

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

M.S. K394

K-8 school K394

**188 ROCHESTER AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY 11213**

Principal: Claudette Murray

Dates of review: May 1 - 2, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Nancy Birson

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

M.S. K394 is a K-8 school with 699 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 87% Black, 8% Hispanic, 0% White, 1% Asian students and 4% other students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is developing a safe and respectful learning environment to support teaching and learning. (1.4)
 - o The school is most proud of its work in helping students develop a stronger connection between their goals and school expectations. The school established small learning communities of 2-3 class modules each from pre-kindergarten through grade 8 so that adults might know students better. Close review by administration of student report cards and classroom observations raised concerns about student behavior and attitudes towards schoolwork in the upper grades. Strong interventions such as individual and small group consulting discussions, a high school articulation meeting with students and parents as well as renewed partnerships with community-based organizations have begun to increase students' commitment to school and have heightened student/teacher relationships. These efforts have resulted in an increase in attendance for this group from 94% to 95%.
 - o While there is no student body representing student voice in a formal capacity, student class presidents and individual students report to being able to approach their principal with any concerns or ideas for improvement and finding a receptive audience. Teachers also state that they feel responsible for students they have taught in previous years. They look at former students' State summative results and are always at the ready with feedback or encouragement on their academic and social-emotional issues. As a result, students feel supported by school staff and this has led to improved student behavior.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams use a wide range of assessment data to analyze student needs and provide supports. (2.2)
 - o The school reviews summative assessments for a better understanding of the types of items assessed and how they are assessed. Their review has extended back to 2005 and has helped craft the curricula as well as the extra supports students require. Teachers have begun to use this data to inform the gaps in the Common Core Learning Standards' (CCLS) requirements that will lead to further refinement of the curricula. Analysis of student misconceptions on literacy and/or math skills has refined interventions and led to a decrease in students scoring at level 1 on the summative assessments. Another analysis, this one of attendance data, pointed to early childhood as an area of concern. This led the assistant principal to increase the number of parent meetings and phone calls home. The school now reports an increase of parental self-reporting to explain a child's absence and attendance in the early grades increased from 94% to 96% as a result.
- External partnerships have been created to provide students and families with support services as needed and to provide students with the opportunity to accelerate their personal and academic growth. (4.4)
 - o The guidance counselor holds group and individual sessions designed to support students in high school selections and beyond as well as to provide opportunities for students to expand their vision of future career and college possibilities. Student behavior management sessions geared to male students have resulted in individual goal setting that has manifested in improved classroom behavior and

academic achievement as seen by gradual increases in interim assessment results.

- o The school provides opportunities for parents to be involved through an active Learning Leaders program. Students scoring at levels 1 and 2 on periodic assessments are paired with these volunteers who provide needed supports. Community based collaborations with three outside counseling services support the school's commitment to the whole child. Families report changes in behavior at home and the school reports fewer school-based incidents. This has resulted in higher levels of attendance, less distractions from learning and increased trust at the school.
- The school is developing alignment between its goals and organizational decisions that are supportive of developing a learning community of teachers. (1.3)
 - o Strategic use of the school's 37 ½ minutes dedicated to academic intervention services pairs students with teachers providing services in reading and/or math to continue the supports provided during the day. English language learners, students with disabilities and students receiving speech services receive extra support from teachers who also provide these services during the day and therefore understand their strengths and challenges. Teachers, assigned accordingly, take responsibility for working with a manageable group of students and provide continuity, leading to improving student achievement for these sub-groups as evidenced in formative assessments.
 - o Middle school teachers are grouped to share a cohort of students. This has led to interdisciplinary planning through common planning clusters. The school reports that it is a cultural shift that has created a "family feel" to the middle school. Teachers share in the planning of curriculum and the use of instructional strategies that best serve the needs of the students. This nesting of a cohort has extended to arts and performance as well and students report increased pride and desire to showcase skills. Teacher teams are grateful for the change, which has allowed them to meet weekly to share the responsibility and accountability of meeting the varied needs of students.
- Teachers are developing data-informed processes to set learning goals for individual students that informs their own goal setting and provides expectations for growth. (3.2)
 - o The process of developing annual schools goals begins with analyzing the end of year data and historical student profiles. These help the school set action plans for mapping, teacher assessments and student groupings. Each individual student has an "individual prescription" that requires teacher group collaboration in order to ensure that each student's needs are being addressed. Teachers maintain binders to monitor assessment results for their students. This facilitates the analysis of the data and informs levels of achievement towards students' goals. As a result, teachers are beginning to adjust individual classroom instruction and share student information with support providers. This protocol is leading to improvements in targeted skills in English language arts and math as evidenced by preliminary student outcomes on periodic formative assessments.

