

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Rafael Cordero Y Molina

**Middle School 302
350 Linwood Street
Brooklyn
NY 11208**

Principal: Lisa Linder

Dates of review: February 7 - 8, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Rose-marie Mills

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Rafael Cordero is a middle school with 984 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 35% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 87.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal makes strategic organizational decisions that are aligned to the goals of the school, thereby promoting continuity and meeting students' learning needs.
 - The Arts are an integral part of the schools' instructional offerings and the effective use of resources allows students to have elective offerings of piano, band, drama, sign language, visual arts, graffiti as an art form, and ballroom dancing. This bolsters the curriculum and elevates students' enthusiasm, resulting in all students having an opportunity to experience success.
 - Student performance data revealed that students exhibited academic growth when they received instruction from specific teachers. Hence, the school programs students to loop with teachers they have had success with. Additionally, Assistant Principals are looped with a grade to ensure continuity and enhance accountability. This promotes shared responsibility to increase student achievement.
- Teams of teachers and administrators create assessments that are aligned to the curriculum and frequently analyze summative and formative data in order to track student performance and monitor instructional decisions.
 - Department teams create beginning of the year unit, mid- year assessments, and end of year assessments in English language arts and mathematics. These assessments align with the curriculum and the results are discussed at department meetings. Curricular and instructional changes are implemented as a result of the data analysis.
 - Teams of teachers and administrators carefully analyze the results of Periodic assessments to identify the strengths and needs of targeted students. Students who require additional help are guided to attend tutorial programs. Staff indicates that preliminary data reflect that students are showing steady progress as a result of these programs.
- The school provides professional development supports and make teacher performance decisions that support pedagogical growth and student advancement.
 - Teachers understand that they are held accountable for the performance of students. Individual teacher feedback on observation reports is aligned to student assessments and work products. Instructional strategies are made to support professional growth. This targeted support improves instructional practices that accelerate student achievement.
 - Professional development opportunities are provided to teacher teams and individually based on the needs of staff. For example, experienced teachers serve as mentors to new teachers and facilitate interclass visitations. Additionally, staff members meet at the beginning of the year with an administrator and review strengths, areas for improvement, and set professional goals. These goals are reviewed at strategic intervals during the school year, thereby promoting teacher reflection and promoting pedagogical growth.

- Multiple streams of communication between the school and families result in high expectation for success and increase parent involvement.
 - Parents are pleased with the multiple ways in which the school relays high expectations. The newly acquired school messenger and electronic bulletin board, along with newsletters, calendars, mailings, and teachers' personal phone calls keep parents in tune with the schools' focus. Additionally, the parent coordinator's, English as a second language workshops, are greatly appreciated as they facilitate greater parent communication and involvement, as well as increase at home support for students.
 - The school actively engages parents in decision-making policies. For example, the school is stringently enforcing the school uniform policy as a result of a strong push from parents who voiced their support for this policy. As a result of increased parental involvement, more students are wearing school uniforms.
- School leaders and staff work collaboratively to evaluate progress towards set goals, resulting in shared responsibility for school-wide progress.
 - The instructional team, along with administrators, meet on a monthly basis to gauge progress towards the attainment of school goals. The meetings entail looking at students' performance on formative and summative assessments and making decisions regarding adjustments required in order for the school meet established goals. This structure ensures that the school is actively measuring progress towards goal attainment on an ongoing basis.
 - The school analyzes Periodic assessment data to monitor interim progress towards goals. The data is reviewed at department meetings and adjustments are made to pacing calendars, resources, and teaching strategies. The ongoing tracking of interim goals allows the school to monitor student achievement in order to make adjustments in a timely manner.

What the school needs to improve

- Fortify the curriculum to ensure that students are engaged in rigorous tasks that promote higher-order thinking to improve outcomes across all content areas.
 - Student tasks on display, in work folders, and observed during instruction do not consistently engage students in rigorous challenges across all classrooms. In a mathematics classroom, students worked in homogeneous groups to complete open-ended tasks that propelled thinking and enhanced engagement. Conversely, in a special education classroom, students sat in groups and completed the same worksheet that was not always aligned to their skill levels. These inconsistencies in academic rigor hinder advancement for all students.
 - In an English language learner classroom, students indicate that they remain in the same mathematics group and have completed the same tasks since the beginning of the school year. The lack of differentiated tasks does not afford English language learners the opportunity to participate in challenging activities based on their level of competency, resulting in limited opportunities for academic growth.
- Deepen differentiated instructional practices so that lessons across the school, offer multiple entry points into the curriculum as a means to accelerate student learning.

- Although the practice of differentiated instruction is evident in some classrooms, it is not embedded across the school. Some teachers are skilled at offering lessons that provide multiple entry points into the curriculum, however many teachers have not developed this targeted pedagogy. As a result, instruction does not afford all students the opportunity to maximize learning.
- Across the school students in most classrooms sit in groups and complete independent tasks. Student to student interaction is not fostered in most classrooms resulting in low-levels of student engagement and thinking to push accelerated outcomes.
- Develop structures to enhance the school environment and support students' social-emotional needs in order to enhance academic growth.
 - Safety concerns reflected on the Learning Environment Survey are addressed in the school's year-long plan. Specifically, an anti-bullying initiative is in place along with numerous incentive programs to promote increased student attendance and positive behavior. Although parents and students indicate that the tone of the school has shown improvement, there is still need for more growth.
 - Presently, guidance counselors and community based partners provide targeted youth development services for students. However, the school has a large group of students in need of individualized socio-emotional services that this structure does not adequately support. Consequently, the needs of all students are not being addressed, thus inhibiting academic success.
- Broaden communication with students and families to inform them of students' learning needs, thereby fostering ownership of learning.
 - Although the school provides mid-marking period progress reports, in addition to end of marking period report cards to students and families, the reports give letter or numeric grades without detailing curricula achievements and next steps for improvements. This reduces opportunities to engage in on-going reciprocal discussions with families regarding meeting school expectations.
 - Student action plan templates and reflection logs are resources that guide students to reflect on their learning after the completion of summative assessments. However, classroom observations and student interviews reveal that teachers inconsistently utilize these tools to advance student knowledge of their achievements and next learning steps. As a result, students are not engaged in evaluating their own learning needs for improvements.
- Enhance goal setting so that rigorous goals are in place for all learners, in order to leverage changes in classroom practices and propel student achievement.
 - Although teachers use data from school-wide assessments to set goals for targeted students, many students are unable to articulate their goals. One student stated that his goal was to pass his class. This practice does not promote student improvement. Thus, the inconsistency of goal setting limits the ability to evaluate impact on classroom practice.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Rafael Cordero Y Molina	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