

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Asa Philip Randolph  
Elementary School 076

220 West 121 Street  
Manhattan  
NY 10027

Principal: Charles DeBerry

Dates of review: March 27 - 28, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Eileen Waters

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

A. Philip Randolph is an elementary school with 469 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 81% Black, 17% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 6% 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 2010 - 2011 was 91.2%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Senior students collectively work towards strengthening the school environment as mentors and role models by concentrating students' thinking on positive social and academic choices. (1.4)
  - As new students entered the middle school, the need to provide them with supports to transition smoothly into the school environment surfaced. Therefore, eighth graders receive training on types of strategies to offer students when presented with challenging situations, and then they subsequently mentor sixth graders on academics and social issues. Students participate in various community service projects, collecting food for a local food bank, and volunteering within the school building in early childhood classes during lunch and/or during after school programs. The College for Every Student program allows middle school students to mentor and take on a leadership role with elementary students to discuss the importance of attending college, strengthens the school community by engaging students in conversations with different constituents, and builds responsibility in older students as role models for their younger peers. In addition, students are comfortable reaching out to the Life Skills and other teachers, guidance counselor, and librarian, for support with issues and concerns. The school thus equips students with strategies to handle all behaviors.
- Various partnerships enhance the academic, athletic, and social-emotional growth of students through a multitude of opportunities that strengthen the school community's commitment to student success. (4.4)
  - The staff has training and uses resources to help sustain an environment where students are respected. With a concentration on building students' character, setting a positive school tone, and identifying triggers of negative behaviors, the school has witnessed a shift in reported incidents moving from physically aggressive behaviors to bringing electronic devices to school. One initiative is helping students' self-monitor behaviors in the cafeteria or hallway, resulting in more student accountability of their actions and a unified approach to strengthen the school community. Through a variety of partnerships that provide academic supports, students are also afforded opportunities in athletics, arts/theater, to learn from authors, and to attend weekend camps. These partnerships are motivating students to perform at a higher academic level, strengthening team and character building, and increasing attendance.
- The school's organizational decisions foster staff collaboration to address students' data informed needs so that teachers support student learning through the use of instructional resources. (1.3)
  - The administration's goal to move students towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century by linking learning through technology and equipping teachers with the skills to make technology more interactive is supported by the iZone work and growing use of laptops and Smartboards. Students share that they use various devices to solve problems, address grammar issues, take notes during a lesson, and research examples to support their work.
  - The decision to loop teachers with students and pair new teachers with veteran teachers builds teacher capacity and allows teachers to easily establish routines

and know the strengths and weaknesses of students so that adjustments can be made. The administration reviews teacher observations and student outcomes before meeting with staff around making deliberate changes to teacher assignments so that teachers' strengths align with school wide needs.

- Teachers utilize a range of assessments to identify the needs of students so that instructional choices are made to target groups of students. (2.2)
  - Teacher teams' analysis of various data sources surfaced some struggles among students with higher order thinking, calculations, and comprehension. Teachers also use Acuity predictive data to create low, middle, and high groups of students. To address students' deficits, teachers utilize online programs to provide additional resources and supports to individual students, present students with tutoring so they receive content area instruction from a different perspective, and offer academic intervention services targeting reading comprehension through small group instruction.
- Parents volunteer within the school community and participate in learning opportunities that promote the school's goals and strengthen the school community. (2.4)
  - Parents volunteer their time in classrooms as Learning Leaders, and during trips and at school events to support the school community. The school engages families in hands-on learning experiences on the Common Core Learning to reinforce parents understanding of the shift in critical thinking skills in students learning tasks. The parent coordinator keeps families abreast of what students are learning, the math coach works with parents on ways they can build their children's math skills, and parents are provided with a step-by-step guide on ARIS so that they can access their children's progress. Teachers also communicate student progress with families and offer online programs to support learning at home.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Further enhance curricula with academic tasks that consistently challenge students' thinking to ensure high levels of learning for all students. (1.1)
  - The school is in the process of taking ownership of their curricula by combining a variety of programs and resources within the school and organizing them into a backwards design format to create a common curriculum structure. Although these curricular align with either State or Common Core Learning Standards, they do not yet target key standards necessary for mastery in order to close their achievement gap. While iZone curriculum, limited to a grade and subject areas, focuses on high-level questions to probe student thinking, this is not consistent across grades and content areas. Even though the majority of academic tasks require students to recall or work with skills and concepts, the opportunity for students to extend their thinking is limited, thus impeding new learning.
- Further teachers' pedagogical development with effective instructional techniques that strategically foster high levels of student thinking and ownership of learning so that all students make adequate progress. (1.2)
  - The school believes that students learn best when they take ownership of their learning by engaging in differentiated tasks that foster problem-solving and critical thinking skills. However, this belief is not yet reflected in the curriculum and teaching practices across classrooms. The release of responsibility from

teacher to student varies in its effectiveness, along with the uneven alignment between students' abilities within a group and the task provided, resulting in teacher centered instruction where students' cognition is obstructed or limited by inadequate instructional choices. While student discussion was attempted in one class, students' struggled to be engaged at a level that intensified their independent thinking to develop new learning.

- Strategize the aggregation of data so that deeper levels of analysis can capture explicit sources of challenges so that targeted decisions result in student growth. (2.3)
  - The school utilizes online tools to capture a broad sense of student performance. The administration looks at data from individual perspectives. The principal captures snapshots of current results, and an assistant principal reviews various data sources for trends prior to meeting with individual teachers. Instructional grade 3 software provides student progress solely on the curriculum of the program. However, school leaders have not yet developed an effective tool that would organize a range of data overtime so that achievement gaps surface, along with identifying successful pedagogical trends to inform decision-making. Nor is there a similar tool in place at the classroom level or across teachers, to surface granular trends in student performance that are then addressed through specific curricular and instructional choices with a focus to target student deficits.
- Enhance the quality of feedback provided to teachers with recognition of effective instructional strategies that are linked with student outcomes and explicit next steps that target pedagogical skills to increase student performance. (4.1)
  - Various venues are utilized to provide teachers feedback from classroom observations that are not typically linked with student outcomes. These feedback products leave teachers with checklists and brief written segments that encapsulate actions taken during the lesson without specifically highlighting instructional strategies. While areas of strength tend to range from classroom organization and bulletin boards to low-level questioning strategies, examples of effective pedagogical practices at not typically surfaced in formal observations. Feedback shared with teachers captures elements or practices not utilized in the lesson, without targeting enhanced strategies needed to increase instructional capacity. The administration conducts informal observations using components of a common framework for evidence gathering. However, these routines have not yet evolved into a practice so teachers receive actionable feedback expanding their pedagogy in a manner that boosts student outcomes.
- Formalize progress-monitoring structures so that student trends are continuously captured at the school and classroom level in order to achieve goal attainment. (3.3)
  - The school has yearlong goals that require a shift towards more students mastering proficiency as per the New York State exams. Throughout the year, school leaders capture snapshots of student performance using classroom level assessments and data culled from grade-specific instructional programs. However, the school has yet to identify how classroom level assessment results align with State summative scores to effectively inform decisions and refine goals and action plans. The principal schedules meetings three times a year with teachers to discuss student progress and professional goals. Yet, while the school focuses discussions on student performance, it has not yet created an effective tool that would allow them to capture student progress overtime across different assessments. Consequently, school leaders and teachers struggle to monitor progress towards attaining school and classroom level goals so that yearlong adjustments are made to ensure goal achievement.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: A. Philip Randolph</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
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?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?			<b>X</b>	

**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**

<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------