

# Quality Review Report 2010-2011

**The Raymond York School**

**Elementary School 065**

**103-22 99<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11417**

**Principal: Rafael Morales**

**Dates of review: March 9 - 10, 2011**

**Lead Reviewer: Gwen Stephens**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Raymond York is an elementary school with 550 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 44% Hispanic, 4% White, and 39% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal's vision for the school includes a learning community utilizing data to establish a framework of goal setting and action planning focused on accelerating students' learning.
  - The utilization and analysis of data by the cabinet, faculty, and school leadership team, translates into a thoughtful Comprehensive Educational Plan that drives instruction. The school's goals and focused action plans linking professional development and inquiry, specifically in math, successfully improve student performance. Seventy-three percent of students in grades K and 2 achieved 85% or higher on the math unit assessments in March, 3.1% higher than the anticipated goal.
  - The school shares goals through school-wide reports highlighting targets met in academic and non-academic areas. This successful communication, along with the ongoing involvement of members from the entire school community during focus groups and planning sessions in the development of goals and action plans, results in all stakeholders feeling valued as partners and committed to the the school's vision.
- The school-wide cabinet's strategic use of resources and effective organizational decisions align with the instructional goals to increase student and adult learning within the school.
  - Scheduling that includes a 100-minute literacy block, creative programming of all teachers in common planning and inquiry teams, full and part-time tutors who provide small group support for students in key grades, and an early-morning extended day program focusing on literacy initiatives, are examples of alignments to goals and best practices that impact on improving students' learning outcomes. A United Federation of Teachers Resource Center, math facilitator, and literacy coach effectively support professional learning furthering the schools work.
- School leaders and faculty utilize a comprehensive range of data to create a detailed portrait of the school's strengths and areas of improvement.
  - At the beginning of the school year, the school formulates its school goals in reading and writing after careful analysis of NY State English language arts (ELA) performance data, and benchmark assessments from NYC performance series', Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System (ECLAS), and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), which are administered school wide. The review of information from these assessments is used effectively to create students' goals, and classify students in tiers relative to the Response to Intervention model. Students in the lowest tiers receive additional instruction and are progress-monitored for improvement, and regrouped until data shows proficiency in skills and attainment of goals. The impact has been an effective school-wide model of intervention for students at-risk of reading failure.

- Students benefit from a standards-based curriculum aligned to City and State standards, inclusive of the arts, with carefully thought out curricula choices enabling students to excel academically.
  - School leaders and faculty utilize structured research-based reading and math curricula that are crafted to develop early proficiency in reading and math and provide horizontal and vertical continuity of instruction. This creates coherence in the delivery of standards-based teaching so all students have access to fundamental knowledge critical to closing the achievement gap.
  - A major initiative of the school this year, rewriting detailed content and grade level curriculum maps and pacing calendars, is a collaborative effort of faculty and coaches. A Project ARTS curriculum, aligned to the social studies content for grades K-5, enhances the school's ability to promote classroom instruction focused on key standards and pacing goals across all grades.
- The principal and his instructional team use observations to establish a common instructional focus and provide teachers with feedback on their practice in order to increase student achievement.
  - The instructional team utilizes formal observations and informal "snapshots" to provide on-going leadership to support, reinforce, and improve teacher classroom practice. Administrators' further support of teachers in making informed instructional decisions, increases coherence of their teacher practice to improve outcomes.
  - A rubric developed to evaluate classroom practice, used by coaches, increases their accountability by ensuring effective follow-up and debriefing with teachers following their visit. This practice supports a common focus and aligns the work of all instructional staff to increase instructional rigor.
- School leaders effectively evaluate the quality of curricular and instructional organizational decisions to increase the coherence of policies and school-wide practices.
  - The principal's and assistant principals' review of curriculum on a regular basis is responsible for the school's decision to change the math curriculum and supplement existing literacy curriculum. As a result, special education students in the grade 4 and 5 self-contained classes showed 67% average gains in English language arts and 89% average gains in math on the most recent Education Performance assessments.
  - School leaders meet regularly with the school leadership team to discuss and explore flexible responses to an increasingly tough budget situation. The school's effective response to several budget cuts enabled them to maintain science and art as cluster positions, highlighting the school's priorities regarding a well-varied curriculum to support student needs.

## What the school needs to improve

- Expand the use of strategies that offer a differentiated approach to teaching so that lessons promote increased rigor and higher order thinking skills to challenge all students.
  - Classrooms across the school provide good evidence of consistent focus on aspects of the literacy and math curricula, such as thinking maps and use of sentence stems. Students are seen working in groups based upon assessment data or learning style inventory. However, tasks within these groups are often the same and there is inconsistency in the use of varied process, content, and/or products. There is also inconsistency in the rigor of student work products and range in teachers' ability to develop questions to support critical thinking and deepen engagement. Consequently, not all students' needs are being addressed.
- Deepen teacher expertise in the use, development, and alignment of classroom level data to ensure that teachers match students' needs and adjust instructional decisions to raise performance levels.
  - While the expectation of the school leaders is to use assessments to provide customized instruction for students, there was inconsistency in how daily assessments and data are being utilized for the purpose of lesson evaluation. Teachers use checklists and conference notes; however this is not a universal practice.
- Refine and expand professional development opportunities to include specific individualized support for teachers across the school to develop effective teaching strategies that accelerate student progress.
  - The school's high priority this year for teacher collaboration has resulted in opportunities to attend on- and off-site professional development on broad topics such as Common Core Curriculum Standards and writing across content areas. However, teacher classroom practice is inconsistent, and professional development is not sufficiently individualized to reflect a "toolkit" of successful early childhood teaching strategies so that teachers have sufficient impact on instruction leading to higher student achievement.
- Further strengthen systems to regularly evaluate teacher teams and make improvements to support the work and build coherence between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
  - Teacher teams meet on a regular basis to review student data and look at student work and administrators visit on occasion to provide relevant feedback. Administrators require teams to provide agendas and next steps posted on an internal school website and Google Docs. However, this practice is not sufficiently structured to support consistent communication, deepening of protocols, and "cross pollination" between teams to cull best practices.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

<b>School name: The Raymond York Elementary School</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs?				<b>X</b>
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				<b>X</b>
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
2.3 Use or develop tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 Engage in an open exchange of information with students and families regarding students' learning needs and outcomes?			<b>X</b>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to students and families, engage them in decision-making, and promote active involvement in the school community?			<b>X</b>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>