

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

The Ronald H. Brown School  
Elementary School Q155

130-02 115 AVENUE  
QUEENS  
NY 11420

Principal: DOROTHY MORRIS

Dates of review: March 20-21, 2012  
Lead Reviewer: Michele Lloyd-Bey

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Ronald H. Brown School is an elementary school with 611 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 36% Black, 22% Hispanic, 2% White, 37% Asian students and 3% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school's broad and rigorous curricula aligns with the Common Core Learning Standards, and includes cognitively demanding tasks that emphasizes critical thinking and speaking that result in improved student outcomes. (1.1)
  - The school's curriculum maps include non-fiction elements, such as informational text, and key standards, such as listening and speaking. Across classes, literacy units are integrated with grade level themes in social studies. Second graders effectively respond to peers in small groups about the author's point of view and make connections based on their knowledge of ancient Greece. As a result, adjustments made to curriculum maps, such as deepening the writing process for all grades, ensure that students across the school write high caliber persuasive essays with relevant themes such as the rights of citizens and a diverse group of learners are on track for career and college readiness through on-going improvement in reading and writing instruction.
  - At every grade level, all learners are instructed to think coherently based on Webb's Depth of Knowledge (DOK). Students demonstrate their thinking through active participation in science investigations, experiments, and research topics such as health and nutrition. In an integrated collaborative teaching class (ICT), students use a math table to solve word problems, and teachers develop problem solving scaffolds so that all students are able to complete rigorous math tasks aligned to CCLS and the New York State standards. Teachers use a questioning taxonomy flip chart that enables students and teachers to reference critical thinking questions throughout the lesson, resulting in students' ability to demonstrate their thinking by asking and responding to thought provoking questions and complete higher order skills emphasized in the curricula.
- The principal's unified team creates a respectful, calm and orderly environment that promotes academic success and social-emotional learning. (1.4)
  - The school's collaborative and cohesive system for regularly analyzing data such as the Learning Environment Survey (LES), the On Line Occurrence Report System (OORS), attendance data, and routine meetings with the guidance counselor ensure that the academic, social and emotional needs of students are met through activities, such as counseling, afterschool activities, academic, and attendance interventions. Anti-bullying is explicitly addressed, and assembly programs, guest speakers, and school wide campaigns against bullying ensure that adults and students treat each other respectfully. As a result, principal suspensions decreased from six to one for the current 2011-2012 school year.
  - The principal sets a positive example by personally connecting with students daily to promote a climate of mutual respect and cooperation. The leadership effectively tracks student attendance and behavior during team, grade, and committee meetings. Students with attendance concerns are targeted to participate in programs and activities such as the Junior Knicks League that promote attendance and social-emotional learning. Last year, 65 students had 100% attendance for the first 100 days of school. This year, the school has more than doubled their 100% attendance for the first 100 days of school. Additionally, the school's data related to long-term absences decreased dramatically from last year's 38 to 2 this year.

- School leaders and faculty use tools to aggregate and organize data to effectively identify trends in subgroup performance and assist in making school level decisions that improve student outcomes. (2.3)
  - The school analyzed summative and formative assessments, organized the data onto spreadsheets and identified making inferences and main idea as areas of weakness for English language learners (ELLs). Teachers use classroom data binders and organize information from diagnostic assessments to capture the skill-based needs of students to create groupings that offer interventions so that needs of individual students are addressed. Consequently, the analysis of DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) data and instructional programs reflect improvement and steady gains in literacy for all student groups including ELLs.
  - Teachers create coherent rubrics that are routinely evaluated to ensure that they align with the CCLS tasks and effectively evaluate student work products. The consistency in rubrics and teacher-made tests ensures that school leaders and faculty capture meaningful data about student mastery and performance of individual and student groups. As a result, the school has been able to effectively identify critical data regarding student performance trends, such as grade three students need to improve in sequencing. Effective organizational decisions, such as the implementation of afterschool and vacation tutorials, provide focused support for struggling learners to inform instruction and further impact achievement.
- The leadership and faculty continually communicate student progress to parents which enable families to be successful in supporting their children. (2.4)
  - The parent coordinator ensures that a majority of parents have access and continuous training in ARIS Parent Link. Student performance on the CCLS tasks is shared on web-based tools, such as E-Chalk and during parent-teacher conferences. Parents' understanding of instructional strategies implemented throughout the school day is high and progress towards meeting the school's and class' expectations is clear and consistently shared in newsletters and online. Reciprocal conversations take place regularly between staff and parents during parent-teacher meetings and through email. Students and their families understand next learning steps based on frequent opportunities to meet and discuss student performance through the leadership's careful analysis of report card grades, teacher comments, progress report information, homework folders, and student work portfolios. A parent expressed, "the instructional websites and continuous afterschool meetings with her child's second grade teacher enabled her to effectively support her daughter at home", resulting in the student becoming Student of the Month. Hence, each child's needs are sufficiently addressed immediately by parents and staff.
- The school provides professional training that promotes a safe, inclusive and respectful school culture, with partnerships that support academic accomplishments and social-emotional growth in preparation for post secondary success. (4.4)
  - The faculty receives on-going training and individualized support from the guidance counselor to improve their awareness of child abuse, bullying and cyber-bullying. Jamaica Hospital School-Based Health Center located on the school's campus, provides nutrition and wellness workshops to the entire school community and as a result, health and nutrition has become a significant aspect of students' and families' lives. The school's respectful culture, result in students that are extremely happy and their desire to do their best is reflected in all

students making steady academic gains, with assessment results indicating that grades 4 and 5 are making the most significant literacy gains to date.

