

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Franklin Delano Roosevelt School

Elementary – Middle School 34

**730 East 12th Street
New York
NY 10009**

Principal: Joyce Stallings-Harte

Dates of review: March 21 - 22, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Daniella Phillips

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Franklin Delano Roosevelt School is an elementary - middle school with 410 students from prekindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 69% Hispanic, 2% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 20% 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 91.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders have a strategic and proactive teacher and classroom observation system in place that improves instructional practices.
 - Administrators and coaches provide detailed, constructive feedback to all teachers on instructional practices. Moreover, they arrange sensible next steps in modeling lessons, inter-visitations, professional development, and mentoring. As a result, teachers demonstrate strong consistency in their work and a high degree of professional discourse. School leaders have developed very effective systems for hiring, supporting, and evaluating teachers, such that even the most difficult performance decisions reflect sufficient interventions over time. Also, out-of-classroom teachers must demonstrate continuous evidence of accelerating students' learning to keep their assignments, which reinforces the value-added nature of teaching.
- Teachers use student assessment data effectively so that instructional planning successfully meets students' needs as evidenced by targeted guided group work.
 - Teachers across the school review results from tests, interim assessments, and student work products and then plan targeted instruction and guided group work from this data. Teachers balance well predictive data with student work samples and classroom assessments in their planning and goal setting for students. This year, middle school teachers innovatively designed on-demand writing assessments using informational texts in science and social studies as a way of gaining better data about student learning across content areas. As a result, they have an accurate picture of students' and subgroups' learning achievement, which has led to stronger teaching practices in writing.
- School leaders make informed and highly strategic organizational decisions that elevate coherence of practices.
 - The dynamic team of principal and assistant principal use technology to deepen learning for students and create organizational efficiencies. For example, the IXL and Achieve 3000 on-line learning tools in math and reading nonfiction strengthen students' skills and comprehension as evidenced by improvements in mental math fluency by sixth grade students. Recent investments in library media center, new science laboratory, and on-site technology team have raised the bar for how staff use technology to teach, track student progress, and communicate.
 - The school prioritizes small class size in all grades to maximize the attention that teachers give to all students. Similarly, paraprofessionals, America Reads volunteers, and parents receive training to improve their work with students, which results in highly productive and well managed class environments with students receiving individualized supports.

- School leaders and staff convey very high expectations to students and parents which promote parents' informed, active participation in school life.
 - Staff maintain high standards of expected student conduct and academic performance. Given its high poverty and special needs student population, the school pays close attention to students' social-emotional development and academic growth. Two guidance counselors and strong external partnerships offer layers of support to individual and groups of students with impressive outcomes. Attendance has risen from 89% in 2007-08 to 92% in 2010-11 while suspensions have declined.
 - The school goes to great lengths to involve parents in school life and support their capacity to extend students' learning at home. For example, staff provide child care, translation services, and resources to parents at weekly workshops on relevant topics, such as "Help Your Child Grow as a Writer." Additionally, the school offers a free lending library of books to families and includes parents in instructional Learning Walk visits to classrooms. As a result, parents feel "very respected" as "important partners" in the school community.
- There is strong investment and accountability in teacher teams so that adult learning and professional development maximize teachers' capacity to improve student learning.
 - All teachers engage in one of seven highly accomplished inquiry teams. They follow a rigorous process of analyzing student work and assessment data, with good evidence that vertical planning of curricula and adjustments to teaching practice ensue. Teachers in a math inquiry team, for example, have utilized different teaching strategies, such as modeling, Socratic method, and guided practice, to demonstrate aloud and visually for students how to problem solve. As a result, students' explanations for solving algebraic equations have become substantially more detailed and accurate. An innovative step taken by all teacher teams has been the development of rubrics that align expectations for student work products to Common Core standards, thereby elevating rigor at the school.
- The principal provides dynamic leadership which is the drive behind innovation and professional collaboration at the school.
 - Teacher collaboration at the school has been carefully nurtured and monitored such that collegiality pervades school culture and teams function at increasingly high levels. Cohort leaders facilitate grade-level teacher teams, while coaches provide content and technology support, which helps ensure that meeting time is productive. The principal enables sharing across teams, such as recent "fish-bowl" exercise of seventh grade team developing inter-disciplinary unit of study. Another example of strategic capacity-building is teacher pairings in co-teaching classes, including two scenarios where former student-teachers now partner as full-time teachers with their previous mentors. Consequently, future teacher leaders are cultivated as teacher collaboration grows.
- The school community is well focused on improved student outcomes with a vision to accelerate learning.

- Through regular meetings with teachers and parents, the principal has generated strong support for priorities and goals to advance school improvement. A prime example of successful action planning is the school's work with special needs students. This subgroup did not meet the State target in English language arts last year, yet targeted goal setting and careful monitoring by staff have produced significant student gains in reading levels and comprehension. Predictive assessment results suggest this subgroup will narrow the achievement gap by placing out of level 1 entirely. The Comprehensive Education Plan articulates clear goals developed through meaningful processes for evaluating school needs, thereby eliciting strong "buy-in" from stakeholders.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine expectations for task complexity to challenge students at even higher levels.
 - All teachers pay good attention to different learning styles and embrace increasing rigor, yet some questions and assignments do not push students' thinking to fullest potential. While infrequent, these questions focus on literal understanding or simplified tasks. As a result, students may not engage as fully or deeply in learning, while higher performing students miss deeper challenges.
- Strengthen teachers' instructional strategies in middle school classes to elevate teaching practices across the grades.
 - Posted prominently by the school's entrance are a set of beliefs about how students learn best, including "Students showcase their work" and "Technology is integrated into curriculum." There is strong consistency in how teaching practices reflect these core beliefs, as most teachers use instructional technology to engage students and produce interesting projects that abound in hallways and bulletin boards. However, teacher-directed lessons occur more frequently in middle school classes which diminish students' ability to take ownership of learning.
- Deepen processes for students reflecting on their own learning and parents supporting their progress to maximize student achievement.
 - Effective routines are well established for teacher feedback in the form of "glow" compliments and "grow" suggestions and student self-assessments on student work. However, many student reflections are too brief and rushed to advance their thinking about what they've learned and what to do differently, thus limiting students' independent learning.
 - Staff provide frequent workshops, open library time, and First Friday for Families events that strengthen parents' knowledge about student learning and use of technology. As a result, increasing numbers of parents benefit from access to on-line tools that track and improve students' academic skills. However, more outreach and collaboration is needed with parents who rarely participate in school events. The school's parent response rates on *School Survey* and ARIS Parent Link fall below city-wide averages, thereby missing opportunities for broad parent input.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Franklin Delano Roosevelt School	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
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