

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island
K-8 School M217

645 MAIN STREET
MANHATTAN
NY 10044

Principal: MANDANA BECKMAN

Dates of review: February 13- 14, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Mariano Guzman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. /I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island is a K-8 school with 416 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 31% Black, 21% Hispanic, 22% White, 26% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 13% 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 94.8%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has focused its efforts on creating a safe and respectful environment that promotes learning and supports students' needs. (1.4)
 - In 2010, out of a desire to create a school-wide initiative that promotes positive behavior, by developing a culture of respect and unity, the school implemented Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS). Through PBIS, teachers created a new school language that allows students to understand what behaviors are expected of them. Moreover, this initiative has brought the school staff together. While the initiative at first touched on three geographic areas of the school, currently the program is being implemented in classrooms. The Learning Environment survey indicates that 98% of families feel the school maintains a safe and orderly environment for learning. The school maintains a 94.8% attendance rate. As a result of this work, the school has successfully improved opportunities for the academic and personal development of students and adults.
- School leaders review summative and formative data in order to identify school-wide needs and area of student progress. (2.1)
 - School leadership including coaches, and content area specialists gather and analyze a range of data, including NY State summative assessment results, Online Occurrence Report System (OORS) data and student attendance data. This data analysis is used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the academic and the social-emotional performance of students. Additionally, at intervals throughout the year, the administration reviews formative assessments to augment and adjust the baseline data. For example, after a review of middle school data, the school identified that students struggled with the writing components on all assessments. As a result, three out of the five middle school teachers are attending a professional development workshop geared around the teaching of basic writing. The training focuses on the inextricable link between thinking and writing, and the organizational processes linked to both. This work is starting to lead to a more focused instructional approach throughout the middle school. These data reviews provide the administration with information for understanding of the school's areas of strengths and needs, in order to target goals to improve student outcomes.
- School leaders and staff used data-informed processes for planning and goal setting across grades and subjects to improve student outcomes. (3.1)
 - The principal's performance objectives and school goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) focused on increasing student proficiency levels in English language arts (ELA) and math, align with clear, school-level action plans. These goals and objectives call for determining student academic growth through predictive assessments including acuity, and social-emotional and behavioral shifts as measured by the Positive Intervention and Behavioral Support (PBIS) model outcomes. School leaders, coaches, dean and instructional specialists plan for the school year by reviewing outcomes from state assessment data as well as the results of the Learning Environment Survey (LES) and Progress Report. These data sources are complimented by formative data collected from teachers and teacher teams. Each child, beginning with their grade of entry,

keeps a journal of their work throughout their enrollment at the school. As such, an eighth grade student having entered in Kindergarten can at a glance see his or her academic progression in all their grades at the school. This information has allowed the school to develop a list of its most struggling students in ELA and math, resulting in targeted supports during the day and afterschool.

- School leaders make informed and effective organizational decisions that support improvements in learning for all students. (1.3)
 - School leaders ensure that faculty has multiple opportunities to meet including weekly grade level team meetings and department meetings. School administrators regularly participate in these grade and department meetings where teachers review student work products. The data-based analysis and feedback received during these meetings is starting to provide provides teachers with additional support for effective planning and the opportunity to develop reflective teaching practices.
 - A review of academic data led the principal to make several significant student programming decisions. English Language Learners (ELLs) are grouped in one-class per grade to better allow for push-in and pull-out services to be provided by the ELL specialist with minor interruption to the student's regular program. In the middle school, each teacher works with all middle school students to better understand the progression of skills for each student and provide scaffolding as needed. These teachers collaborate and plan together during team meetings while sharing student work products. During discussions, teachers share that these strategies are starting to provide them with insights that they can apply to their pedagogic practice in accelerating student growth and learning outcomes.
- The school shares academic feedback with students and families to inform them of their academic performance, thus promoting clear expectations for learning. (2.4)
 - School leaders and teachers provide feedback to students and families related to academic achievement, discipline and attendance during fall and spring conferences. The school utilizes *Engrade*, a web-based grading program that enables teachers to post assignments and grades for parents and students throughout the year, keeping them regularly informed of academic progress. As a result, families are able to chart the progress of their children and acquire a better understanding regarding their performance in school.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide communication to families so that all constituent groups are involved in setting goals that include higher levels of challenge in order to accelerate learning. (3.4)
 - The school benefits greatly from being the only school on Roosevelt Island. As a result, generations of families have attended the school and know the faculty well. It is a small intimate community geographically as well as in numbers. The school communicates students' grades electronically with families and has a Curriculum Night, but the opportunities for deeper exchanges that the small size of the Island naturally offers are missed. For example, parents, even members of the School Leadership Team (SLT), had no knowledge of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Parents expressed concern that while they had perceived changes in the work their children brought home; they were unaware that these changes were part of a shift in Citywide expectations in literacy and math teaching and student outcomes. They expressed a need for support from

