

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Police Officer Ramon Suarez School

Elementary School Q239

**17-15 Weirfield Street
Ridgewood,
NY 11385**

Principal: Robin L. Connolly

Dates of review: December 13 - 14, 2010

Lead Reviewer: Myrta Rivera

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Police Officer Ramon Suarez is an elementary school with 796 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 81% Hispanic, 8% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes 30% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 94.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders effectively align resources and make organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and long-term plans.
 - School leaders have expanded the successful Leveled Literacy Intervention to three teachers this year. Program analysis shows an average gain of 8.6 reading levels as compared to non-participating students who show an average gain of 4.6. This strategy aligns with the long-term goal of supporting at risk students across grades.
 - In an attempt to address the dip in scores and capture expertise of teachers, the school reorganized selected third to fifth grade classes into literacy/social studies and math/science classes. The teachers, selected based on data and interest, along with academic intervention teachers, provide students with small group differentiated instruction during one of the double periods. Preliminary data shows that students are moving faster in reading and showing greater growth in math based on ITA data.
- The administrative team and teachers use a wide range of data effectively to identify school strengths, trends and needs to plan effective instructional and intervention strategies to ensure student learning.
 - A comprehensive review of data indicates the need to support English language learners and struggling students with comprehension when reading non-fiction material. Double periods in reading as well as carefully coordinated push-in academic services provide students with additional support. These strategies led to extra credit last year on the progress report for English language learners.
 - Teachers and administrators track student progress regularly through data binders that are updated using thumb drives given to every teacher with test results. Teachers sort the data to identify struggling groups and high achieving students to plan next steps. The data binder also includes guided reading notes, running records as well as conference notes. This data is the basis for differentiating instruction.
- Teacher teams effectively align assessments to the curriculum and adjust classroom level curricular and instructional decisions based on student data.
 - Assessing student progress is an embedded practice where teachers use running records, rubrics or pre/post assessments to measure growth and identify gaps in learning. All teachers use clipboards to assess on the spot if the student is able to work on the teaching point during the active engagement or independent work period. During a mini lesson, a teacher quickly assessed a student on the spot and showed him a strategy to check his work. Teachers use these classroom assessments to make instructional or grouping decisions.
 - One example of effective teaming is that Math teachers joined English as second language teachers to form an inquiry team that researches effective instructional strategies in teaching estimation. At a meeting, one teacher shares how using the "front end" strategy with a visual of a

car was effective for her English language learners. The group regularly examines student work to identify strengths and needs and track progress for student sub-groups.

- The school has developed an effective system of improving instructional practice that focuses on professional growth aligned to the school's instructional goals.
 - The entire school shares a common instructional focus using small group instruction through use of the workshop model in a collaborative school culture. The impact of this work, documented in the Learning Environment Survey, indicates that all teachers feel that expectations are clear and feel engaged in an active and vibrant partnership that promotes learning.
 - The school offers teachers differentiated professional development with support for new teachers such as mentoring, inter-visitation and assignment of a buddy teacher. All teachers complete a survey monkey identifying areas of interest and need. Teachers write their goals and action plans with benchmarks. School leaders meet individually with teachers to approve these goals and measure progress.
- School leaders have successful structures in place to evaluate the quality of curriculum and instruction to build alignment and coherence to optimize student learning.
 - Regularly scheduled cabinet meetings provide the forum for evaluation and adjustment of curricular and instructional practices by reviewing periodic assessment data and classroom assessments. Data binders, reviewed periodically during data coaching sessions where each grade team meets with their administrator to review data results, determines next steps as a grade.
 - The creation of the Learning Committee provides the structure for supporting the introduction of the Common Core State Standards to staff and its implication for instruction. Through this committee's analysis of curriculum, looking at student work and item skills analysis, the school increased the number of non-fiction materials in reading and writing.
- Professional collaboration by teams using an inquiry approach is a high priority that results in shared leadership and improved student learning.
 - The successful implementation of an SBO facilitates all teachers to become involved in inquiry teams. Teachers meet every Thursday after school to examine student work, collaborate with colleagues, share instructional strategies and improve their teaching. Teachers use professional articles and protocols for looking at student work.
 - Throughout the school, teams are using inquiry approaches to improve student outcomes. One example is that through the analysis of teacher work in inquiry teams, the academic intervention teacher uses successful strategies for teaching sight words documented by an inquiry team. Identified students benefit from tested strategies videotaped to provide teachers with support to incorporate these new strategies in their teaching.

- Teachers use and analyze data, set individual goals and track their progress to accelerate student progress.
 - Teachers create student goals frequently as part of their assessment practice. Students are able to articulate their goals and next steps to meet these goals. Parents receive written notification when the goals change so that they can support their child at home.
 - The goal to increase the reading/writing skills for English language learners supports the push-in model during the literacy block. Common planning time allows English as a second language and classroom teachers to coordinate and plan lessons based on current assessment data. Frequent assessments and monitoring of student progress supports accelerating student learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are emphasized in a coherent way across grades and subjects.
 - Even though all classes use higher order thinking skills in their lessons, the pacing of the lessons during the mini-lesson section is too long in some classes. This inconsistency in delivery of instruction can jeopardize student's ability to think critically with independence.
 - Academic tasks engage a variety of learners. However, there is no organized support group for the highest achieving students and parents' feel that there should be an ARISTA program. This lack of support for the school's stronger students can stifle their creativity and quest for learning.
- Deepen differentiated instructional strategies that lead to high levels of student engagement with extensions for high performing students.
 - There is a general level of student engagement and thinking based on a review of student work especially for some higher performing students. The lack of accelerated extensions for these students can jeopardize their ability to produce high-level work.
 - Classroom instruction offers small group instruction for all students. However, higher performing students resort to working independently on more of the same material. This lack of challenging material can hinder growth for the highest performing students.
- Increase opportunities for parent engagement and deepen parent's role in school decision-making.
 - Even though parents were involved in the change of school schedule, they are not consistently involved in making school decisions that supports the school goals. The lack of parent engagement can inhibit their ability to support the school's direction.
 - Learning leaders trained 15 parents to become volunteers in the school. However, the school has only had 38% of parents complete the Learning Environment Survey. Parents agreed that this lack of parental input can inhibit support for the school goals.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Police Officer Ramon Suarez 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