

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Richard Rodgers School of The Arts and
Technology**

Elementary School M166

**132 West 89th Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Debbie Hand

Dates of review: January 11 - 12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Louise Antoine

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Richard Rodgers School of the Arts and Technology is an elementary school with 609 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 24% Hispanic, 49% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders work with an assortment of external partners in the community to develop a safe, inclusive, and supportive culture that supports the social development of students.
 - Students, parents and teachers state that they feel safe in their school as leadership has implemented the Caring School Community program. This program has introduced students and staff to town hall meetings and a cross-age buddies program focusing on building students leadership skills and building a sense of community across the grades. As a result, the school has noticed an improvement in the learning environment and a decrease of incidents and occurrences in their school community.
 - The school's continued collaboration with The Salvadori GLOBE program provides project-based learning to students with a focus on their surrounding environment. After school programs with B.J. Reads and the Horticultural Society also provide supports for families and students' academic and socio-emotional success through enrichment activities and community outreach opportunities.
- The principal collaborates with all stakeholders to develop goals designed to address the academics needs of the school and establish a clear vision that drives school improvement.
 - The administrative team and school community reviews a multitude of data, including learning environment data and State assessments, to identify goals that emphasizes the school's areas of need and progress both academically and socio-emotional. The comprehensive educational plan clearly delineates the school level goals and identifies action plans for each goal that supports strategies for school improvement.
 - School leaders have weekly planning sessions with teachers through faculty conferences and grade team meetings to review data, adjust curriculum maps, revamp lesson plans and outline next steps. As a result, goals are periodically revisited to address ways to improve student outcomes.
- School leaders and faculty have developed a collaborative community where communication of expectations is consistent and parents are actively engaged in the school community.
 - A monthly curriculum letter that highlights what is expected in content areas is sent home by teachers. Annual curriculum nights relay information on expectations, academic rigor of the curriculum and socio-emotional progress. This results in on-going teacher-parent conversations about expectations in the classroom and across the school.
 - The principal communicates instructional and school wide decisions to parents and invites them to participate in a variety of school activities, such as principal tea and workshops related to student achievement.

With an open-door policy, this collaborative community engages parents in ongoing conversations related to school improvement.

- School leaders develop pedagogy through internal and external supports that lead to a school wide coherent philosophy of how students learn best so that teacher capacity grows to improve instruction.
 - Administrators and faculty share a common school-wide instructional focus on writing that drives teaching and learning. Teachers engage in designing uniform rubrics for writing across subject areas and the administration consistently provides feedback on rubric use through classroom observations and analysis of student work, thus building coherent and effective teaching practices.
 - School leaders provide staff with mentoring, training and coaching through the support of external partnerships. School and network level professional development in classroom management, differentiated instruction and creating rubrics has provided teachers with varied supports that enable them to hone their classroom practices around the schools' focus in writing.
- The school has aligned resources around their instructional goals and strategically provides teachers with time to focus on the needs of students so that students are engaged in higher order thinking.
 - The principal has purposefully developed a program which enables teachers and support staff to host daily grade level meetings which are supported by the network specialists in response to the learning needs of their students. School leaders strategically use per diem funds for use during inter-visitation on a weekly basis. As a result, teachers are working to improve their instructional practices to better support their students.
 - Groups of students have been created by the principal based on data from the English language arts exam. Teachers are intentionally paired with a specific group based on student need and teacher ability for an hour each week. Therefore, students are engaged in challenging tasks based on their reading level during this time.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop a coherent curriculum to include rigorous academic tasks that promote higher order thinking across all grades and subject areas so that all learners are challenged.
 - The practice of designing rigorous tasks in writing is developing among teachers and has yet to be fully adopted when creating tasks in math, science, and social studies. Consequently, students are not consistently challenged to use high order thinking skills during their learning.
 - The teachers are currently analyzing student writing assignments using rubrics. However, tasks are not refined from the data analysis findings in order to best meet and engage the needs of students in their learning. Without this ritual in place across classrooms, student engagement and academic rigor are inconsistently addressed in the curriculum.

- Deepen the schools existing work around differentiation to embed rigorous habits so that students are provided with multiple entry points into lessons and all learners are engaged.
 - Across the building, students are engaged in hands-on, inquiry-based lessons in which teachers regularly assess students to know their achievement level. However, the use of this information to implement differentiated instructional practices and routines is not consistent across the school. Lessons are planned for groups but do not match students learning needs as evidenced by student work products which results in students confused and struggling with tasks.
- Formalize the process of aggregating and analyzing classroom level data to create a picture of students' strengths and areas of need so that teachers identify clear next steps for learning.
 - Currently teachers meet once a week, to create common rubrics and plan. However, they are at varied stages in utilizing the rubrics to provide consistent feedback to students' on next steps for improvement to increase quality of work. As a result, students are not aware of what sub-skill or particular knowledge they need to master in order to make further progress and teachers struggle to communicate next learning steps for learners.
 - Teachers regularly collect and analyze student work in an effort to refine their instructional practices. However the teachers' approach is limited to identifying needs of individual students rather than needs of student subgroups and larger trends amongst their students. Consequently, teachers do not use this data to impact their own classroom instruction to better support their subgroups.
- Further develop the systems in place to evaluate progress towards defined goals so that necessary adjustments can be made through regular, formalized interim checks against measurable targets.
 - Even though the school has used and developed assessment tools, at this time the school is developing structures to evaluate the effectiveness of recently implemented resources and structures at interim points in order to make educational decisions and adjustments. This restricts the schools ability to consistently monitor progress towards goals for student subgroups across all subject areas.
- Further expand systems for collecting and monitoring data relative to student progress in order to ensure the necessary adjustments are made to increase coherence of practices across the school.
 - School leaders examine scores of diagnostic tests and rubrics in order to offer interventions. However, they do not evaluate and document the instructional program regularly with the use of these assessments to aid in identifying trends and gaps in teaching that impedes student achievement.
 - The school informs parents of their child's needs and progress during open school and phone calls. However, there is no clear system in place

for students and families to become aware of student progress and next learning steps throughout the year.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Richard Rodgers School of The Arts and Technology	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