



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Rufus King School**

**Public School 26**

**195-02 69th Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11365**

**Principal: Dina Koski**

**Dates of review: January 16 - 17, 2007**

**Reviewer: Alan Geller**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Rufus King School is a pre-kindergarten to grade 5 school with 650 students. The school is culturally diverse with 62% Asian, 12% Hispanic, 12% Black and 14% White. The Asian population comes mainly from China and Korea. There are 95 special education students, which comprises 14% of the school. Many of these students are serviced in collaborative team teaching classes. There are 64 English language learners, 10% of students.

The school is not eligible for Title I funding. Attendance is 95% which is consistent with previous years, and with that of similar schools. Parents are actively involved in the school programs.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by the students, staff and parents and has created a positive learning environment.
- The school generates its own data to track student progress in relation to the reading and mathematics programs.
- Students feel well respected by the staff and, as a result, enjoy participating in school activities.
- Decisions related to staffing and budgeting are determined by analyzing the needs of the students.
- School procedures are well understood and monitored, ensuring that the school is safe and runs smoothly.
- The workshop model is utilized to provide opportunities for student interaction within small learning groups.
- The pupil personnel team works collaboratively to provide intervention services for the students in greatest need.
- The parents are a valued part of the school and participate in decision-making.
- The staff are empowered to work collaboratively to share best practices in formal and informal meetings.
- The teachers have high expectations for all students and this serves to unify and drive the staff to have a sense of pride in their work.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop the tracking of student progress in a more consistent manner in all grades and use the data to set measurable goals for achievement and to differentiate work to meet these goals.
- Further develop the analysis of performance by the various groups represented in the school.
- Extend the professional development plan to enhance the use of rubrics to develop benchmarks for student writing and involve students further in their own learning.
- As a means to upgrade the skills of all staff, develop a protocol whereby teachers observe each other and participate in peer-evaluation activities.
- Develop specific timeframes to monitor and revise curriculum and other plans.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

The principal is a strong leader who has the respect of the staff, students and parents. The school team supports the mission of the school and works collaboratively to provide the students with a safe and nurturing environment. Teachers receive support from school leaders as well as from their colleagues. The staff develop their own data as they conference with students and conduct assessments. The workshop model provides opportunities to work with students in small groups and to track individual student progress. All special education students and English language learners receive support within this model. The school leaders are committed to continuous learning and provide the staff with opportunities to attend workshops outside of the school.

Curriculum materials are in place allowing teachers to track student progress using interim assessments and provide differentiated instructional tools.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school uses a wide range of monitoring tools to collect data in addition to the standardized test scores. Teachers utilize these tools to maintain running records of student progress to determine the next steps that will increase student learning. By analyzing the data, school leaders can note how students are performing as well as classes and grades. In order to further ensure that the findings are correct, the data is discussed at team meetings to note performance trends. This is a key factor in determining program needs such as intervention plans. Teachers have the tools needed to document student progress and the school is working to develop a protocol of next steps in every subject area. The school focuses on the needs of special education students and English language learners as well as students scoring in levels 1 and 2. Teachers of these programs also conference and assess to monitor strengths and needs of students.

A needs assessment of all students has been developed to determine the programs needed to increase student progress. The school has commenced the process of looking at individual children based upon their past and present performance to further determine their needs. The progress of grade levels is monitored utilizing uniform assessments. Subject areas are assessed and additional resources are implemented as an outgrowth of the analysis of the information gathered. Students in greatest need receive support in intervention activities and additional small group instruction is provided before and after the school day.

Although the school is now very effective at looking at the progress of individual students, and at some groups, staff do not look so closely at the relative performance of students

from the various ethnic groups, nor of boys and girls, in order to ensure that all are doing as well as they can.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

Teachers gather and review their data on a daily and weekly basis. Teams of teachers work collaboratively to share the data and set goals for individuals and groups of students. This data is further developed into grade goals. Plans are then formulated to achieve these performance objectives, with discussions of strategies. A major priority is to develop next steps for each student as the data is collected and analyzed.

Articulation amongst the teachers and support staff set specific supports to focus on the classroom program. As the writing program develops in classes, it is supplemented by the work of support staff. The same process exists in developing goals and plans for the special education students and the English language learners. The entire staff supports this process resulting in an approach that benefits all students. Students who are in greatest need receive support in the classroom, utilizing differentiated instructional strategies and intervention plans to reach agreed goals. These activities are monitored by the teachers as well as specific school teams. New strategies are planned as needed.

High expectations are a unifying and driving force of the staff as the goal is to improve student outcomes. These high expectations are conveyed to the parents at meetings and by the parent coordinator. Parents and teachers communicate regularly to note student progress and actions that can be supported at home. Students are aware of these plans and know what is expected of them, although the staff have yet to further develop the use of rubrics for writing as a means of providing meaningful feedback to students. The school understands the goals of the community and plays a central part in developing positive attitudes.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

This school is an exempt school and is therefore able to select the curriculum. Programs have been chosen based upon how well they would meet the need of the students. Additionally, they have been selected carefully because they have built-in assessments as well as unit tests. These assessment tools allow the teachers to assess the students on a regular basis. The school seeks to involve all students in a broader range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, one of which is ballroom dancing, to address personal as well as academic development.

Staff share common goals and discuss their data to determine the effectiveness of teaching plans. These programs allow staff to differentiate instruction, allowing students to make progress on an individual basis. Also, teachers work with individual or small groups of students to continually monitor their progress, and note the improvement in student

outcomes. Teachers are encouraged to meet and plan collaboratively both informally and at formal meetings. Teachers have high expectations of the students, exemplified by their questioning techniques. Students are asked to comment on the responses of their classmates, creating an engaged group of learners.

The needs of the students determine how the budget is allocated for additional staff and resources. The staff are selected and hired by how well they fit into the school plan. Staffing decisions, such as academic intervention providers, are based upon the needs of the school. In order to meet the needs of students, literacy is provided in blocks of time on a daily basis. Additional time is included in the program for collaborative team teachers to articulate with support providers to note student achievement. Students enjoy the school activities and the interaction they have with their classmates and teachers. They receive feedback and are well respected by their teachers and as a result actively participate in school activities.

Student attendance stands at 95% which is above City schools and is approximately the same as similar schools. Students enjoy coming to school and the parents support the educational program. Absence is rigorously followed up by the school staff.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school has a dedicated staff due to careful selection of teachers by the principal. Candidates are interviewed and perform a demonstration lesson. They must also have knowledge of the curriculum and be able to work as a part of a team. Often selected staff will work part-time in the school before becoming a full-time teacher.

Professional development activities are based upon the needs of staff and students. School leaders observe classes, conduct walkthroughs and meet with staff to determine their needs. The principal visits classes regularly and offers feedback to improve instruction. School leaders know their teaching staff and make specific suggestions based upon the experience and skill of the staff member. Teachers are encouraged to visit each other as a means of learning from master teachers. The principal is aware that the staff would like more opportunities to observe colleagues and participate in peer evaluation on a formalized basis as a means of improving instructional strategies.

The school leaders meet with a variety of teams to evaluate school results, providing further professional development as staff learn from one another and share perceptions and strategies. Ideas for improvement are shared with the entire staff as new plans are implemented.

The principal is well respected, by the staff, students and parents, as an instructional leader and a warm and caring person. The principal is accessible and finds solutions to problems as quickly as possible. This is appreciated by the parents and teachers. School routines are well understood and as a result the school runs smoothly. Changes are made when necessary, for example to improve safety. Links with community-base organizations support learning. For example, a partnership with the Virtual Y is in place whereby students receive academic support in an after-school program.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The principal establishes and revises goals to coincide with report cards. This provides another measurable way to judge the effectiveness of goals. School programs include interim assessments as another means to determine if the strategies and plans used enabled the students to achieve. Furthermore, monitoring tools are utilized as a means to compare students in classes and grades. Intervention plans are reviewed at team meetings and effectiveness of plans are measured by support staff and teachers.

Grade level teams and school leaders work together to modify plans based upon student needs. The staff are very willing to share ideas and plan together to ensure that students meet school targets. The principal has instituted a pilot program in English language arts to measure its successful implementation and its effectiveness in improving student outcomes. This action was the result of adjusting plans and instituting changes as a means of improving learning. The staff assumes the responsibility for analyzing student progress and for planning and revising curriculum and interventions on a consistent basis.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|   |   |   |          |
|---|---|---|----------|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: The Rufus King School (PS 26)</b> | ∅ | ✓ | +        |
| <b>Quality Score</b>                              |   |   | <b>X</b> |

| <b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>   | ∅ | ✓        | +        |
|---|---|----------|----------|
| 1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>                                 |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul> |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>                       |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.                  |   | <b>X</b> |          |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>  |   |          | <b>X</b> |

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

| <b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b> | ∅ | ✓        | +        |
|--|---|----------|----------|
| 2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.  |   | <b>X</b> |          |
| 2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.  |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.   |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| 2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.      |   | <b>X</b> |          |
| 2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners  |   |          | <b>X</b> |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>   |   |          | <b>X</b> |

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.  |   |   | X |
| 3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   | X |   |
| 3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.   |   |   | X |
| 3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.  |   |   | X |
| 3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.  |   |   | X |
| 3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.   |   |   | X |
| 3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.  |   |   | X |
| 3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.   |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>   |   |   | X |
| <b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.   |   |   | X |
| 4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the Focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap. |   | X |   |
| 4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.  |   | X |   |
| 4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.  |   | X |   |
| 4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.  |   |   | X |
| 4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.   |   |   | X |
| 4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.  |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>   |   |   | X |
| <b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>   | Ø | ✓ | + |
| 5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.  |   |   | X |
| 5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.  |   |   | X |
| 5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.  |   | X |   |
| 5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.   |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>   |   |   | X |