

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Robert F. Wagner, Jr.

Elementary School Q78

**48-09 Center Boulevard
Queens
NY 11101**

Principal: Louis Pavone

**Dates of review: November 9 - 10, 2011
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert F Wagner, Jr. School is an elementary school with 249 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 5% Black, 39% Hispanic, 38% White, 14% Asian and 4% other students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The diligent principal has created a goal-oriented learning community that is well focused on student outcomes with a clear vision to continue to accelerate learning.
 - Teachers meet regularly on common preps, data periods and at lunchtime to establish focused goals and fully analyze student progress to improve learning outcomes across all subjects. During this time, teachers share specific action plans and effective lessons which have resulted in supporting the school's goals in accelerating student learning as evident in the comprehensive education plan.
 - The principal clearly communicates school goals and action plans which result in the school community working together effectively to accelerate student learning. The school consistently uses calendars, newsletters, goal notebooks and emails to inform parents, students and staff of the instructional plans. As a result, the entire community fully supports the practices that inform the school's direction. As one parent stated, "I enjoy the publishing celebrations, which make me feel a part of my child's learning."
- The school's strong partnerships with a variety of organizations helps the school meet the academic, social and emotional needs of students and build capacity that improve student achievement.
 - The school partners with several community based organizations that use data to provide students and families with many support services during and after school hours. For example, these partnerships offer homework help, recreational activities including musical performances, real world learning opportunities such as cultivating a school garden, parent workshops and guest passes to the Long Island City Y that engage families in physical activities. Consequently, students enjoy coming to school and families feel as an integral part of the learning community.
 - The guidance counselor and school leaders work closely with students and families to promote character education and prepare students for middle school. For example, each month, all classroom teachers are provided with a book on character building. November's book of the month was, "The Best Story." This enlightening book encourages students to use the talents they have and to be happy with the outcome. The school also offers workshops and assembly programs on the middle school articulation process and provides individual sessions for parents who require additional assistance with the application. Therefore, students are on the path to post secondary readiness. One student stated, "My teacher is getting me ready for Middle School."
- The school provides a very safe, nurturing environment in which every student is encouraged to grow both academically and as an individual where they feel respected by fellow students and adults alike.

- The school supports students' voice and active participation through the student government association. They meet each month with a counselor, providing an opportunity for students to experience first hand how a democracy works. They discuss important school-wide issues and help establish school policies. Students highly value opportunities to plan and participate in school activities such as school wellness with the Office of School Food and Nutrition (OSFN) committee. As a result of the council's involvement with the OFSN committee, the students were instrumental in getting a water dispenser and a salad bar option for the cafeteria. This has led to a positive school environment and student concerns are effectively addressed.
- The Learning Environment Survey indicates that 100% of parents and teachers feel the school maintains a safe and orderly environment for learning. Students mention that they can talk to their principal, teachers, counselors and other adults if they have a problem. One student said, "The principal helps the most." The school maintains a sharp focus on the academic and personal development of students and adults which has led to an increase in attendance from 94.9% last year to 95.8% this year, 61.6% of students on or above grade level on the ELA State assessment and 78.8% students on or above grade level on the math State assessment.
- School leaders use a variety of purposeful evaluation tools to closely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy with a clear focus on deepening adult learning thereby improving classroom instruction.
 - The principal offers frequent recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal observations and analysis of student work products using a common instructional lens. The school has adopted Danielson's research-based rubric to articulate clear expectations for teacher practices and use the framework for development of teachers. The principal conducts short frequent cycles of classroom visits to provide clear next steps to improve instruction. The principal also meets with individual teachers three times a year to establish expectations, discuss goals and create a professional development plan with specific supports to meet their needs and improve their pedagogical skills. These practices promote teacher growth and reflection, which has resulted in improved student performance as noted in 12% additional students meeting benchmarks on instructionally targeted assessments.
- The school meticulously collects and uses a wide range of data to create a concise picture of the school's strengths and areas of need.
 - School leaders use a comprehensive set of data from ARIS, New York Start, Progress Report, Quality Review, standardized tests, informal and formal portfolio assessments to acquire a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of need. For example, the school determined that English language learners were lacking in their English language skills in writing. As a result, teachers revised their lessons to improve the writing skills of this subgroup.

