



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Ralph Bunche School**

**Elementary School 132**

**132 - 15 218th Street  
Queens  
NY 11413**

**Principal: Alicia N. Davis**

**Dates of review: April 28 – 29, 2008**

**Reviewer: Ada L. Orlando**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Ralph Bunche School is an elementary school with 418 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 94% Black, 4% Hispanic and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 1.4 % English language learners and 7.6 % special education students. Boys account for 47% and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 57% eligibility.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is highly supported by her assistant principal and has a clear vision for moving the school forward and promoting even higher achievement.
- Administrators, faculty, students and parents all work together to support personal and academic development of all students.
- Administration and teachers make good use of data from standardized and periodic assessments to monitor student progress and align instructional decisions.
- The school is a safe and student centered environment where learning is the priority.
- High expectations are shared consistently with the school community to ensure that students achieve their potential.
- Professional development is differentiated, aligned with school goals, and based on strong teamwork and collaboration.
- Data is used well to ensure that effective additional support is provided for those students most in need, with a strong focus on special education students.
- Systems are in place for on-going communication amongst administration, teachers, and parents that contributes to parental involvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Formalize whole school goals and share them more effectively so that everyone in the school community has a clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- Ensure that all school plans include measurable success criteria, timeframes and interim benchmarks so that they can be monitored and evaluated rigorously.
- Provide further training to extend the use of technology by all staff to support teaching and learning, and to make data analysis more effective and efficient.
- Further expand art partnerships to enhance learning within and beyond the school day.

## 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 well developed.**

The Ralph Bunche School is a well-managed school that implements many effective practices and provides an extremely safe and orderly environment. The school was recently recognized as one of New York City's top performing schools and awarded additional discretionary funds which were used to expand the technology initiative throughout the school. This addressed the area for improvement indicated in last year's Quality Review. The school has been successful in expanding its resources in technology and aligning it to their Comprehensive Education Plan goals. Professional development has been offered to all staff members to enable them to use the new technology in their teaching. However, not all staff are fully confident in the use of technology within the classroom or in the context of data analysis.

The administrative team and teachers work rigorously and collaboratively on the collection and analysis of data. Qualitative and quantitative data is collected well and teachers have a good understanding of each student's performance and progress. The schools plans do not clearly show how success will be evaluated and interim measures of progress within a set timeframe. There is differentiation of instruction based on students' academic performance. The development of the inquiry team this year allows work to focus in a more structured way on their selected target population of students in the lowest one-third in English language arts.

The school's instructional programs are differentiated, rigorous, and are matched to student's needs including the English language learners and special education population. In addition, all students attend the extended day program which provides support in literacy instruction. Students' work is displayed throughout the school which reflects the rigorous and high quality goals set by the standard based curriculum.

Students speak very highly of their school, their teachers, and the staff and enjoy coming to school. Parents appreciate the principal's open-door policy and support the high instructional expectations of the school. All members of the school community share in the vision for the continued success of the school.

### 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 well developed.**

The school generates and effectively uses a wide variety of data related to student performance. Administrators and teachers use not only standards-based summative data

but also objective data developed by the school, such as student portfolios and teacher assessment binders. This gives a clear picture of each student's achievement and progress.

Teachers use the school management systems and structures to inform instruction and track students' progress. In addition to the increased availability of technology the school plans to provide further support and training to enable all teachers to use it as effectively as possible. The academic intervention service and inquiry team members analyze data as it applies to English language learners, special education students, and high achievers, customizing instructional plans to meet their needs. Students receive high quality support which has positively impacted on their progress and performance. Data is disaggregated to explore any differences in achievement and progress between classes, boys and girls or any other special focus groups.

The principal and her cabinet engage in a comprehensive year-to-year academic comparison of the schools overall results and their performance in relation to their peer group and higher performing schools across the City. Performance and progress data are recorded and disseminated to staff to enable them to align their instructional practices to meet the needs of students and improve student performance.

**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 well developed.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan is aligned to the principal's instructional goals which are created based on student's performance on standardized tests and other data. Collaboratively, the principal and inquiry team members create mid-year and long term goals for selected students. Yet, these goals are not shared with all classroom teachers to create individual student measurable goals and timeframes. The school does not set clear overarching goals for performance across all grades and subjects or specific groups.. As a result, although all staff are committed to improvement, they are unsure of their specific responsibilities.

All staff have common planning times within the school day. Teachers meet and discuss student goals but there is no comprehensive school wide system for identifying and recording individual targets. During planning time, teachers have created curriculum mapping for literacy identifying specific monthly goals based on the units of study. Teachers use these curriculum maps as a framework identify assessment opportunities and to further expand the development of individual goal setting for each student. Staff have clear academic expectations for all students resulting in continuous student growth. The school focus is to identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement. Teachers also focus on goal setting and appropriate timeframes and benchmarks for all students in the lower quartile.

The school has established a nurturing relationship with parents and embraces parent partnerships. Parents are well informed of the schools instructional goals and how the school uses data to plan for instruction through progress reports, scheduled activities and meetings for parents. The goals are shared among most parents and some parents are involved in individual goal setting.

**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.**

School uses a variety of summative and formative data to drive instruction. Student learning is aligned to the data gathered and it is used effectively to identify students’ needs. Learning is assessed continuously and academic progress is monitored which enables teachers to guide small group instruction. Using assessment data, instruction is matched to students’ needs and academic performance goals and contributes to students’ achievement. Structures are constantly reviewed in order to provide flexible groupings for students who require academic intervention services, differentiated activities and individual and small group instruction. Targeted instruction is provided for some students the morning extended day program. Students in the upper grades have an opportunity to enrich their background in the arts, music and physical education during the school day. There are limited opportunities for lower grades and for access to partnerships with cultural institutions to enrich the educational experience for the whole school community.

The principal is creative with the budget and manages it successfully to support curriculum development. The principal and the instructional team have purchased Studio in the Arts to support their visual arts program. Whilst more students now have access to art instruction and there is integration of art across the curriculum there is variation in the level of accessibility for some students. Teachers volunteer and provide extra curricular activities for students in dance, chess, basketball and other interest areas during and after school. The school now has three computer labs that teachers use to enrich and support instruction through in content areas of social studies, science, mathematics and literacy.

The school has maintained their above average attendance rate in comparison to peer group and District schools. The principal has a comprehensive action plan to monitor attendance. Students are rewarded with a variety of incentives and classes are recognized during daily morning assembly for 100% attendance. Students who have poor attendance are identified and supported by the attendance and pupil personnel team and referred for services as needed. Staff are very accessible to students. Students feel safe and cared for by all the adults in the building. Parents appreciate the level of care shown for their children. As a result, there is a high level of respect and trust between student, staff and parents.

**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.**

Professional development plans are strategically based on school academic performance, student data and teachers’ responses to the survey which is aligned to what the teachers identified as their professional development needs. An area for development in the last year’s Quality Review Report was to increase professional development in technology. The principal provided workshops about Acuity, ARIS and how to access and use the interim performance indicators to help school staff meet goals developed for student progress. Professional training in Acuity and ARIS enabled teachers to facilitate small group and differentiated instructional activities. The staff survey identified the need for further professional development in the area of technology in order to deepen the understanding of all new data systems.

Newly appointed teachers are supported by experienced mentors who model lessons and provide regular resources. Systems are in place to ensure that new teachers are supported in their practice and how to integrate school-wide programs and innovations. Teachers have opportunities to share best practices with each other, working closely together in teams. They have opportunities to observe each other's classroom instruction. The principal has also scheduled intervisitations with other schools in the District to give teachers the opportunity to observe effective practices and reflect on their own teaching. This reflection is done with mentors and teachers during grade level planning meetings.

Partnerships with outside entities support student's academic performance and social and emotional development. Support services are offered to parents to assist them in the overall development of their child. The principal recognizes that creating more partnerships by extending community outreach is needed and is important to further support the academic, social and emotional growth of all students. The organizational structures provide for smooth day to day running of the school. There is clear communication among the principal, assistant principals, and staff about the daily schedule. Any changes in routines are quickly communicated and visibly on display.

**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 well developed.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan is constantly monitored and modified by the school leadership and instructional teams based on student performance. The school has structures in place for monitor student progress and plan accordingly. For example, the school's curriculum mapping in literacy is an action plan that is well monitored, has measurable goals for each unit of study and is a living document for teachers to discuss regularly. Instructional plans are reviewed and modified. This year the school wide focus is to expand vocabulary development. Interim assessments are a regular and frequent feature of the school. Any weaknesses that are identified are immediately addressed and remedial support is offered.

Teachers modify instructional plans that customize student learning through Acuity and other instructional resources. Acuity has a built in system that tracks student's performance and modifies practices to improve student outcomes. In addition, it provides suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments. A clear focus of the school is to identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement. During planning time teachers focus on goal setting within timeframes and interim benchmarks for students. Teachers monitor the performance of students through periodic assessments and address their needs accordingly.

The principal clearly communicates a vision of continuous improvement for this already successful school which is shared by the committed staff team and endorsed by the student and their families.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Ralph Bunche School</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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 student's 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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 make 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>