



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Ruby S Couche School

Elementary School 30

**126-10 Bedell Street
Queens
NY 11434**

Principal: Dwayne M Crowder

Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Andrea Harris

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 30, the Ruby S Couche is an elementary school with 550 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 86% Black, 8% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 62% eligibility.

The school's mission is to create a learning environment that incorporates the use of technology by all students in all subject areas preparing them to be life long learners. All students have access to computers in their classrooms throughout the day. The principal's appointment began in August 2007.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal is providing strong leadership that is beginning to move the school forward to achieve his clear vision.
- Whole school goals effectively shared with the entire school community ensure high expectations for all students.
- Attractive bulletin boards and hallway exhibits prominently display work creating a print rich, stimulating environment that engages students.
- There is strong collaboration among teachers in monitoring student progress and engagement in learning.
- The school is beginning to develop systems for tracking periodic assessment data to modify practices to support student progress.
- There are good interventions systems effectively supporting special needs students requiring additional opportunities for learning.
- The school effectively supports new teachers in the use of data incorporating the appropriate best practices in their instruction.
- The school runs smoothly and students are very proud of their well-ordered environment.
- The school community effectively sets school wide goals with appropriate plans for reaching them.
- The school continues to provide structured opportunities for teachers within a grade to meet, plan and assess student progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Implement a system of goals for students in all academic subjects that are measurable and based previous achievement.
- Continue to support teachers' ability analyzing summative and formative data targeting differentiation of instruction in the classroom.
- Improve the use of data targeting the specific reference to ethnic and gender groups.
- Further, ensure a simplified data tracking system in all subjects, exclusive of literacy, making data more manageable and accessible to teachers.
- Further, ensure a system evaluating student progress aligned with outcomes supporting future goal setting and improvement planning.

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 a proficient.

The principal has created a vision of high expectations for all students and collaborative teamwork among staff that focuses on student progress. The instructional cabinet and principal have created an environment effectively structured for learning by staff and students. These structures support a strong cultural belief that promotes the academic and personal development of all students as individuals. Students benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum in all subject areas as well as out-of-school activities. The school runs smoothly and students are very proud of their well-ordered environment. Teachers value the principal's support and the learning opportunities he provides during his weekly literacy workshops. This professional development is helping teachers develop their craft in the area of differentiated instruction. However, many teachers still struggle with linking planning to appropriate differentiation for students. Together, they are developing academic programs that support students especially those with learning difficulties. The school recently implemented a tracking and monitoring system in the area of literacy. The school links this directly to goal setting that allows for careful monitoring of student achievement. This has resulted in many students making good progress.

The school community continues to embrace the recommendations from the previous review. Students are beginning to benefit from teacher professional development focusing on data and differentiated instruction targeting specific reference to ethnic and gender groups. The school's use of the Acuity assessment tools has supported teachers' use of data with their planning. The data team carefully monitored and tracked last year's performance by all subgroups, proposing programs tailored to the needs of individual students. The inquiry team focused on selected students achieving in the bottom third in English language arts. Their research helped to establish consistency in the use of best practices among staff and students promoting achievement for all learners.

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 principal has created a culture where data is rigorously gathered and monitored to understand what each student knows and is able to do over time. Under his leadership, the school utilizes a full time data specialist who supports teachers daily. This has also

brought about a very close collaboration among the staff on using data. The forming and implementation of the literacy action team assists teachers with data collection. In the area of literacy there are clearly established structures supporting teachers' detailed knowledge and understanding of progress and achievement for every student, class and grade. A similar structure exists for math but there are some developing tracking systems for science and social studies, making it difficult for the school to understand student progress in these areas. The data specialist and instructional cabinet continually update the support of teachers' understanding and use of data to inform instruction for special education students and English language learners. Careful monitoring and adjustment of instruction of these students for progress from year to year as well as during the current school term has enabled them to make consistent growth in achievement. The school's special education and English language learners continue to out perform similar groups in similar schools. Although there is a focus of some subgroups, the school does not analyze subgroup performance by gender or ethnicity sufficiently. Current data indicates that the performance of African American males in literacy remains behind that of similar females. This demonstrates that the school is missing certain trends in student performance.

The school's inquiry team has helped to expand the use of data in connection to teacher planning. Inquiry team members provided teachers with professional development on using the teachers' resource tools in Acuity. This enabled teachers to develop lesson plans targeting the specific needs of students. The principal and the cabinet are developing plans to further support teacher growth using data to accelerate student learning.

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.