- School leaders analyze a range of data including student work, item skills analysis, baseline assessments, occurrence reports and school programs on each grade level. An analysis of the data is used to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher practice, curricular and organizational decisions, and support services for students. This results in careful school-wide planning of instruction, the creation of units of study across grades to support school level goals and the implementation of social-emotional supports for students. Consequently, across the school, students' academic performance has increased on Every Day Math unit tests and on literacy assessments. Additionally, the school's character education program, which fosters ethical, responsible and caring youngsters by modeling and teaching good character traits through specific values each month, has led to a 95% increase in student participation in donating food to people in need and collecting money for the 9/11 Memorial Fund.
- School leaders make purposeful organizational and curricular decisions across all aspects of the school to improve student learning and meet the school's instructional goals.
 - The school offers a very successful School-Wide Enrichment Model (SEM) across grades. Parent talent experts from the community and staff are included in developing an enrichment curriculum that follows the model of the professionals in the field. For example, students produced an i-movie, which included editorial team meetings, training on interviewing techniques by a NY1 reporter and broadcasting of their own restaurant reviews. Consequently, the SEM engages the students in visual, musical, spatial and kinesthetic activities through their particular interests and talents thereby enabling them to enhance their academic potential. This highly effective use of resources are well aligned to the school's long range instructional goals to improve learning as evidenced by increased student outcomes on SEM assessments and meaningful student portfolios.
 - The school's organizational decisions include the assignment of push-in English as Second Language (ESL) teachers to support English language learners (Ells') in the classroom during the literacy period. Both classroom teachers and ESL teachers work collaboratively as teams to track the progress of English language learners and plan lessons to meet their needs. As a result, 100% of the students increased their comprehension and advanced one or more levels in reading as noted in running records and Fountas and Pinnell monitoring charts.

What the school needs to improve

- Emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills across all subjects and grades so that learning tasks promote increased levels of thinking and student engagement.
 - The school uses curriculum maps that support rigorous habits and higher order skills and implement standards-based lessons. However, the analysis of student work to refine learning tasks that emphasize rigorous habits and incorporate critical thinking to constantly engage all students, particularly high performers, is not an embedded practice across the

school. This limits opportunities for some learners to fully demonstrate their thinking across all subjects.

- Refine differentiated instruction so that lesson planning reflects purposeful groupings, challenging tasks and questioning to extend thinking and to maximize learning.
 - The school focuses on supporting high needs students such as English language learners and students with disabilities by offering academic intervention services. However, high performing students are sometimes unchallenged and instructional strategies do not always strategically offer meaningful extensions that further develop their thinking. This limits additional opportunities for accelerated students to continually participate in critical thinking activities in order to further push cognitive growth.
- Strengthen the use of formative assessments that are closely aligned to key standards and linked to the curriculum for student subgroups in order to accelerate their learning
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers use English Language Arts (ELA) and math item analysis information as well as Acuity predictive and interim assessments data to supplement summative data and identify student performance levels. However, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self assessment to make immediate adjustments to lessons is not a fully embedded practice across the school. This limits the school's ability to pinpoint and address the special needs of student subgroups and modify targeted, differentiated interventions to accelerate learning. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks are not always strategically revised, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.
- Enhance systems for monitoring progress toward the achievement of long and short-term goals so that timely adjustments are made across the school to accelerate student learning.
 - The school has systems to measure progress toward meeting interim goals and identifying areas of need. However, formalized practices to determine the progress of improvement plans towards interim goals are not yet fully embedded across the school by teams and individual teachers. As a result, the school does not consistently adjust improvement plans to further accelerate learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: The Robert F. Wagner, Jr 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 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