

Quality Review Report 2010-2011

Robert Randall School

Elementary/Middle R373

**91 Henderson Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Ilene Goldstein-Harnett

Dates of review: May 24-26th 2011

Lead Reviewer: Eileen Waters

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert Randall School is an elementary and middle school with 429 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 32% Black, 21% Hispanic, 44% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 83% of the students enrolled and girls account for 17%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2009 - 2010 was 90.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has a highly supportive learning environment centered on students' academic, social and emotional needs that allows students to continually develop and engage in their learning.
 - Parents compliment the safe environment, both physically and emotionally, provided to their children along with the heart and passion teachers have for the students. The analysis of the Learning Environment Survey (LES) and occurrence reporting data has led to the adoption of programs that target students' emotional needs. From this, bus matrons receive support from the school around strategies to implement that have decreased negative behaviors while in transit and each site has created goals to address the concerns gathered from the LES. Using data to improve the culture of the school has allowed the administration to better address the needs of teachers and focus on student progress.
 - The staff works collaboratively to meet the academic and social emotional needs of the students on a regularly basis. An occupational therapist, designs various contraptions to decrease common physical behaviors of autistic children. The use of the mood meter allows teachers to register students' emotional level and immediately address any concerns. The student council plays an active role in school events and handles student complaints by attending to issues that arise. All of these common rituals and supports allow students to continuously focus directly on their learning.
- Teachers' active participation in inquiry work cultivates a learning culture centered on students' needs and growth, as well as promotes the development of leaders.
 - Across the school, teachers work in inquiry teams to target a common deficit among their students based on data analysis. Teachers then research strategies to increase their pedagogical expertise and assist students' learning needs. Student progress is monitored over time and strategies are adjusted as needed. From this practice teachers have changed their instructional strategies to better address the needs of students to decrease work avoidance behaviors and increase listening comprehension.
 - Over the course of the year, the administration has withdrawn its role in teacher teams to allow for instructional leaders to evolve. Teachers have been empowered to collaborate with colleagues, visit peers to learn new strategies and share their ideas with administration. Consequently, teachers have taken on various leadership roles to further advance their practice and voice opinions that have impacted on school decisions.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals work collaboratively to provide students with academic tasks appropriate to their abilities while keeping them challenged and engaged in their learning so that progress is made.
 - The varying cognitive and motor abilities of students are met through instructional tasks aligned with unique learning needs so that students are engaged and responsive. Autistic children are provided with small group or individual instruction using visuals, augmentative devices, computers, iPads, and finger paints with the assistance of paraprofessionals. In a math class, students worked with instructors and peers to complete the step-by-step

process for the exceptions to the order of operations using the SMART board. Also, students completed hands-on activities based on their developmental needs and socialization skills that were addressed as students sang, placed their picture on a school building poster and greeted each of their classmates. Students therefore build communication skills through various forums based on their capabilities and continue to advance through the daily instructional routines. Students' literacy and math skills have increased along with their endurance as evidence in teacher's daily data collections. For other students, mastery is gained through the repetition work and actions that addresses their unique learning styles.

- The varied organizational decisions and utilization of resources support the pedagogical needs of the teachers so that student's unique needs are met and student progress is achieved.
 - Across the multiple sites, various instructional and organizational decisions are made to best suit the needs of teachers and students. A reading and a behavior intervention program have been adopted to better address students' literacy needs, provide teachers with a more cohesive basis for instruction, and decrease negative behaviors of students to allow for recognition of students' feelings. With the strategic use of space and utilization of grants and donations, students are provided with dance instruction in a dance studio and chorus members have performance attire for community shows. Monthly faculty meetings are held via Skype so that the entire staff hears a coherent vision and expectation from the administration. The administration gathers information around teachers' strengths and expertise when reorganizing staff so that students' needs are met by well-equipped teachers. Scheduling has allowed teams of teachers to work collaboratively to build their professional knowledge through inquiry work and professional partnerships.
- The cabinet uses a variety of data to develop yearly goals that drive the academic and behavioral growth of students while increasing the unification of the school community to move the school forward.
 - The school has created goals based on data analysis to strengthen students' academic needs specific to their developmental abilities, behavioral competencies and coherence between teachers and administration. Using various sources of data, these goals have been collaboratively set to align with the long-term plan of the school as well as the continuous needs of the student population. As a result, instructional and organizational decisions have been made to positively support the attainment of these goals.
- Teachers use a variety of assessments that align with students' needs and provide information on student learning that impacts on pedagogical adjustments to best meet the needs of students.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers continuously gather data on students' abilities and deficits using checklists and common assessments. As part of inquiry work, teachers create and use assessments to help them gather data around students' mastery of a targeted skill. Results from these evaluations, provide teachers with pertinent information to adjust their pedagogical approaches and differentiate instruction as needed.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the level of professional support and feedback provided to teachers so that areas for growth are targeted in order to improve pedagogical practices.
 - Teachers receive verbal and written feedback from observations and walkthroughs. Although there is a common instructional focus, it is not consistently reflected in feedback to teachers in a fashion that would hold them accountable to increase their expertise. Written feedback is vague with little direction to teachers around how to deepen their pedagogy. In the absence of explicit feedback linked to instructional practices, teachers' professional growth is hindered.
 - Colleagues and the members of the cabinet offer professional development topics on academic and behavioral techniques to the staff. Teachers are encouraged to register for professional development offerings suited to their needs through outside organizations. However, differentiated professional opportunities to build teachers' strengths and deficits are not yet in place, hindering professional growth among the staff.
- Continue the curriculum transition so that all student populations are engaged in academic tasks that challenge higher order thinking abilities and provide coherence across the school.
 - Although teachers in standardized assessment classes have been using the District 75 units of study, they are also implementing a literacy program better suited to students needs. With the varying needs of alternate assessment students, a common curriculum has been a struggle to develop. The school has begun to create curriculum maps for both alternate and standardized assessment classes that incorporate the Common Core State Standards and the developmental needs of students along with depth of knowledge. Without a universal curriculum across the school, teachers struggle to have common understanding of academic expectations for all students.
- Expand the practice of organizing data across the school so that trends can be strategically tracked to provide purposeful information that supports instructional and organizational decisions.
 - School leaders and teachers have structures in place that allow them to measure the progress of students from a broad perspective. The administration tracks the number of students meeting the goals in their IEP and a teacher team monitors students' progress in listening comprehension. Although some teachers have developed tools that help them to strategically aggregate data so that progress is monitored overtime in a specific area, this is not yet an embedded practice across the school.
- Extend the structures in place that monitor assessment and data systems to further evaluate the effectiveness of practices so that adjustments can better support the achievement of students.
 - Meeting regularly as a cabinet, the success of assessment structures are discussed and revised to further target areas of need from a broad perspective. Purposeful coherence between the current structures and instructional practices has not reached their full potential in order to fully support the work of teacher teams and students' progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2010-2011

School name: Robert Randall 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