- The School Wellness Council targets identified needs of students gathered from surveys and fitness gram. The program educates students and families to understand the importance of committing to healthier life-styles through proper nutrition and exercise classes. The principal models the importance of exercise by walking daily on the school's newly renovated track. Hence, students and adults think in healthy ways and make time to listen to one another. Independent reading and student behavior is tracked periodically and data shows that there is a steady increase of 1-2 independent reading levels of students. There are also no behavior issues of students who participate in the one or more of the many partnerships at the school.
- School leaders and staff are a cohesive team and regularly evaluate assessment and grading practices that include the expectations of the CCLS and share this information with students and their families so that next steps can be obtained. (5.2)
  - A range of assessments are used across the school, such as exit slips, rubrics checklists, and work portfolios. Weekly cabinet, grade and instructional meetings with members of the Children First Network, consultants and team leaders ensure that conversations relate to the effectiveness of grading practices while integrating CCLS. Content area assessment information is collected, evaluated and shared during team meetings where teachers adjust tasks and rubrics aligned to the CCLS. During these meetings, staff ensures that the school's grading policies and assessment practices sufficiently reflect rigor, such as higher order questioning and skills, so that teachers make adjustments to rubrics that align to the CCLS tasks resulting in accelerated student learning.
  - All teachers create and maintain assessment data binders that reflect student achievement data, conference notes and running records. The leadership ensures that during daily observation of classrooms and team meetings, data binders are accessible and evaluated to maximize consistency in school, grade, and classroom level practice. Information generated from the binders result in instructional modifications such as strengthening the workshop model. Consequently, effective data and communication systems ensure that families have accurate information and students understand their next steps.

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

- Refine teaching strategies to include questioning and routines that are strategically differentiated and result in appropriate levels of support and extensions for all learners. (1.2)
  - The school has a cohesive set of beliefs about how students learn that is evident in teacher team and individual classroom level practices. Teachers collaboratively plan lessons that are rooted in the analysis of data and enable them to group students based on their individual learning needs. Tasks challenge students' ability to participate in advanced comprehension skills, such as inference. While the majority of teachers plan differentiated lessons using student data, not all teachers strategically differentiate instruction during the actual teaching of the lesson. Consequently not all learners, particularly accelerated learners, benefit from supports and extensions into the curricula to further elevate their critical thinking skills.

- A third grade classroom teacher use chalkboard slates to engage students to prove their answers to writing fractions as a mixed number. Students respond eagerly and use clear and explicit math vocabulary and express different ways to get the correct answer. However, this type of high level of cognitive engagement was not observed in every classroom and as a result, not all students benefit from strategies that push their thinking and lead to challenging discussion and work products.
- Enhance organizational decisions to ensure that effective support systems leverage change in teacher practice and result in improved outcomes for all students. (1.3)
  - Teachers meet weekly for various professional collaborations, such as instructional, grade and teacher team meetings. Teacher programs are structured to include double blocks of time for their collaborations and student instruction, resulting in improved assessment data results. However, due to budget constraints for this school year, coaches are assigned regular classes, resulting in the faculty's inability to receive consistent internal pedagogical support. Consequently, the school's long-term goals to improve students' listening and speaking across the school and challenging academic experiences for all students are compromised.
- Strengthen assessment practices to ensure that the effectiveness of class and grade level decision making further increase learning outcomes for all student groups. (2.2)
  - Across the school, periodic assessments, homework, rubrics, exit slips and unit tests support teachers in instructional planning, checking for student understanding and making adjustments, such as increasing the use of math manipulatives and visuals for ELLs to ensure that students' needs are successfully met. However, while teachers can provide in depth analysis of subgroup trends in their classrooms, not all teams consistently aggregate assessment data in such a way that they can pinpoint the performance trends of each subgroup at the grade level based on common assessment data. Absent the strategic organization of data derived from common assessments, the teams' ability to effectively track the performance of special populations and adjust instructional decisions that promote positive student outcomes is limited.
- Refine the observation of classrooms to ensure that enhanced feedback with greater alignment to professional goals of teachers improves their practice and leads to increased student performance. (4.1)
  - The school ensures that all teachers, including those new to the school, receive ongoing support and research-based feedback from the administration and peers based on formal observations and informal walkthroughs. However, while there is a culture of continuous professional learning, the individualized professional goals of teachers are not formally documented. Therefore, feedback to teachers is not captured in a strategic way that includes teacher's professional development needs that are matched with the rubric-driven differentiated professional goals identifies by individual teachers. As a result, feedback and next steps that provide clear expectations and a full picture of teacher's professional needs are minimized.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: The Ronald H. Brown 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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>

**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>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?				<b>X</b>
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?			<b>X</b>	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			<b>X</b>	

**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>
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