test outcomes in order to drive classroom instruction and student performance.
 - A newly hired English language arts consultant assists teachers with the development of lesson plans and curriculum maps by reviewing school wide data. This informs decisions that align curricula to State standards to ensure that they challenge and engage students.
- The administration and faculty gather a variety of data across all subjects to create an overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
 - An analysis of last year's English language arts Acuity assessment revealed that the content of the test did not completely align with the school's curriculum. As a result, the school has chosen to partially design their own assessment. This is in order to generate accurate information regarding students' strengths and weaknesses.
 - By reviewing the results of State assessments, attendance, suspensions, and the Learning Environment Survey, the school identified the need to assist sixth graders with the adjustment to middle school. Based on this, the school initiated a peer support program where eighth graders buddy up with sixth graders to offer social and academic support.
- The staff, students, and parents share and demonstrate high expectations for improving student achievement.
 - The school has created a parent engagement center, which promotes involvement. The school welcomes parents and encourages them to meet with the parent coordinator to address school goals, concerns and to access the ARIS parent link. This enables parents to know how their children are doing at school. The center has increased parental involvement as evidenced by daily usage and has provided another way for the school to communicate high expectations.
 - The development of an interactive website highlights the school's commitment to communicate high expectations and important information regarding school activities. The school updates the site regularly. The school considers that the large parental turnout at the ARIS training was a direct result of announcing it on the website.
- The school's systems and partnerships support students and their families in continued learning and promote personal growth and development.

- The administration conducts focused classroom walkthroughs specifically noting student behavior. They provide professional development opportunities to staff that highlight maintaining a safe environment and a respectful culture. As a result of the walkthroughs and professional development, there has been a decrease in student suspensions.
- The comprehensive after school program includes yearbook, music, drama, chess, sports and student government. These activities provide opportunities for students to expand their learning potential in a structures social environment. The program is very successful as evidenced by the majority of students participating in these extra curricular clubs.
- The cohesive cabinet works to drive the school forward by sharing its academic vision with the community to improve student outcomes by refining practice to meet students' needs.
 - The school's analysis of data determines the impact of curriculum initiatives and interventions. It makes adjustments as needed such as when it noticed the prevalence of grade 6 incidents and created the E6 academy as a continuous support program for middle school success. Support includes a guidance department that provides social and emotional support so that students can learn and practice coping strategies. Consequently, attendance rates are good and incidents are down.
 - Teacher teams have enabled staff to develop leadership capacity by analyzing data, sharing their results with colleagues leading to the adjustment of the curriculum to meet the needs of students.
- School leaders use data regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of organizational decisions, interventions, professional development and staff assignment.
 - The administration's regular analysis of academic programs and interventions led to the school realizing that they were teaching to the average student. As a result the school did a gap analysis and began initiatives to set learning targets for the lower and higher performing students.
 - The literacy committee meets regularly to monitor and revise the curriculum by identifying content areas where there is a need for improvements in plans or strategies. This self-evaluation has resulted in increased teacher collaboration, improved lesson planning and improved student performance. Sixty-five percent of the students make at least one-year's progress in English language arts.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote greater consistency in differentiated instruction based on data so lesson planning reflects purposeful grouping for different learning styles and activities that extend thinking and maximize learning.
 - The school does not consistently use data to create groups based on skills, to accelerate student learning. As a result, there is limited

subgroup analysis and progress monitoring of students throughout the school.

- Formalize the use of summative and formative data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of student subgroups.
 - The school does not consistently aggregate data to inform curricular and instructional decisions for the special education population. Therefore, these students do not make sufficient gains in English language arts or math.
- Enhance the academic rigor in setting subject, grade and classroom goals.
 - The school does not consistently challenge and engage individual students or groups, including the highest achieving students. It has not established benchmarks across grades and content areas to monitor progress and revise the curriculum to challenge students.
- Refine the collaborative teams to strengthen teachers' instructional practices to empower them to accelerate student learning.
 - The collaborative inquiry teams review data holistically. They do not analyze data to identify learning trends at the classroom, grade or school level. Therefore, it is difficult for the school to determine the impact of instructional decisions and determine where to adjust resources to meet the academic needs of students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2009-2010

School name: Albert Einstein	△	▶	✓	+
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>	△	▶	✓	+
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?			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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			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>	△	▶	✓	+
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 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the team and classroom level?			X	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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 students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			X				
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			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>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
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?			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			
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed