



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Ralph Bunche School

Elementary School 125

**425 West 123 Street
New York
NY 10027**

Principal: Claudette Lustin

Dates of review: January 22 – 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Angela Cook

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Ralph Bunche School is an elementary school with 405 students from kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 61% Black, 34% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

The principal is in her second year at the school. The school building is now shared with a junior high school. The sharing of premises limits the scope of the Ralph Bunche School to provide certain activities, because of a reduction in space.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a clear vision of how to move the school towards its goals of raising student achievement.
- The school has instituted good systems to support the use of data to inform planning and instruction, and to track the progress of students.
- Effective team work ensures that all students in need of improvement are carefully tracked and supported.
- A carefully designed program for professional development supports teachers in creating new opportunities to enhance students' learning.
- There is good two-way communication between parents and the school, which parents say enables them to be involved with the education of their children.
- The inquiry team, building on substantial good practice, has used data effectively to identify the students on which to focus.
- New teachers are supported well by their colleagues and by the school's induction process.
- High expectations are fully shared with students and parents in a variety of effective ways.
- Fruitful partnerships with outside organizations and programs provide good opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom.
- An imaginative dual language program provides good opportunities for kindergarten students to study the curriculum using both French and English.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand teachers' ability to use data to inform their planning so that instruction is differentiated across the school to meet each student's needs.
- Expand the use of data to enable comparative analysis with similar schools.
- Develop the opportunities for teachers to share planning time more frequently in order to promote consistent practice across the classes.
- Continue to develop action plans which incorporate interim indicators which are objectively measurable and set within clear timeframes.
- Continue to develop feedback to students on their work so that each knows how to improve.
- Better utilize the range of skills available within the administration in order to build further capacity to support school improvement.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

School systems and structures designed to support improvement in student achievement, through the collection and use of data to inform instructional planning, are beginning to embed well. They have been supplemented by further new procedures and a greater availability of new data, although the use of data to compare the performance and progress of girls and boys and with similar schools is limited. Some teachers plan effectively differentiated activities to meet the needs of groups of students, others provide tailor-made activities for each student, but some teachers do neither consistently. Feedback does not always provide students with a clear indication of how they can improve. Not all senior staff are fully involved in the collaborative decision-making process.

Seven months have elapsed since the previous Quality Review. The school has carefully analyzed the areas identified as requiring improvement, and has worked hard to implement changes. Good training is developing staff capability and confidence to use data in the classroom. Regular professional development opportunities are used to share good practice and develop some consistency in the ways teachers assess students' work. Teachers' common planning time is, however, limited. The curriculum has been extended to include the arts and physical education, and there is greater use of technology. Higher-achieving students are grouped separately in order to provide a challenging pace of instruction for them, and to extend their knowledge and understanding. Some of the new approaches are not yet fully integrated routinely into classroom instruction, but there is existing good practice to build on. Attendance is closely monitored on a daily basis, and absences immediately trigger appropriate follow-up strategies. The inquiry team is an effective group which has meticulously analyzed the good data available and used it to identify students who are under-performing and who, with support, have the potential to improve their grade.

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school has developed a new robust system of data collection which provides detailed information about each student, class and grade, and is updated four times a

year. Data is gathered from a variety of sources, and this enables its validity to be cross-checked. The principal and her senior team gather much information from their walks through the school. This supplements the statistical data which comes from assessments, tests and classroom records. Some systems are not yet fully embedded across the school. The principal, who collates the data manually in order to acquire an overview, is quick to acknowledge that the process is insufficiently developed to expedite this stage of the analysis. The school does not compare in depth the progress of girls and boys.

The performance of all students, including English language learners and special education students, is carefully monitored through class records and assessments. This data is used effectively to track their progress against a baseline established at the beginning of the year. The support teams do this very regularly for English language learners and special education students. Good systems and training, including regular inputs by an external consultant, have been carefully devised to provide manageable steps to support teachers in developing their use of data in the classroom, but the practice of using is not consistent across the school. The school's use of data to compare itself with similar schools is rudimentary, which reduces the opportunity for detailed analysis to identify areas where good practice can be shared for the benefit of the school.

The inquiry team has used the data well to evaluate the performance and progress of students of different ethnic groups. Their careful analysis has helped them select a group of lower-achieving students on whom to focus. The group has researched its work well, debating vigorously, finding agreement and setting its parameters accordingly.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Systematic assessments across the school at the start of each year provide detailed base-line information about each student's performance. This information, supplemented by periodic assessment data, is diligently analyzed in order to identify those in need of additional support and the particular areas within the curriculum where help is most needed. Priorities for each student are agreed and good plans are drawn up. Careful monitoring tracks each student's progress. The process is the same for English language learners and special education students. Their needs are accurately identified and a good coordinated support package is put in place which promotes effective learning.