What the school needs to improve

- Support the development of rigorous, challenging tasks that are aligned to key Common Core Learning Standards in order to promote the consistent development of higher-order thinking skills across grades and subject areas. (1.1)

- o The CCLS- aligned tasks, the school has implemented Pre-K to 8, have energized and unified the staff around planning for rigor but this is still in the nascent stages and needs to be further supported and planned. These tasks have led to changes in teacher practice on higher order questioning and moving towards enhanced student discourse. This is further evolving the school's current practice of students' building on one another's responses to end of chapter questions. Teachers state that they appreciate the shift from "push, push, push" to digging deeper on topics. The move to CCLS-aligned tasks has led to the expectation of common practices that many teachers are now beginning to engage in with their students and students are now expecting from class to class. The school has yet to uniformly apply revisions to all grades and subjects, resulting in missed opportunities to maximize students' engagement.
- o The math coach supports teachers in understanding the CCLS standards in order to more consistently provide cognitively challenging tasks to students. The principal reports that there is an increase in planning using high leverage pedagogy across the classrooms, including collaborative team teaching classes, but the school has yet to capture the impact of this change other than feeling that "something is happening in the atmosphere". This has resulted in a piece-meal implementation of the practice that is seen in some classrooms but not yet consistently in all, hindering the development of engaging, coherent curricula and instructional practices school-wide.
- Increase teacher capacity to expand the level of differentiation in all classrooms in order to offer equal opportunities for all learners in purposeful thinking and participation. (1.2)
 - o There is evidence of teacher modeling and the workshop model in use. Teachers are beginning to plan for higher level questioning in lessons and students' thinking is being honored through wait time and teachers' requesting students to build on one another's thinking. There is still mostly teacher-to-student interactions, however, and there are, at times, missed opportunities in some classes to socialize the learning. As a result of uneven application of peer discussion practices, groups of students are not consistently included in learning at high levels.
- Further deepen the level of feedback to teachers through the use of a research-based rubric in order to promote consistent practice across classrooms. (4.1)
 - o Although there is frequent teacher observation and feedback provided, these are not yet tied into the school-wide goals. Teachers can name the top three goals but there is not yet a differentiated staff development plan that incorporates elements of the school-wide goals and individual teacher needs. Although teachers have received professional development and are aware of a rubric tied to a framework, the school's current reliance on the Glow and Grow tool is inconsistent with the feedback that would further develop consistent practices and improve assessment results at a higher rate, than is presently occurring, across all grades or groups of students. In addition, the system for managing teacher evaluation, assignments and development is not consistently based on student work or consistently referenced in the feedback process to teachers. As a result, this has limited the school's ability to make informed and effective decisions on instructional practice in managing teacher evaluation, assignments and development.

- Systematize the communication and collaboration processes with parents to increase their ability to track their child's progress and provide academic support at home. (2.4)
 - o While the school's culture embraces family engagement in decision-making, it still does not consistently provide timely information on student learning outcomes. Students write goals and are provided with data as to where they stand. Through workshop offerings the school attempts to include parents in their children's academic and social-emotional success, but there is no consistent format for informing parents of what their child is studying in class, how they are doing, what the expectations for the grade are, or what supports he/she is receiving outside of parent teacher conferences or parent-initiated communications. One student stated that he "only showed the good grades to my parents", revealing how limited communication with families can lead to incomplete and inaccurate information being sent home. Furthermore, technology supports of Study Island and Reading Egg are only available to homes with computers and the Internet. The school has yet to provide alternative measures for these particular interventions designed to reinforce skills both in school and at home; therefore not all students are provided with tools to understand and improve performance. As a result, there is limited understanding as well by some parents of how their children are faring under school initiatives.
- Structure the review of teacher teams to ensure their understanding of the inquiry process and deepen the quality of teacher collaboration. (5.4)
 - o There is a structure for providing teachers with common planning and inquiry time. However, a system to monitor and support teacher teams that results in improved reflective practice to further student outcomes has not yet been developed. Teachers on one team shared assessment data round-robin style around one student, but there was no evidence of teachers recording the instructional supports identified as being needed by the student. Teachers on one team ask about a performance task, "Is this rigorous enough?" They look to tools such as the Depth of Knowledge wheel to help them plan but acknowledge that their conversations can sometimes feel unstructured. Teacher leaders are likewise not yet receiving deliberate and systematic support to help develop their own skills as adult facilitators. As a result, ideas often go unsupported and there is limited professional growth for teachers and support staff.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: M.S. K394	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		
1..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
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