



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Division of Performance and Accountability
2010-2011**

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Robert Fulton

Elementary School 008

**37 Hicks Street
Brooklyn
NY 11201**

Principal: Seth Phillips

Dates of review: April 11 - 12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Heather Benson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Robert Fulton is an elementary school with 549 students from pre-kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 58% White, 20% Black, 11% Hispanic, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers purposefully design curricula aligned to key standards that challenge students with rigorous tasks, thereby promoting students' development of higher order thinking skills.
 - A grade 2 teacher-created Box City Unit asks each student to design and operate a store, pay taxes, buy and sell goods and services, and establish rules for self-government, thus engaging students in integrated, high-level tasks. A multi-grade math teacher team aligns units to Common Core State Standards to improve students' use of higher order thinking strategies. As a result of planning across subjects and grades, units of study spiraled to better prepare students for high-level tasks in the upper grades, such as the *We the People* hearings, which include activities that are designed to allow students to plan, evaluate, and reflect.
- The principal makes informed organizational decisions aligned with school goals that provide structured use of resources, resulting in increased opportunities for students to engage in challenging tasks.
 - The decision to consistently provide teachers a minimum of three years on the same grade level to mature professionally results in a stable faculty, promoting collaboration within grades. Partnerships, as with the Guggenheim Museum, provide teachers and students with rich learning opportunities to connect visual arts metaphors and universal themes to their own reflective processes and practices, thus supporting students' development of higher order thinking skills.
 - All teachers engage in teacher teams and share additional common planning time each week. Teams collaborate to design math assessments, revise rubrics, and align curricula to the Common Core State Standards to inform instruction and planning which supports student engagement in extended reflection and challenging tasks.
- The school effectively uses data to inform planning which supports students' social-emotional learning and provides a safe and inclusive environment so that students and families feel welcomed and nurtured.
 - In addition to analyzing the Learning Environment Survey and attendance data, the school conducts needs assessment surveys, internally designed, and customized for parents and students, in order to obtain relevant data. The data-informed decisions to initiate the Parks Project, a film club, and a curriculum guide for families resulted in increased communication and community building across the school.
 - Students and parents report that students are well known and well supported by faculty members. Parents' state "children are celebrated in so many ways." Children are encouraged to approach adults in the building for social-emotional support, and students report that the school is "a real community . . . and we all help other people."

- Teacher teams gather a variety of assessment data to create clear pictures of student mastery allowing teachers to make informed instructional decisions.
 - Teachers use reflective rubrics and conferences to provide actionable feedback, which facilitates learning and informs students' next steps. Teachers collaborate around student work samples to drive assessment design, improve the use of rubrics, and co-design regular assessments to guide instructional decisions. Teachers' analysis of data from Teachers College Assessment Pro, in-class writing tasks, Ready School Assessments, and Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces, allows teachers to clearly understand the next steps for each student.
- School leaders and faculty use multiple modes of communication to families to support parental involvement in the school community thereby increasing opportunities for them to influence school policy.
 - Administration, teachers, and the school leadership team collaborate effectively to publish clear expectations that are communicated to families in several forms, including a school website and School Hub, an online resource and communication tool. A comprehensive Robert Fulton curriculum guide outlines expectations by subject and grade, leading to parents sharing that they are well informed to support their children's success.
 - The school's many opportunities for parents to attend events and volunteer support for school initiatives include parents as Learning Leaders, library volunteers, fundraisers and learners at school sponsored workshops. Childcare that is provided for larger events increases feasibility and motivation for parents to participate in well-varied ways.
- The school communicates specific information regarding students' performance allowing for a greater understanding of strengths and next learning steps thus increasing student achievement.
 - Teachers communicate students' successes and next steps via task-specific rubrics and conferences, and students are provided daily opportunities to reflect and converse with partners around strengths and goals. Parents effectively communicate with teachers through progress reports, rubrics, and School Hub. Thus, students and parents interviewed clearly understand student goals and next steps.
 - The parent coordinator and teachers offer courses for parents on tools used to assess students. Parents enthusiastically indicate that as a result of workshops they are well versed in how to access and understand ARIS, Acuity, and class assessments to support their children's learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the consistency of the implementation of differentiated instructional practices across all classrooms and subject areas to engage all students in curricular extensions in order to increase student achievement.
 - Although teachers collect and analyze multiple data sets, they are now "learning how to turn that into instruction." Plans are often informed by

the data, and some lessons observed employed multiple entry points to the curriculum. However, not all lessons are implemented as planned. In a math class, students shared that they sometimes complete work that is never checked or revisited. In a literacy class, students report, “her explanations are long-long-long-long, so we don’t listen much.” Thus, the inconsistent implementation of differentiated practices across the school limits student engagement and student achievement.

- Strengthen the use of observations and class visitation tools in order to provide clear feedback to teachers resulting in effective and differentiated professional growth.
 - Administrators visit classes, conduct learning walks, and provide consistent verbal feedback to teachers. Although many teachers plan and implement effective instruction for their students, not all observed teachers had been provided with written observation feedback within this school year. The lack of formal practices relative to lesson planning and lesson implementation leads to missed opportunities for administrators to ensure that the faculty is aligned in instructional practices, and thus not all students receive suitable differentiated instruction.
- Embed the use of protocols in teacher team meetings to better structure meeting agendas and focus discussions around student work in order to increase the impact of collaboration on teaching and learning.
 - Although a majority of teachers are engaged in teacher teams and many teams use aspects of an inquiry approach, the teams observed employ a myriad of interventions across target populations and thus have difficulty identifying which instructional strategies are most effective. This limits the impact that teacher teams have on student outcomes.
 - In teacher meetings observed, teachers prepare agendas and provide student work samples, but the teams do not adhere to agendas nor use protocols or structures that would lead to in-depth, systemic analysis of student work. As a result, instructional decisions are made based on observations, data, and information that is not always thoroughly investigated thereby minimizing the efforts of their work.
- Establish systems in order to evaluate the effectiveness of leadership development opportunities, thereby building leadership capacity.
 - Although the assistant principal consistently “checks in” on Wednesdays to provide verbal feedback to teacher teams and administration reviews teacher team binders to follow team progress throughout the year, these systems do not result in actionable feedback to teachers regarding each team’s effectiveness, which therefore does not drive teams to build instructional coherence across the school.
 - While teachers are supported by peers on collaborative teams and via school-based and citywide professional workshops, such as Math in the City trainings, current systems to evaluate leadership development rely on informal observation and conversations. Teachers rotate teacher teaming responsibilities and present workshops at faculty meetings, but an inconsistent focus on building teacher leaders and distributive leadership results in limited opportunities for leadership development.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Robert Fulton	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?			X	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			X	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			X	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?				X

Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?			X	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			X	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X	
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?			X	
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			X	

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

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed