



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Roy Wilkins School

Elementary School 136

**201-15 115 Avenue
Queens
NY 11412**

Principal: Tanya Walker

Dates of review: May 19 - 21, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Marilyn Lehmann

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Roy Wilkins School is an elementary school with 741 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 93.3% Black, 4.2% Hispanic, 1.5% White, and 0.7% Asian students. The student body includes 3.9% English language learners and 6.2% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89% eligibility.

The principal has been in post for sixteen months. One of the assistant principals has only been at the school since September 2007.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school gathers a considerable amount of data which it uses very well to inform its understanding of the performance and progress of all its students.
- Teachers collaborate effectively to develop instruction that is interesting and engaging and students enjoy their lessons.
- The school-wide use of data-based small group instruction in English language arts and math effectively meets students' varying needs.
- Stimulating displays of student work in classrooms and hallways make expectations explicit and celebrate student achievement
- Well-planned professional development strongly supports teachers in improving their instructional practice to better meet students' needs.
- Teachers' professional growth is enhanced by regular opportunities to meet together in different teams to plan and share good practices.
- Strategic decisions are firmly based on assessment outcomes and center on improving student achievement.
- The principal and the school community have a clear vision for the school and are working together to achieve this.

What the school needs to improve

- Embed developing collaborative approaches to planning in order to further enhance learning and promote school improvement.
- Continue to develop strategies to encourage parents to work in partnership with the school.
- Increase students' access to, and use of, technology in order to broaden the curriculum, develop their skills and confidence, and enhance their learning.
- Ensure that teachers take responsibility for managing student behavior so that effective learning and teaching is maintained.
- Ensure that administration and teachers take an increasingly rigorous approach to revising plans in response to the information from progress measures.

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.

The Roy Wilkins School provides a cheerful and welcoming environment, with stimulating displays of work in hallways and classrooms. Students feel safe and cared for, enjoy their lessons and like and respect their teachers. Behavior around the building is well managed and students' behavior is generally good. However, not all teachers yet fully recognize their responsibility for ensuring students behave equally well in class.

The principal is determined to ensure the students succeed and has introduced many changes in order to make this possible. Teachers agree with her that "it's all about the children" and have put in considerable effort to support her. There is now a climate of collaboration and mutual respect. Teachers meet frequently to discuss students' progress and to plan next steps. They have also embraced the move to data-informed small group instruction and have worked hard to develop the necessary skills. This differentiated approach has made lessons more interesting and engaging and effectively supports students' academic and social development.

The school generates and collects a considerable amount of data which it uses effectively to analyze students' performance and progress. The data is successfully used to organize the small groups for instruction as well as to inform instructional programs and strategies. The curriculum has been carefully chosen to provide useful data as well as to develop students' skills and knowledge. The use of small group instruction across the school has led to more differentiation, and students' individual needs are more often being met. Students have art lessons but opportunities to use and learn about technology are limited.

Professional development is a priority and the school makes every effort to ensure that teachers can continue to grow. Teachers are encouraged to learn from one another and the school makes sure they can meet regularly in scheduled time to plan and share good practice. Teachers also frequently meet informally in their own time to exchange ideas and information.

Since the last Quality Review the school has ensured that students have rigorous goals in English language arts and math, and it now involves students in setting their own reading goals. Professional development has focused successfully on improving teaching strategies and on enabling teachers to use assessment effectively. The inquiry team's focus has been to improve outcomes in math for a group of grade 3 and 4 students. The team is now identifying the most successful strategies and discussing how to extend them across the school next year.

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 collects and utilizes a wide range of data on the performance of each student, class and grade, including ECLAS and end-of-unit tests in addition to student portfolios and teacher assessments. Lower grade teachers collect and use data generated by the BEL (Building Essential Literacy project) curriculum. All members of staff maintain binders containing regularly updated data relating to their students, which they use on a daily basis to inform their instruction. The data is disaggregated to consider the progress of different groups, and by gender and ethnicity. Further, all the teachers, cluster teachers and service providers have been trained to use Acuity and regularly access it to add to their knowledge of the students. Special education students and English language learners are also carefully monitored and information about their progress included in the data. As a result, administration and teachers have a thorough understanding of the performance and progress of all of the students.

The school measures its progress against its own previous performance to monitor trends. It is looking for signs of overall improvement so this includes consideration of information on attendance and behavior as well as academic achievement. It also compares itself with other similar schools to identify and learn from their good practice. The student data is brought to all meetings and constantly used to inform decisions and planning to support student progress.

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 school has developed an increasingly collaborative approach to planning which is supporting students' learning and contributing to whole school improvement. The school seeks to address what it sees as "the best interests of the children" through various teacher teams which meet regularly to plan for improvement. These include the professional learning team, which focuses on planning small group instruction, the pupil personnel committee that reviews individual student issues and the attendance team which plans and monitors strategies to achieve high attendance rates. Teachers also work together to plan curriculum approaches. As a result there is both a shared approach to planning and a shared understanding of the steps the school is taking to improve students' performance and accelerate progress.

The school identified gender as an issue because boys achieve less well than girls and also form the majority of students who use the "save room". A range of strategies was planned and implemented, including some "boys only" activities, and their impact is being monitored.

The school goals are frequently articulated and are widely understood, and the whole school community shares high expectations for all the students. These are supported by the stimulating displays of student work in hallways and classrooms which provide a

cheerful and lively learning environment and publicly celebrate student achievement. The school provides regular information to parents about their children's progress. It continues to work to increase parental involvement so that more students benefit from parental support for their learning.

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 has carefully chosen a core curriculum to best meet its students' needs and also provide ongoing data about their progress. The BEL program used in the lower grades for literacy is very well structured and includes effective assessment tools. Similarly, the Teachers College curriculum that is followed in the upper grades has a clear structure that supports teaching and learning. Equal thought has gone into the choice of programs for math, science and social studies.

Teachers plan successfully together to develop instructional strategies that will engage students' interest. Students understand classroom routines and move quickly and quietly from one task to another. They enjoy their lessons and are actively involved in their own learning. One student said "children want to learn" because they "learn in a fun way". Students' personal and academic development are further enhanced by enrichment programs. Students commented about how much they enjoyed these activities, which include dance, music, drama and opportunities to experience opera or learn an instrument. However there are relatively few chances for students to use technology to develop their skills and support their learning across the curriculum..

The school-wide emphasis on small group instruction in English language arts and math means that all teachers use data very carefully to form learning groups and to plan instruction. Most teachers now work through group instruction in all curriculum areas and this facilitates good differentiation to meet the range of student needs.

The principal insists that "the children come first" and that teachers treat students thoughtfully, and the environment is now one of mutual respect and trust. Students feel they can talk to teachers and that teachers treat them kindly. As one student put it, teachers "don't lose patience, they take the time to explain."

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 is strongly committed to supporting and encouraging teachers' professional growth. Feedback from frequent lesson observations, analysis of data and information from teacher surveys inform professional development planning. The principal rearranged the school schedule to facilitate common meeting time during the day for every grade so teachers now meet regularly by grade to plan and share good practice. This is in addition to cross-grade, faculty and other meetings which address how to improve instructional practice. Teachers also often visit each other's classrooms, both formally and informally, to learn from one another. As a result, more teachers are becoming "experts" in particular

areas and instruction is increasingly consistent and effective across the school. New teachers are similarly well supported and are enabled to develop into confident and capable practitioners.

Systems and procedures are being implemented to ensure the school runs smoothly, including routines to manage movement around the building. Students know what happens if they behave inappropriately and the rewards they can earn for achievement, good behavior and regular attendance, so behavior around the school is generally quiet and controlled. The administration expects each teacher to take responsibility for managing student behavior in their classroom, but this is not yet established practice throughout the school.

The school benefits from relationships with a number of outside organizations. A partnership with the Lincoln Center provides students in grades 4 and 5 with instruction in baroque music and opera. Black Spectrum Theatre gives grade 3 students theatre experience as actors, scene-painters, lighting and audio technicians. These and other partnerships support and enhance students' academic and personal development.

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 reviews student progress against interim goals after each phase of predictive and interim assessments. Plans are then adjusted to address identified weaknesses. Professional development programs that are aligned to the curriculum also have interim targets and deadlines as certain skills must be addressed in time to meet teachers' needs for particular units of work.

Teachers review the effectiveness of their instructional plans and strategies on a daily basis. They are now increasingly taking responsibility for revising their plans in response to the information from progress measures. The administration reviews data on a weekly basis and uses the information very carefully to inform strategic decisions. The principal hired a male dean because the data had raised concerns about boys' achievement and behavior and she was keen to have an effective role model in the school. She also ensured there was a full-time guidance counselor to support students. Assessment outcomes indicated that students benefited from smaller classes so the principal plans to hire more staff and cluster teachers next year and increase the number of smaller classes in the lower grades.

The principal and teachers share a vision for the school. Teachers were clear that it centers on the students and on "raising the level of expectation". They want every child to achieve as highly as possible and to experience success. They are working together with commitment and determination to achieve the vision, and the school has every capacity to continue to improve.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Roy Wilkins 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 demanding, 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?				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?			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