

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Ronald Edmonds Learning Center

Middle School K113

300 Adelphi Street

Brooklyn

NY 11205

Principal: Dawnique Daughtry-Pemberton

Dates of review: March 26 - 27, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

M.S. 113 Ronald Edmonds Learning Center is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 923 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 76% Black, 19% Hispanic, 1% White, 3% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010- 2011 was 91.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has designed a curriculum that is engaging and coherent, including an extensive Arts program for all students, leading to increased academic achievement by all learners. (1.1)
 - The school assessed what students had to know and, with the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), what they would need to know and identified “power” standards in all core content area subjects and visual and performing arts. These power standards focus on targeted subgroups, including students with disabilities, writing arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence, citing textual based evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text and incorporates the Department’s Blueprint standards for visual and performing arts. This shared focus on key, identified standards helps the school to make targeted decisions around instruction that develops these skills, supporting the school to foster college and career readiness for all, as evidenced by student work and performance products.
 - The school has consistently worked to define terms such as “rigor” and “challenging” in order to operate under one definition encompassing all learners. Rigor is defined school-wide as opportunities to provide students with prospects to exhibit higher level thinking skills where they are challenged and pushed to the next level of learning. Teacher teams then defined what those definitions would look like in the classroom. For example, the science department discussed the unit on DNA and what discussions, vocabulary and content would be introduced to all students. An observed self-contained special education science class analyzed traits and genotypes and explained how alleles are passed down through generations. Several charts were displayed to assist students in vocabulary development and a record of the learning thus far in the unit. This approach has led to more rigorous practices across classrooms and departments.
- The school has a clear, consistent belief about how students learn best and their curriculum is aligned to this belief, enabling all students to produce high-level work. (1.2)
 - Rigorous learning objectives based on Depth of Knowledge and teacher discussions and reflections on student work allow their belief, that students should have various opportunities and points of entry to the curriculum through their interest, to be visible school-wide. Classroom visits revealed students working in groups with flexible, differentiated tasks that enable students to flow from group to group based on need. Educational assistants are also utilized to provide small group and individual support. For example, an observed math class had all students working on the concept of volume; one group who needed additional support worked with the teacher, another group worked with the educational assistant using netbook technology to complete their task and an independent group worked on extensions to their volume task. Each group shared out their tasks and were provided feedback from their

peers. With this comprehensive approach to differentiation, students' of varying academic abilities are having their needs met.

- The school has focused on questioning and student engagement to strengthen existing teacher practices. Across classrooms, students were engaged in teacher to student, student to teacher and peer-to-peer discourse, clarifying and negotiating meaning through activities leading to new learning. Bulletin board work displayed tasks that included multi-step problems and essays with multiple examples of students citing evidence to support their ideas and judgments, demonstrating elevated instructional goals for student work and work products that demonstrated higher-level thinking and skills.
- School leaders make organizational decisions to change the overall structure of the school in order to better support the school's instructional goals, which helps to meet the needs of all students more successfully. (1.3)
 - To meet instructional goals, build capacity among administration and teacher teams, and create stronger peer relationships, the school returned to a single, comprehensive school configuration from its previous arrangement as several schools within a school. This reorganization of resources enables the school to maximize personnel efficiently. For example, they can assign personnel in order to reduce class size for students with disabilities as well as infuse computer technology in classrooms with such resources as Smartboards, laptops and desktops. Leadership also arranged for one-third of the students' programs to have additional technology periods scheduled in order to enhance student learning. As a result of these organizational decisions, students have a deeper connection to teachers and their peers and school leaders are able to provide support to grade specific cohorts based on a grade-wide assessments versus academy assessments.
 - The use of daily double periods for core subjects and the inclusion of weekly advisories support students' academic and socio-emotional needs. Weekly common planning periods and inquiry teams by grade and content provide opportunities for teachers to discuss student work. Professional development is done during faculty and grade conferences, providing teachers the opportunity to improve their skills in developing higher order tasks such as requiring students to justify and formulate judgments and respond to open ended questions.
- The school's grading policy and use of electronic grading programs enable school leaders and teachers to monitor student progress, leading to more data-informed curricular and instructional decisions. (2.3)
 - Data from ARIS, Acuity and TeacherEase, an on-line grading support, is discussed and used to track the performance of targeted subgroups as well as inform curricular and instructional decisions. These tools helped reveal school trends, guided staff in the alignment of student groupings, and revealed skills students needed to master if they were to increase their reading comprehension. This resulted in restructuring the school's extended time program and the inclusion of a "Skill of the Week" that is aligned to school goals and student needs.
 - Grading policies are determined by department. Students are informed at the beginning of the year and consistently reminded through letters and

charts posted around the classrooms of the way their grades will be determined. Grade teams discuss pass rates in core subjects in order to determine student progress and student mastery aligned to the curriculum and the integration of the CCLS. This has resulted in students knowing what is expected of them in every class and believing “their work is graded fairly,” receiving feedback that not only makes them feel “good” but also leads to improvement on future work products.

- The school uses observations of classroom teaching and the analysis of student learning to provide effective feedback and next steps elevating instructional practices in the school. (4.1)

Administration and teacher teams support the development of all teachers including those new to the profession. Conversations centered on the citywide instructional expectations have increased opportunities for teachers to reflect upon their practice leading to stronger instructional practices in the classrooms. Short and frequent observations conducted in cycles focusing on questioning and student engagement have enabled school leaders to provide actionable feedback with next steps to teachers in order to meet the needs of their students.

- The school uses a research-based rubric to articulate clear expectations for all staff. The rubric supports common school goals around questioning and cognitively engaging lessons. Specific teacher needs are addressed by short, on-line professional development, classroom intervisitation, mentoring, coaching and demonstration lessons enabling teachers to receive prompt support in their practice.
- The school incorporates resources from community-based organizations and partnerships to provide support to students and families as they pursue academic and personal goals. (4.4)
 - The school’s counselor is instrumental in working with students and families transitioning to high school by organizing a high school ambassador’s program where former students return to the school to discuss their high school experiences and parent workshops centered on what happens in high school. The school conducts its own high school fair and articulation night enabling parents to get more information about schools and potential matches for their child. Workshops designed to support families with students who have individual education plans and expectations in high school are also arranged. This enables the school to ensure that students are aware and high school equipped.
 - Partnerships with Long Island University and Polytechnic University have leveraged support for their winning robotics team and health and wellness program including platinum sneakers, a collaboration with neighborhood senior citizens and students that has older and younger participants focus on walking as a form of fitness. Creative Outlet and Brooklyn Academy of Music also provide extensive professional development support for the arts as well as free admission to their performances. This has enabled the school to strengthen its afterschool programs and provide services to students and families that would normally be outside of the school’s capacity to provide. This includes programs that support exposure to the Arts, promote better health and nurture social-emotional development.

What the school needs to improve

- Further align assessments to curriculum using ongoing assessment practices and analysis of information on student outcomes in order to effectively adjust decisions about instruction on the team and classroom level. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use assessments aligned to the curriculum and student performances on bundled CCLS tasks to make instructional decisions. The discussions are primarily in English Language Arts and mathematics, however, and this limited school wide focus hinders developing teacher pedagogy and student outcomes in other content areas.
 - Teachers use strategies such as polling, conferencing, and mini-conferences during student work time to check for understanding. However, across classrooms, the practice was not consistent, limiting opportunities for teachers to provide next steps for all learners.
- Consistently use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups in need of support. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams set goals based on summative and interim data. Curriculum maps and lesson plans are derived from these goals. However, differentiated goals for targeted or individual students are limited, impacting the identification of supports that are needed to accelerate student learning for all students, including subgroups.
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers analyze data in order to make decisions about what supports students need in the grade or school-wide. For example, social studies and science teachers have added a grammar strand in student writing to support the English language arts department with teaching mechanics in writing. However, across the school the practice is not consistent, including in Regents classes, limiting the school's ability to differentiate student learning goals that support accelerated learning for all, including high achieving students.
- Track progress at the teacher team and classroom level in order to strengthen the achievement of learning goals. (3.3)
 - The school collects data on attendance, suspensions and occurrences. However, this information is not shared with inquiry, grade or department teams, limiting the school's ability to track behavior trends that might be impacting student performance and progress.
 - The school provides progress reports weeks prior to the close of each of the four marking periods. The school also generates a failure rate report in order to highlight courses or sections where students are having difficulty in order to engage those families and students in further discussions. The practice is consistent throughout the school; however the feedback provided to families about additional services available to students have not resulted in increased participation in support programs such as the afterschool program, limiting the number of students who have the greatest need from receiving support.

- Further develop systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with students and families, making changes as needed to increase coherence of policies and practices across the school. (5.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers collect, organize, aggregate and analyze interim assessments, student work samples, course grades and teacher tests. Decisions on classroom instruction are made based on the trends noticed in the data sets, however in several teams the analysis was not accurate as the criteria of student proficiency on writing pieces with the integration of CCLS and the prerequisite skills student need to complete selected performance tasks, limiting the potential positive impact of the instructional adjustments in departments and grades.
 - The school collects a wide variety of data to assess student progress. However, structures to support the free flow of information shared with parents through tools such as ARIS Parent Link is limited. In addition, this data is not effectively shared with grade and department teams or support personnel, including guidance counselors. This restricts the school's ability to ensure they have an accurate picture of how all students are progressing academically, socially and emotionally.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Ronald Edmonds Learning Center	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 as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			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, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		X		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?			X	
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?			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 staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			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, guidance/advisement 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, with particular attention to the CCLS?			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