The school proclaims its high expectations continually by celebrating the success of its students in assemblies, display work, and parents' conferences and workshops. Letters home and meetings with parents are used to reinforce the message. Good two-way channels have been established with parents so that they are able to provide the staff with information about their children's learning needs, as well as to receive reports about their children's progress. The school plans to use the portfolios of students' work to enable the teachers to identify the next steps for each student, and to share these with the parents. Although some work is checked and some written comments are provided telling students what they need to do to improve, this is not yet consistent practice

across the school. Not all the senior team is fully engaged in a collaborative process of setting goals for improvement and developing plans to deliver the required outcomes.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Areas of the curriculum, including literacy and math, are beginning to generate good data to assist teachers in planning for their students’ needs. The school effectively canvassed students’ opinions to assist in developing the curriculum. A survey was conducted to identify what additional subject areas the students would like to be offered. On the basis of their responses, art has been added to the curriculum, and music is shortly to be included. A broad range of subjects is scheduled during the school day, including swimming lessons. Extra-curricular activities, such as ballet, and after-school French classes for students and parents, provide further enrichment. Students in kindergarten have the exciting chance to learn using two languages. The imaginative bi-lingual program enables learning to be in English one day and in French the next.

The school has carefully drawn up and shared at a faculty conference protocols for teachers regarding management of classrooms and record keeping. During her administration walks the principal monitors the implementation of these requirements. Teachers are held accountable for their students’ progress by means of good data collected by the school. Some data emanates from the walks through the school by the principal and her senior staff, some comes from class records, and some from State and City tests.

Although in some lessons instruction has been differentiated to meet the needs of the students, this is not consistent in all classes. However, colorful, informative and stimulating displays support learning in class. Parents and students say that staff provide safe and very supportive learning environments in which all students are able to make progress.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school views professional development as a priority in its drive towards the goals of raising students’ achievement levels. In order to provide high-quality, tailor-made training for individual staff, the school has appointed external consultants to work within the school, supported by four lead teachers. The well-designed professional development provides good opportunities for staff to develop the new skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to implement changes in the curriculum. Good support is also provided for staff in using data to inform instructional planning. Areas requiring further development, such as the acquisition by students of “inferencing” skills, are included in the training sessions.

Staff have few opportunities each month to prepare lessons together, and there is no regular observation of each other's teaching. However, weekly professional development sessions provide time to share ideas, and staff do have the opportunity to watch the consultants and lead teachers model classroom instruction. The limited common preparation time results in a reduction in the consistency of planning within some grades. A well-planned induction program provides effective support for new teachers. Feedback from lesson observations by the senior team encompasses helpful learning points and useful strategies. Student support services use data very effectively. They co-ordinate their approaches to ensure that students are provided with appropriate intervention programs that meet both their academic and their personal development needs.

Good partnerships with some outside organizations provide a number of interesting and exciting opportunities for the students. The French Embassy has supported the school with books and visits by authors and Embassy officials and funds the after-school French tuition for parents and students. Other organizations support literacy, art and math.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's plans for improvement arise from its Comprehensive Education Plan. Not all subsequent plans have interim indicators that are measurable and set within a timeframe. The school recognizes that this limits the way in which progress towards some goals can be monitored and the speed with which whole-school plans for raising achievement can be reviewed.

Support teams using good data identify students' interim academic goals, and, having tracked the progress made, ascertain the effectiveness of the intervention or other support provided. This analysis is carried out at individual and class level, providing the teams with important information for their planning. The school has begun to use student portfolios to set goals for each individual, and to track progress, with some good results. This strategy enables a rapid evaluation of progress to be made, leading to a raising of student achievement.

The principal analyzes the data well in order to make effective strategic decisions. For example, when an initial partnership with an outside body aimed at making math more relevant did not have sufficient impact on the math assessments, a new partnership was sought to bring math even closer to the everyday experiences of the students.

The principal closely monitors the progress of the school towards its goals of raising students' levels of achievement. She has a clear vision of the future development of the school which is shared by her staff and which drives improvement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Ralph Bunche School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			X		

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?			X		
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X		

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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?			X		
2.3 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?			X		
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?			X		
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X		

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?			X		
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?			X		
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X		

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?			X		
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?			X		
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?			X		
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X		

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?			X		
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X		

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped