

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Edward M. Funk

Elementary School Q033

**91-37 222 Street
Queens
NY 11428**

Principal: Erich Wagner

Dates of review: April 11 – 12, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Edward M. Funk School is an elementary school with 1041 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 23% Black, 25% Hispanic, 6% White, and 46% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 5% 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 94.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty make purposeful decisions that align curricula to standards and support rigor and higher order thinking to improve student performance.
 - The school has designed its units of study to coincide with the major areas of emphasis covered on the State tests in reading and math. Teachers use curriculum outlines to provide a coherent development within each subject area and as a guide to devise lesson plans that address the actual needs of students. As a result, students feel engaged in their classes and show improvement on unit tests.
 - Teachers deliver rigorous instruction to students incorporating higher order thinking skills in their lessons. In grade 3, literacy students use the text to identify their characters' strengths and on the basis of those ideas they can predict what the character will do. In grade 4, students use the idea of personification to write their own poetry which they share with their peers. This has led to the majority of students becoming engaged in the learning and improving their writing as measured by grade-level rubrics.
- Teaching strategies and practices are consistently aligned to the curriculum and reflect the belief that differentiated instruction and student engagement are essential to increasing student achievement.
 - Teachers throughout the school use flexible and skill-based groupings, group explorations, and teacher demonstrations that facilitate active student participation in solving math word problems, writing research papers on China and drawing conclusions from simple science experiments on which objects sink or float in water. This active engagement has led to a double digit increase in student performance on unit tests as student comprehension has improved.
 - Across classrooms teachers regularly confer with students to teach the next steps in students' development and use techniques such as graphic organizers during writing, problem-solving process techniques for math and effective basic internet research for social studies and science. These individual conferences focus on refining student effort. This has led to improved student work as measured by grade-level rubrics.
- School leaders make difficult, thoughtful organizational decisions in allocating their budget, time and limited technology resources to the full support of the school's instructional goals to properly meet the learning needs of students.
 - The school has eliminated the coaching positions and reduced the number of out of classroom teachers in response to budget pressures. This has led to an increase in class sizes and the full responsibility for struggling students falling to grade-level inquiry teams and classroom teachers. After-school programs have been cut. As a result, the inquiry teams have become more effective in moving struggling students.
 - Teachers have regular meeting times during the school day. Classroom teachers have accepted responsibility for some physical education lessons and for teaching the arts. Therefore, students spend a larger proportion of

their time with their classroom teachers who focus more deeply on literacy and math skills and monitor their performance across subject areas more closely to better meet their needs.

- Teams of teachers and individual teachers align assessments to the curriculum and diligently analyze student data to refine instructional decisions at the team and classroom level to improve student outcomes.
 - Teacher teams develop and use assessments by grade level that emerge from their units of study across subject areas. The grade 4 teachers designed a rubric that provides specific feedback to students on their poetry writing. This facilitated the development of specific lessons that increased the students' understanding of the use of symbolism and figurative language. The special education inquiry team has developed protocols that assist in examining students' work and devising next steps that take the children closer to their goals. As a result, they have decided to focus more on the enhancement of academic vocabulary and the use of diagrams and drawings in their students' writing to express their ideas. This has led to an increase in the volume of student writing.
- School leaders use the formal and informal observation of classroom teaching and the consistent analysis of learning outcomes to continuously improve the level of instructional practice to increase teacher performance.
 - The school leaders have used balanced literacy as the interdisciplinary foundation of all instruction. Across classrooms teachers use mini-lessons, guided reading, accountable talk among students, and flexible grouping to teach classrooms of increasing size. This approach has led to teachers expanding student vocabulary and refining student writing as documented in teacher conference notes.
 - The school administrators visit classrooms frequently for formal and informal observations. They meet with teachers to provide feedback on student notebooks and work products and the ongoing performance of students. The leadership uses this information to determine next steps for individual teachers that improves their performance.
- Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that develops leaders and focuses on continuous student achievement.
 - Each grade level has an inquiry team that focuses on struggling students and analyzes assessment data, student work and teaching practice. Teachers take the lead in developing and implementing ideas without needing administrative management. The kindergarten team developed a pre-assessment that complements the early childhood literacy assessment system and enables teachers to identify learning problems early in the school year. As a result, they have made changes in the way they teach phonics and do word work to facilitate a smoother transition to first grade for their students and a fifty percent increase in student readers.

What the school needs to improve

- Expand the engagement of students and families in open, frank dialogue regarding student learning needs and strengths to increase parental awareness and knowledge.
 - The school hosts several parent workshops on the use of ARIS Parent Link to understand the student data involving their children. This has led to utilization of these tools by the small percentage of school parents who attend regularly leaving many parents unaware of its potential.
 - Teachers actively reach out to parents in person, more frequently by phone, less often by e-mail and sometimes with notes sent home explaining the progress of their students toward meeting school standards. However, parents are not encouraged to engage vigorously in reciprocal conversations around student progress and are less aware of when a child with good ability is under-performing.
- Communicate higher, more challenging expectations and goals to students and families to involve them in decision-making and increase active parent involvement in the school community.
 - School leaders sought parental input on uniforms, the design and construction of the new playground, and the severe reduction of after-school programs as a result of budgetary realities. They communicate regularly to families about strong attendance and the importance of diligent academic effort. Consequently, parents take ownership of the school decisions and a small percentage of them are active in the school as volunteers and on parent association initiatives. However, the majority of parents think that their children are insufficiently challenged.
- Establish clearer, more consistent structures that can provide timely feedback on the effectiveness of the structured professional collaboration and capacity-building in the school to increase support for this work.
 - The evaluation of teacher teams is primarily the responsibility of one assistant principal who regularly attends the team meetings on a rotating basis and elicits feedback from teacher leaders. This same person mentors the teacher leaders and oversees the gradual release of responsibility to classroom teachers for making adjustments to collaborative practice. This has led to an effective yet informal system that may have little sustainability during difficult budgetary circumstances or very busy times adversely affecting capacity-building.
- Improve the provision of professional development that promotes deep individual reflection and supports the continuous evaluation and revision of teaching practice to improve the standard of instruction.
 - The school works collaboratively with its network team to provide professional development regularly on its core subject areas of balanced literacy, math, social studies and science as well as on exposing its faculty to the emerging Common Core State Standards. Opportunities for faculty to actually discuss their practice are limited even though teachers take responsibility for effective student outcomes. This has led to more experienced teachers justifying traditional methods of teaching rather than revising their practice to sustain continuous improvement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Edward M. Funk	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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