

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Robert Goddard School

Middle School Q202

**138-30 Lafayette Street
Queens
NY 11417**

Principal: William Fitzgerald

**Dates of review: May 24- 25, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert Goddard School is a middle school with 1,103 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 10% Black, 45% Hispanic, 9% White, and 33% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. 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 school's rigorous curriculum is aligned with standards and sufficiently challenges and prepares students for college and career readiness.
 - The leadership and faculty analyzed summative and formative data results and determined that writing is a school-wide focus. Common Core State Standards in reading, writing and math are reflected in rubrics, and curriculum maps are detailed, sequential, and contain a monthly genre focus. Academic rigor is achieved based on Bloom's Taxonomy higher order questioning, Socratic seminars and literature circles. Consequently, teachers comment that a recent examination of students' genre of the month writing samples indicate that the rigorous rubrics and enhanced curricula challenge all students and result in a school wide progression in writing. Teachers meet regularly to ensure that curriculum maps are aligned to the standards and adjustments, such as the selection a new strategy, are made based on the students' performance. As a result, over three years, the Regents exams have shown academic growth by reducing the percentage of students scoring below a 70% in math and increasing the number of students scoring above 85%.
- A coherent set of beliefs about how students learn is the underpinning for varied differentiated approaches that fully address the individual needs of students and result in exemplary work products.
 - As a recipient of an iTeach/iLearn grant, teachers across the school engage students in instruction that is strongly linked to technology. All students have access to a multitude of technology tools such as laptops, SMART boards, iPads, iMovies, and a wide range of instructional software. A state of the art television studio allows students to create their own programs that focus on script writing and editing, which are recorded and shared with their peers in class. Students create exemplary power point presentations in science and social studies. Differentiated approaches are tailored to instruction based on resources, groupings, and methodologies. In a grade 6 class, students use iPads, laptops, and visual learners video tape a Socratic seminar based on the fall of Rome. As a result, according to the most recent predictive scores, grade 6 level 1 students decreased to 4% and levels 3 and 4 students increased up to 60%.
- The leadership and faculty's decision making is purposeful and result in informed organizational and curricular decisions that suitably align with school goals to accelerate student learning.
 - According to the principal, weekly cabinet meetings are the engine of the school and during these meetings, "we discuss everything". A new skills program was adopted to address deficit areas of English language learners, (ELLs) through direct instruction and progress tracking of literacy skills and phonics. The strategic analysis of data resulted in instructional technology assisted tools for students with special needs and SMART boards to support both struggling and accelerated learners. Coaches support students by

providing push in and pull out intervention models. Weekly common planning time, regularly scheduled team meetings, as well as afterschool tutorials ensure that the entire school is focused on student learning. Consequently, all decisions result in optimal learning experiences that ensure that the goals of the school are met.

- Teachers consistently use summative and formative assessments to track subgroups' progress resulting in a deeper understanding of trends, performance and progress of students.
 - Acuity, ITAs, unit tests, and predictive results are routinely tracked to identify strengths and weaknesses of the target population and make adjustments to instruction as needed. The grade 7 teacher team also analyzes students not in the target population to ensure that identified strategies are effective for all students. At the end of cycle 2, teachers found that students did not always restate the topic in their writing, making it difficult for the reader to understand. As a result, the strategy of peer editing was introduced and students' writing has improved. Based on predictive scores, the English language arts projections in special education decreased level 1 students to 12.7% and increased levels 3 and 4 students to 19.3% in this subgroup.
- Across the school teachers engage in structured professional collaborations using the inquiry approach resulting in highly effective shared leadership where staff is committed to improving the performance of all students.
 - Teachers systematically analyze relevant data, share current research findings, use protocols to examine student work and make adjustments, such as increasing direct instruction to struggling learners. As a result, the grade 6 team modified their writing program to include iPads for students who continue to struggle in order to offer students more individualized support. The leadership, facilitators, and coaches routinely collaborate and make significant decisions such as implementing effective instructional programs that improve the language and instructional performance of English language learners. Successful instructional strategies are selected from sources such as the Pre-Referral Intervention Manual and results are shared with colleagues across the school during team meetings and in the ARIS community. Consequently, teachers clearly articulate the strengths and weaknesses of their students and take ownership for their students' learning.
- The school has clear systems to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams and thoroughly examine student data that result in capacity-building decisions.
 - Data specialists and lead inquiry teachers meet bi-weekly to discuss the effectiveness of their work by engaging in conversations related to student attendance, assessment results, instructional strategies, and high quality resources. Frequent formal and informal classroom observations and conversations drive capacity building. Regularly scheduled team and cabinet meetings, ensure that teachers are able to strategically analyze short-term assessment data as a means to measure progress towards long-term goals, resulting in coherence between curricular, instructional, attendance, and assessment practices.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine the communication process with students and their families about academic strengths, weaknesses, and next steps so that learning is enhanced.
 - Information regarding student progress is shared with parents through programs; however, notifications do not offer parents a clear picture of their child's next learning steps. Thus, reciprocal and continuous discussions that would target students' strengths and weaknesses between students, parents, and staff are not occurring, hindering student progress.
- Enhance the usefulness of information regarding student progress that is shared with students and their families in all subject areas so that feedback is explicit and results in improved student performance.
 - School leaders and staff engage in an on-going review of formative and State assessments, set high student goals, and continuously review students' work to track progress. Students and families receive progress reports after benchmark assessments; however, these reports are broad and do not offer specific feedback. Thus parents are unable to sufficiently participate and support the academic development of their children.
- Expand opportunities for all teachers to strengthen their practice by engaging in learning opportunities that enable them to observe and reflect more with their peers.
 - The leadership provides multiple opportunities for faculty to engage in study groups, on and off site professional development, and individualized coaching. However, inter-visitations are reserved mostly for teachers who are experiencing difficulty in their practice. As a result, regular opportunities for staff to engage in inter-visitations that enable them to observe exemplary instructional practice of their peers in model classrooms and engage in reflective dialogue concerning student outcomes are not an embedded practice, resulting in diminished pedagogic growth of teachers.
- Develop greater opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development that addresses the social emotional needs of students to accelerate their academic and personal growth.
 - Survey data indicates that 84% of students feel that bullying is a problem. Therefore, the school's guidance counselors created a presentation for staff that focused on bullying and huge anti-bullying campaigns was launched across the school. However, with limited professional development resources to support teachers in dealing with adolescent issues, staff and families struggle to address students' social and emotional needs. Thus, the support for staff and families to help students strengthen their personal development skills that impact on their academic success is hindered.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: The Robert Goddard 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