

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Raoul Wallenberg School

Elementary School 194

**3117 Avenue W
Brooklyn
New York 11229**

Principal: Mary Zissler-Lynch

Dates of review: December 12 - 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Linda Waite

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Raoul Wallenberg is an elementary school with 446 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 46% Black, 26% Hispanic, 15% Asian students, 12% White, and 1% other students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and school leaders make informed budgetary and organizational decisions that support school-wide goals and promote improvements in learning outcomes. (1.3).
 - A school-based option provides additional time for teacher and inquiry teams to meet on Thursdays. This coupled with grade conferences to examine and refine curriculum, assessment, and classroom instruction, is strengthening teacher practice as evidenced by teacher reflections. An extended day program that provides an additional two hours each week for students to engage in tasks specific to their academic needs is having a positive impact on student learning outcomes as noted on academic intervention teacher notes and parent letters. Strategic organizational decisions include: integrated co-teaching classes on every grade, inter-grade reduced class size, two hour blocks for literacy and math, push-in services increasing staffing ratio that provide greater individualized attention to students, and presentations to colleagues. Thus, all students in grades 4 and 5 made significant gains in English language arts, (ELA), and in math on all grade levels.
- Teachers and teams use a variety of data to analyze student-learning outcomes, and revise instructional practices to meet the learning needs of all students. (2.2).
 - Teacher teams and teachers utilize a combination of reading and writing samples, conferencing notes, running records of Fountas and Pinnell levels, pre- and post-math unit tests, as well as periodic Acuity assessments to identify students' performance levels and next steps. A review of data revealed that grade 4 students had difficulty determining relevant and irrelevant information in non-fiction genre. The team's decision to utilize titles, captions, graphs, bold words and share specific strategies for parents on a regular basis, resulted in significant increases as measured by results of subgroups on ELA ITAs Tier 3 and 4 from last year to this year. Students with disabilities showed a gain of 28%, Black students demonstrate a 13% increase, English language learners a 67% gain, and Hispanics a 29% improvement. Across classrooms, teachers utilize common rubrics to identify students' strengths, weaknesses, and next steps for success. Additionally, students utilize rubrics to engage in self-reflection, conferencing with the teacher and classmates during peer revisions and goal setting. This information serves as the basis for revision of instructional strategies and practices by teachers such as targeted mini lessons to address areas of concern so that all students meet with success.
- The school recognizes parents as key partners in their children's education and keeps them well informed of their children's needs and next steps to support and improve performance and progress. (2.4).

- Families are invited to a welcome breakfast and grade orientation, held at the beginning of the school year that, introduce them to administrators, the parent coordinator, teachers, service providers, and grade level curriculum and allows them to learn school and classroom expectations. Yearlong the school informs parents of their children's progress via parent conferences, report cards, and detailed progress reports that include at-home strategies. Additionally, parents communicate needs, concerns, and information, which foster reciprocal dialogue. Parents' praise of the school is reflected by scores on the Learning Environment Survey, which continues to improve, and is higher than the citywide average for elementary schools. School leaders regularly engage families in shared-decision making and leadership through monthly school leadership team and parents association meetings. Multiple opportunities for parents engage them in school activities such as Math Family Night, Books on Parade, Science Night, Multicultural Day, and Cookshop classes, which result, in parents feeling connected to the school and valued as members of the community. The school and the parent coordinator schedule monthly workshops on relevant topics around data, learning, and testing, resulting in parents understanding and supporting their children.
- The school has an effective tracking system to monitor student progress and achievement of learning goals across classes and over time. (3.3).
 - Teachers utilize progress growth charts and class tracking sheets to monitor student progress on yearlong reading benchmark assessments. Additionally, the school's number facts program is carefully monitored to measure progress through its math number logs. Results of State exams and interim assessments are tracked using spreadsheets to highlight results both aggregated by grade and disaggregated by various sub-groups. Information is shared and reviewed by faculty and school leaders to make necessary instructional revisions to meet students' needs. Teachers also utilize results from a variety of data sources to create measureable, long-term, and interim-class goals in the core content areas. Additionally, students collaborate with teachers utilizing interim assessment data to create personalized goals that are shared with parents. Upon mastery of goals, new goals are generated. Consequently, students and teachers clearly articulate strengths, weaknesses, progress, and next steps to achieve success.
- The school has established successful systems for monitoring teacher effectiveness with a clear focus on providing professional support for adult growth and improved student-learning outcomes. (4.1).
 - School leaders utilize a research based framework and rubric to conduct short frequent cycles of observations based on a particular focus. All teachers receive immediate individualized written feedback with delineated next steps that provide clear expectations. As a result, teachers have the opportunity to reflect, revise, and practice instructional strategies to develop a level of comfort and mastery before the next observation. School leaders use this information to organize school-wide professional staff development activities. Additionally, this information is used to offer need-based individualized and small group professional support program throughout the year. Hence, the faculty feels that their professional needs are met and they are well supported by the administration and their colleagues as noted in the significant increase in the Learning Environment Survey scores for support and professional development.

