



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

The Ruby S. Couche School

Elementary School 030

**126-10 Bedell Street
Jamaica, N.Y. 11434**

Principal: Dwayne Crowder

Dates of review: April 13 - 14, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D.

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ruby S. Couche is an elementary school with 578 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 85% Black, 8% Hispanic, 4% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 17% 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 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Expectations for delivering the standards-based curriculum are clear and supported well using progress-monitoring checklists.
 - Administration's decision to align every lesson to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has resulted in every teacher having a CCSS binder, referred to as the instructional resource binder that includes distributed materials. Teachers, mandated to use this binder when planning, are better able to align the school's curriculum to meet State standards.
 - As observed at the grade 4 teacher meeting, teachers create math benchmark pieces for a subtraction unit, examine the CCSS note grade-level expectations, and then align math questions to the standard to create leveled benchmark pieces. Consequently, teachers critically examine the standards in order to design differentiated activities to accelerate student learning.
- The development of project-based learning is giving students the opportunity to undertake research, solve problems, and be learners that are more active.
 - Majority of classrooms observed showed differentiated group instruction based on skill-level of students. Groups worked on different assignments with suitable materials ensuring that student's have the necessary tools to engage in the curriculum and produce work products demonstrating content and skill mastery.
 - In the Everyday Math classes observed, all students were engaged in their lessons, using various manipulatives and the majority of classes utilized higher-level thinking skills, leading to a classroom environments conducive to school-wide achievement.
- Staff gather a range of relevant data across most subjects to understand individual student and relevant subgroup performance progress and learning needs.
 - Classroom teachers maintain data binders with student's assessment results, as well as whole class information. Analyses of data is used to identify student's strengths and weaknesses, guide teachers' and administrators' decisions on instruction, and support the formulation of small groups and one-on-one conferring. Consequently, an organized and extensive record-keeping system empowers school-wide goal setting and advances precise academic and social-emotional provisions that address whole-school and individual challenges.
 - The principal's preparation of a bar graph from the most recent periodic assessment data shows results relative to four categories, all students, African-American, economically disadvantaged, and special needs. This information, distributed school wide during faculty conferences, led to coaches expanding their program of in-class support to meet the needs of students.
- Teachers collaborate to examine student work, plan together, and visit each other's classrooms to share ideas and best practice through a desire to improve student outcomes.

- All classroom teachers participate on grade inquiry teams that aggregate and review multiple forms of data in order to track students that are either low performing or not showing adequate progress. This results in coherence across grades and in content areas, deepening differentiation, and providing data-driven support that addresses student needs.
- Every teacher inquiry team is facilitated by a “teacher leader” responsible for the team’s inquiry binder allowing for a coherent sharing of information. This shared leadership has led to the staff establishing a school wide structure of identifying, targeting, and assessing students throughout the school.
- The school analyzes relevant and summative information routinely to identify trends in student progress and performance in order to inform curriculum and instruction.
 - The school’s practice of individualized CCSS teacher binders enables them to align their planning and assessments to the CCSS. This results in meaningful instructional practices to accelerate student growth.
 - The school’s mandate on displaying the color-coded Dibels data in lower grade classrooms enables administration to quickly see the progress of students and classes, target those students that might need additional support, and guides instructional decisions geared to improve student performance.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning.
 - The principal’s decision to reallocate staff and reduce class sizes in the upper grades did not sufficiently include key staff members. The elimination of arts positions, and the reassignment of an Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR) as a cluster teacher, limits staff’s productivity and the school’s ability to provide suitable coursework for students.
 - Although the school did not make its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA) for students for the 2009-2010 State report card, the urgency for support for literacy instruction is not evident. Currently, a literacy coach is used as a cluster teacher to provide preparation periods, thus reducing support for teachers, and hindering building capacity for staff to provide rigorous content area instruction meeting the needs of students.
- Develop a cohesive system to ensure that all teachers know student’s needs, strengths, achievement, and learning styles, across the curriculum to support targeted instruction and foster task engagement.
 - Teacher teams utilize a wide range of assessments to evaluate student work, but there is a lack of common rubrics to enable them to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses. This limits the reliability of the data and the ability of teachers to identify successful instructional strategies.
 - Grade level inquiry teams meet regularly to examine work and discuss next steps. However, there is not a specified school protocol that enables them to uniformly analyze the work of students across grade and content areas. This

results in reduced teacher capacity to extend and enhance learning beyond the classroom.

- Initiate a collaborative approach across all subjects to help in setting student improvement goals based on benchmark data with an eye to raising student achievement.
 - The principal stated the students were to have individual goals in each content area. However, as observed during both student and parent interviews, neither knew the goals, nor were they displayed in classrooms. As a result, students are not aware of their next steps and have limited knowledge of their academic needs.
 - Teacher teams use data for their targeted students to see their results and to see any student progress. However, they do not set any goals for them. This reduces teacher's ability to gauge their effectiveness and limiting the impact of their work on student achievement.
- Expand the use of the school's observation tool to identify good teaching practices to ensure continued improvement in pedagogy.
 - Administration has created a professional development needs sheet used to grid teacher's weaknesses based on observations. However, this protocol is in the development stages and therefore does not presently drive teacher improvement, resulting in the lack of instructional congruence school wide.
 - Although administration has observed teachers at least twice this year, there is no focus and no evidence of differentiated professional development opportunities. This results in the lack of targeted and differentiated opportunities to elevate staffs' instructional practices thus limiting teacher development.
- Strengthen support services and collaborations in order to provide students with a wide range of opportunities to grow academically and socially.
 - Findings from the 2009-2010 Learning Environment Survey (LES), resulted in the principal starting a peer mediation group, led by the guidance counselor and a school wellness council. However, as it is in the beginning stages its impact of supporting both the academic and personal growth of students is not evident.
 - Studio in the School, the only external organization in the school provides art experiences for the students. However, it is only one day a week for half a year, which does not fulfill State requirements for arts education. This impedes opportunities for all students and teachers to engage in interactive learning to enrich academic tasks across content areas.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Ruby S. Couche 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