The principal fully and effectively shares whole school goals with the entire teaching and learning community. During grade conferences and common planning meetings there is a clear articulation of each whole school goal and how it relates to accelerating student learning. There is careful attention paid to those students in greatest need. All instructional leaders and staff demonstrate a high level of collaboration ensuring the effective utilization of a wide range of data at both formal and informal meetings and their alignment with whole school goals. This information along with other relevant data supports the understanding of student needs and the setting of individualized learning goals in literacy and math. The individualized learning goals in literacy and math, however, are often vague, not based on prior achievement and not collaboratively developed between student and teacher. The goals are not measurable and lack the interim benchmarks needed to monitor them appropriately for student progress. The inquiry team has had some success in this area and is currently helping other staff members develop structures to support this work. The inquiry team's work in English language arts concentrated on special education and at risk students, developing good structures for analyzing their data and using it to set measurable goals with specific learning targets.

The school's open door policy encourages parents to be active participants in the school and exchange information regarding their children's education. There are numerous

opportunities for parents' participation in school activities daily, yet not all parents participate. Those who take advantage value the school and find it to be a welcoming and supportive environment for their children.

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 well developed.

The school's approach to the literacy curriculum provides good information about student progress providing teachers with the next steps for differentiating learning. Teachers in each grade meet to discuss and plan units of study. Performance indicators, converted into teaching points, serve as a baseline for aligning the literacy instruction to State standards. Further enhancement of literacy work using diagnostic and instructionally targeted assessments provided meaningful interim data allowing teachers to monitor progress towards goals and increases overall in student achievement. The development of indicators in science and social studies are not in place. This means that similar systems for aligning instructional strategies and goals in these content areas have not been created yet.

The effective use of data during pre- and post-observation conferences by the principal and assistant principal holds teachers highly accountable for student achievement. Some teachers use data well to plan differentiated instruction that effectively addresses the needs of all students. However, through additional observation, the principal has identified that a number of teachers are not using data effectively to differentiate the instructional needs of specific students.

Budgeting decisions driven by the needs revealed in student data, for example, the appointment of a data specialist, two reading and a math specialist now support push-in and pullout programs. Students benefit from a broad and engaging curriculum in all subject areas as well as out-of-school activities. Teachers utilize common planning time to develop theme-based projects that students find engaging and interesting, extending their experiences beyond the traditional curriculum. They meet annually in the spring to design the academic work for the coming year using an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates reading, writing and math within other content areas. Students feel safe and like coming to school as evidenced by the increase on school wide attendance.

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 well developed.

The school places a continuing high priority on quality professional development. The principal's detailed knowledge of teachers' strengths and areas for improvement informs the development of the program. Information gathered from class observation, data review, and walk throughs supports this work. Additionally, teachers have input through bi-annual surveys. New teachers feel highly supported by the focus on professional growth that includes support from teacher mentors and grade leaders. Teacher

opportunities to engage in professional development both inside and outside the school carefully align to student data with a structured system for turn keying information and capacity building. Five weekly common preparation periods supports a very strong collaboration among teachers. A good exchange of information between classroom teachers, inquiry team teachers and intervention staff takes place daily and effectively supports students in reaching their goals.

The school runs smoothly and students and teachers enjoy the well-ordered environment. Students feel supported and that their teachers care and have high expectations for them. However, clearly aligned goals in the area of guidance that closely connect with students' academic performance are lacking. The managing of emotionally challenging students remains primarily with the principal. Currently the principal is working diligently with staff supporting their growth in this area. Teacher collaboration with guidance along with sensitivity workshops around supporting students' personal development are underway. The school has several outside partnerships that support the academic and personal growth of its students. Although this is the case, school leadership, staff, parents and students feel that more needs to be done increasing student interaction with outside partnerships.

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.

Periodic and instructionally targeted assessment tools effectively support teacher planning and interventions for selected students in key areas. School leadership carefully and effectively tracks and monitors all assessments for students. Weekly coach meetings consistently support teachers' growth in using periodic assessments. This ensures teachers' flexibility adapting plans and practices for accelerating learning. Coaches and teacher leaders assist in the tracking of student assessments, and determine if the progress is sufficient. This process helps to determine the effectiveness different strategies and practices used to promote student achievement. The school uses several structures for monitoring and revising student progress throughout the year. Not all teachers use assessments to monitor student progress effectively. Currently teachers use a binder system kept by hand. The transfer of information is very time consuming allowing little time for analysis and planning next steps. Because the school's student data tracking system in all subject areas is not simplified not all data is manageable and accessible to teachers.

The whole school community supports the principal's vision of rigorous monitoring procedures targeting the achieving of this vision. There are monitoring structures that include interim goals with suitable periods for measuring success and making adjustments. These systems provide school leaders and staff with detailed knowledge of each student. This supports the school's ability to ensure the evaluation and adjustments of school programs when necessary. Most teachers are becoming more proficient at setting and adjusting goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Ruby S Couche 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