the school on how to help their children at home meet the school's expectations, optimizing opportunities for student progress. Similarly, SLT members, who view themselves as key stakeholders, state that a lack of in depth training on the expectations of the new CCLS and how to use tools prevented more families from becoming engaged, further limiting the opportunity to understand their children's academic performance and to help them reach their next learning steps.

- Refine the curriculum emphasizing rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills to meet the needs of all learners. (1.1)
 - The principal with selected faculty has begun the work of aligning the curriculum across the grades with a developing emphasis on Common Core Learning (CCLS) and with an emphasis on improving students' writing. This work, however, is not consistent across content areas and in meeting the needs of all student groups. This gap is particularly resonant in the uneven rigor of tasks and entry points for sub-groups of students including low performing and at-risk students. Consequently, the school's curricula does not effectively engage all students in academic tasks that challenge them to engage in critical thinking, thus impeding the performance potential of a significant group of students including those most at-risk.
- Strengthen the quality and consistency of differentiated classroom strategies to ensure that they are prevalent throughout all classes and targeted to improve student achievement. (1.2)
 - The school utilizes grouping as a key element of instructional practice. Developing literacy through the writing process undergirds instruction throughout the grades with a middle school focus on teaching techniques that develop the structure, coherence and clarity to students' expository and narrative writing. However, there is a lack of consistency across grades and classrooms regarding differentiated learning opportunities for all students at their instructional levels. As a result, lessons observed revealed that teaching strategies that support student engagement for all students are not always evident and the quality of student work products is uneven school-wide. Consequently, this impedes successful learning opportunities to support improved outcomes for all students as evidenced in student work products, as well as results on State and City assessments.
- Further analyze and share information on student achievement to track school and student progress. (2.2)
 - Teachers design rubrics at the beginning of the year to accompany lessons in writing, reading and math that support the curriculum as it starts to evolve to meet and align with key standards including CCLS. They use exit slips, student responses, and quizzes as classroom assessments to supplement acuity results and summative data. However, the use of these measures throughout the school is not consistent and there is little evidence of how these tools are used to regularly identify strengths and needs of subgroups such as higher achieving students and ELLs as evidenced in the pedagogical practices employed throughout classrooms in the school.
 - Across classrooms, on-going strategies to check for student understanding and learning were limited and did not reflect consistent use of student self-assessment. In some classes visited, teachers did not make the necessary

adjustments during instruction to assure that all students were learning. As a result, the lack of ongoing checks inhibits teachers' ability to inform their decision-making on the learning needs of all students so that next learning steps can be mapped for each student's success.

- Expand the alignment of teacher feedback and the analysis of student outcomes with strategies that promote teachers' professional growth and reflection. (4.1)
 - School leaders offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal observations using a common instructional lens. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based rubric to provide teacher feedback. While the school has an assistant principal, the primary responsibility for classroom observations is carried out by the principal, thus making it difficult for the school to be fully engaged in a consistent practice of conducting short frequent cycles of classroom visits with immediate teacher feedback. The infrequency of short classroom visits limits the administration's ability to target each pedagogue's strengths and clearly articulate specific next steps and strategies for professional growth, in order to positively impact student outcomes.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S./I.S. 217 Roosevelt Island	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
-----------	-----------------------	----------	-------------------	----------	-------------------	-----------	-----------------------