- The school's effective support services and collaborations provide a wide range of opportunities for students to grow academically and socially. (4.4).
 - The school effectively employs its guidance and advisory personnel in scheduling in-class informational sessions, and grade-level and individual parent support on the middle school application process. Thus, students and parents are well aware of the process and requirements for a successful entry into middle school. The school assessment team meets with parents, teachers, and students to provide appropriate academic and behavioral strategies to address students' learning and emotional needs. Students participate in a well-organized 'Career Exploration Day' that is organized by the school psychologist. The computer teacher is teaching skills that allow students to present and enhance their research findings through PowerPoint presentations. As a result, students are developing academic, social, and technology skills, necessary for success at the post-secondary level and beyond. A partnership with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) provides after school help with homework, recreational activities, and social- emotional programs. The school also utilizes Making Books Sing to help promote literacy skills by having English language learners rewrite a book as a play and perform in the production. Therefore, school wide programs meet their academic, behavioral, and emotional needs. Councilmatic funding provides resources for the school to develop linkages with the Brooklyn Philharmonic and Midori and Friends, allowing 40 students to learn to play percussion and wind instruments and participate in culminating performances. As a result, students engage in the arts, develop their talents, and are exposed to various cultural institutions and experiences that add to their fund of knowledge and positively impact their learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop curriculum that emphasizes rigorous habits and critical thinking skills to support student achievement and college readiness. (1.1).
 - School leaders and faculty members utilize Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Hess' Rigor Matrix to create curriculum maps in various content areas, which align to the Common Core Learning Standards and address essential questions, content, skills, assessment, and technology integration to engage students in critical thinking and problem solving. First grade students read and use connections to texts and self to answer inferential and critical questions. Students in social studies classes read, research, and discuss within groups to determine whether the English or Dutch had more influence in the United States. However, this is not yet a consistent practice across grades and subjects and therefore not all students engage in rigorous curriculum tasks that promote high level thinking, and problem solving to advance achievement.
- Promote greater consistency of differentiated instruction based on data so that students are challenged, tasks accommodate various achievement levels and questioning extends thinking and maximizes student learning. (1.2).
 - Groupings are routinely based on students' ability and skill levels, which leads to good student participation. While questioning in some classes promotes critical thinking and accountable talk, many of the questions posed in other classes visited were literal in nature leading to uneven levels

of thinking and discussion. While materials and readings are differentiated to address students' needs, tasks are not sufficiently tiered to accommodate higher performing students in both general education and self-contained classes. Therefore, not all students are consistently challenged to reach their potential.

- Refine structures to evaluate the curricular, instructional and organizational decisions. (5.1).
 - Grade level teacher teams supported by administration are responsible for reviewing, adjusting curricula, and sharing decisions with other grade level teams. However, the structure does not consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the decision, which ultimately impacts negatively on student learning. . The evaluation of instructional decisions such as utilizing technology takes place on a regular basis through the observation process. However, the effective use of technology is not yet formalized. Therefore, teachers mostly use Smartboards as a whiteboard. Consequently, few students benefit from its use as an interactive tool to motivate, engage, and address students' learning needs and styles.
- Refine systems to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams engaged in professional collaborations, and make improvements to support the work. (5.4).
 - School leaders attend teacher team meetings, review agendas, minutes, and protocols for looking at students' work. Team leaders' are responsible for communicating targeted needs, strategies, and progress with school leaders and faculty members. However, a protocol to evaluate the effectiveness of the teams is not yet formalized, thus hampering the ability to evaluate the impact of inquiry on student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Raoul Wallenberg 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 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