

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Rufus King School

Elementary School Q026

**195-02 69th Avenue
Queens
NY 11365**

Principal: Dr. Dina Koski

Dates of review: February 8-9, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Anita E. Saunders

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Rufus King is an elementary school with 632 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 13% Hispanic, 11% White, and 64% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 96.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created an exceptionally strong and coherent curriculum to meet the academic needs of students and increase achievement.
 - The school has completed a very detailed curriculum providing alignment with the Common Core State Standards and instructional coherence across grades in all subjects and distributed to all staff for planning instruction. Curriculum maps for kindergarten through grade 5 include unit goals, standards, essential questions, and assessments designated by month to ensure content and instruction meet the identified needs of the diverse population and increase achievement in English language arts (ELA) with a focus on academic vocabulary.
 - The core and inquiry teams use data analysis to plan academic tasks that challenge and engage students appropriately. For example, problem solving instruction is differentiated to include more manipulatives for struggling students and English language learners (ELLs), including the use of interactive SMART boards, logic puzzles and brain teasers for enrichment activities. Bloom's taxonomy has been implemented through questioning techniques during lessons and conferences in all grades resulting in higher order thinking. Consequently, there is an increase in student achievement.
- The principal's strategic leadership promotes organizational decisions that clearly support school, teacher team and classroom level goals, consistently improving student outcomes.
 - A school based option provides the staff with additional time for professional development that is used to study professional texts and share successful pedagogical strategies to plan appropriate instruction. One staff committee has revised report cards to include benchmark assessment levels and another committee has been focused on increasing vocabulary skills. As a result, teachers are meeting the instructional and achievement needs students.
 - Due to budget constraints and retirements, various teachers were strategically reassigned to strengthen the literacy skills across grades, supporting the school's long range plans. Teachers have implemented classroom book clubs, a student newspaper and a science research project to challenge students from a new perspective, resulting in improved literacy skills.
- The principal has created a learning community that is focused on student outcomes with a vision to accelerate learning for all students.
 - The school's long term plan to improve ELA achievement is driven by their data analysis from multiple sources. Teacher teams are identifying trends, researching best practices aligned to students needs and implementing instructional strategies. For example, the 2nd grade teacher team is reviewing early performance assessment in language arts results and focusing on listening skills, while the kindergarten team is reviewing

their diagnostic results for improvements in phonemic awareness, vocabulary development and comprehension. Specific benchmark assessments for units across content areas are providing administration and staff with on-going data and continuous knowledge of student achievement necessary to make instructional decisions. As a result, goal setting and action planning are informed by assessments to close the achievement gap.

- A shared instructional vision across the school creates a culture that embraces learning and elevates students' academic achievements.
 - The entire school faculty constantly works as a coherent family to raise student achievement through high expectations and enhanced instructional practices that are regularly shared. As a result, there is clarity of purpose and a consistent focus across all classrooms leading to continual improvement of students reaching their goals.
 - School leaders regularly examine student data and plan strategic observations to provide differentiated professional development to improve teachers' pedagogical practices. For example, a math coach provides in-classroom demonstrations for all teachers on high level mathematical thinking and problem solving in support of the school wide initiative. Follow up support is provided to individual teachers so that they become more purposeful in their instructional strategies.
- Professional development opportunities are aligned to school's goals and build teacher's capacity in instructional expertise so that student's learning outcomes improve.
 - Teachers have multiple learning opportunities, based on their discussions with school leaders, to further their knowledge in curriculum, differentiation and instructional strategies. For example, the staff was provided with extensive training on understanding complex texts and the importance of this skill in improving comprehension and succeeding in college and career. Additional staff training was provided on teaching informational texts resulting in building capacity amongst the staff.
 - A protocol is used to look at student work, curriculum mapping, accountable talk, differentiated instruction, and strategies for comprehension and fluency. Teachers are afforded visits to classes within their school and network, which fosters conversations around best practices. As a result, teachers are reflecting and evaluating their practice with peers and becoming more knowledgeable in their classroom teaching, ultimately impacting student achievement.
- School leaders and faculty analyze a wide range of data to track students' progress identifying learning needs to pinpoint trends and adjust practices.
 - Summative data from the Progress Report and the State exams item skills analysis are analyzed, as well as formative data, including writing samples, reading levels, and student ranking lists, are collected at least four times a year to track student progress and identify trends. A lack of academic vocabulary and extended responses in ELA and math were noted with all students, especially ELLs. As a result, literacy instruction with a focus on vocabulary has been infused across all content areas.

- Inquiry teams were reorganized by grade level and meet on a weekly basis to collect, analyze and identify target students for additional supports and enrichments. As a result, the extended day curriculum was adjusted to provide students with instruction based on their needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the development of structures to regularly evaluate and adjust assessment and grading practices to improve coherence and communication throughout the school community.
 - Although the school is reworking its grading policy to include the Common Core State Standards, a structure to regularly evaluate this work has not yet been fully developed and consequently there is a lack of consistency.
 - The school shares performance data and goals with parents and students. However, a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the communication process is evolving. As a result, communication has not reached its full potential in providing next steps.
- Further develop a system to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and leadership development so that the professional growth of staff is consistently advancing.
 - Monthly meetings between the principal and team facilitators allows for a review of teacher team work that leads to clarification of focus and next steps. In the absence of a more transparent system that regularly evaluates the effectiveness of leadership ability and the success of team members hinders the continued growth promise of teacher leadership.
- Continue the work of analyzing data in order to plan instruction that supports the needs of a diverse student population to improve learning outcomes.
 - Teams of teachers are using and creating assessments that provide feedback on targeted students so that appropriate lessons are developed. The grade 4 team has developed a detailed progress report for each targeted student that involves assessments and next steps, and the planning differentiated of lessons. However, this high level of planning for a range of appropriate differentiated instructional strategies to increase student achievement is not a fully embedded practice across all teams.
- Extend differentiated instructional practices so that all learners are challenged with multiple entry points reflective of the school's belief system.
 - The school believes differentiation of instruction is essential for all students to learn and classroom assignments are typically differentiated according to student achievement. However, the entry points for content, process and product are not always differentiated to challenge all students with supports and extensions into the curricula. A lack of this practice across all classrooms leaves some students not meeting their maximum potential.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Rufus King Elementary 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	

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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