

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**The Roy Wilkins School**

**Elementary School 136**

**201-15 115 Avenue**

**Queens**

**NY 11412**

**Principal: Tanya Walker**

**Dates of review: May 7 – 8, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Roy Wilkins School is an elementary school with 694 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 95% Black, 4% Hispanic, 1% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 92.1%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The instructional program is supported by a standards-based curriculum including the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) tasks that fosters rigorous learning experiences to promote high levels of student achievement. (1.1)
  - The school has refined a detailed curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and provides instructional coherence across grades and subjects, including the Arts and physical education. The curriculum maps and pacing calendars have been adjusted to coordinate content with instructional focus to meet students' needs. Literacy is the basis for student skill development and the common core tasks have emphasized student writing using evidence to support their arguments. This curricular emphasis has led to improvement in student achievement as seen in school-wide displays of writing in classrooms and hallways.
  - Teachers use multiple sources of data to continuously challenge students' thinking using authentic experiences. Certain academic tasks encourage students in small groups to write poetry, solve multi-step word problems, analyze political cartoons and conduct science experiments. Students' active engagement in these types of tasks demonstrate the higher order thinking skills embedded in the classroom instruction that has led to steady improvement on interim assessments.
- The school uses multiple entry points to learning that are sufficiently individualized to match students' needs so that all learners achieve academic improvement. (1.2)
  - The school uses a workshop model of teaching across all classrooms and subject areas. This method begins with a mini-lesson that is followed by guided practice and culminates in independent and individualized student work. Teachers monitor student engagement as they teach and preliminary checks for understanding are routine. This high level of consistency in teaching practice increases the students' comfort level in knowing the structure of the classroom. This has resulted in academic improvement across grades as measured by teacher-refined unit assessments.
  - Teachers plan their units together with their students in mind. During each lesson teachers ask questions of increasing complexity to stimulate and facilitate rich discussion. Students are regularly grouped during guided reading and guided practice as teachers coach into their skills. Teachers conduct individualized conferences daily with struggling students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities to expand their zone of proximal development. This strategic differentiation has led to steady improvement as evidenced in student writing in notebooks and finished products.

- The school leadership makes strategic, data-driven organizational and instructional decisions that support the school's goals and result in enhanced student outcomes. (1.3)
  - The school budget and resources have contracted in the last two years, yet the leadership has leveraged them for maximum impact by replacing outdated instructional materials and upgrading technology with an infusion of laptops and SMARTboards. These tools have supported the writing initiatives of the school and have resulted in increased writing stamina and output by the students.
  - Teacher teams meet each Tuesday and one additional day each week to plan instruction, refine curriculum and analyze student work. Additionally each grade has the benefit of a common prep that facilitates informal meetings and discussion on designing challenging student tasks. Teachers plan challenging and engaging tasks such as the Common Core Learning Standards assignments. This has led to improved writing and math effort as evidenced by the results of the CCLS tasks available in all classrooms.
- Teachers create and utilize a variety of relevant classroom assessments that clarify the precise needs of students and result in improved performance and growing achievement. (2.2)
  - The school assesses students regularly with on-demand tasks in all content areas related to the New York State Standards and the Common Core Learning Standards. Unit tests are administered monthly after each teaching unit. Rubrics are developed along performance levels for each writing task and assignment. Teachers use pivotal questions and quizzes for ongoing assessment. This practice has resulted in improved student performance with seventy percent of students achieving on grade level during class.
  - During instructional time, teachers consistently check students for their comprehension. They ask students to respond with thumbs up or down, they coach children in the rubrics, they ask probing questions during one to one conferences and strategy lesson and they utilize guided peer review. These responses have provided teachers with immediate data that they have used to coach or re-teach their lessons leading to improved results on interim assessments.
- Professional learning is embedded in the school's culture and frequent, systemic observations and the analysis of student learning data result in innovative instructional practices that lead to goal achievement. (4.1)
  - The principal and assistant principal maintain a coaching portfolio for each teacher that includes a Teacher Data Report (TDR), inter-visitation forms, informal and formal observation reports and teacher feedback notes. These sources of data are combined with student data and work products to fully inform decisions about teacher evaluation, tenure, retention and individualized professional development. A third-grade special education teacher who received an extension of probation showed a short science video on his SMARTboard to a small group of students. He had previously been trained in integrating technology into

his instruction. This system has led to improved instructional practices across classrooms and student improvement on interim assessments.

- The school leaders are using the Danielson framework for evaluating instructional practices. They rotate through the classrooms frequently for short cycles of formal and informal observations. They provide feedback to the teachers with next steps for their professional growth and reflection. Teachers utilize the rubric for their own self-reflection and use the common language to discuss pedagogy. As a result, teachers expand their instructional practices and the majority of students achieve their academic goals.
- The school leadership has a shared instructional vision that is reflected in its data-based goals and creates a culture that elevates students' academic achievements. (3.1)
  - The school's major goals which are included in the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) are sharply focused on student achievement with benchmarks for progress in English language arts and math. They have also targeted ELLs, students with disabilities and their bottom third in performance. These goals are well known by classroom teachers and results in students achieving their goals as delineated in their classrooms.
  - The school cabinet and teacher teams study a wide range of summative and formative data including State test results, subgroup performance, attendance, suspension data and parent involvement data. They combine this with feedback from parents, teachers and even students to create the action plans to accelerate student growth. As a result, the whole school community is focused on the achievement of the students.

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

- Increase the ongoing feedback to parents about student goals, assessments, and progress in order to consistently engage families and promote student progress. (2.4)
  - The school has strongly encouraged families to use ARIS Parent Link, the Department of Education (DOE) website and the parent coordinator, as resources for updated information on the meaning and interpretation of student performance. The school also offers families numerous opportunities to participate in school activities. However, there is limited support outside of the School Leadership Team to enable their participation, particularly in school decision-making. As a result, effective efforts to build increased parental leadership to promote student progress in the school community are restricted.
- Extend communication and collaboration with parents to increase their ability to understand and support their child's learning and monitor progress towards goals and next learning steps. (3.4)
  - The school conveys high expectations to the staff and provides multiple sources of communication to parents by phone, email, letters, flyers and

meetings. These offer opportunities for families to be informed about the high expectations of the school and engage in discussions about student progress in all subject areas. However, at this juncture, the student progress reports that are shared with families do not provide specific information about students' advancements towards their goals. As a result, the students are not all aware of the necessary next steps to accelerate their learning.

- Broaden the range of external partnerships and support in order to successfully promote students' personal development and academic growth. (4.4)
  - The school provides ongoing coaching and professional development to teachers to promote and maintain effective classroom management and a culture of respect in the school. The staff works with the guidance counselor and social worker to encourage students who are at risk of academic failure. However, the limited external partnerships have reduced the exposure of students to real world learning opportunities and afterschool programs, thereby limiting their personal development and academic growth.
- Expand the system that regularly evaluates the effectiveness of teacher teams and leadership development so that professional growth consistently improves. (5.4)
  - The school leaders monitor the effectiveness of teacher teams through drop-in visits, teacher surveys, the collection and collation of artifacts like agendas, sign-in sheets and meeting notes, and direct supervision of teacher leaders. However, only the principal and assistant principal are leading this monitoring effort. This linear system sometimes restricts the free flow of feedback both ways and slows the leadership skill development of teachers and their professional growth.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: The Roy Wilkins School</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	

<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<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>