

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Rocco Laurie
Middle school R072

33 FERNDALE AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND
NY 10314

Principal: PETER MACELLARI

Dates of review: November 2 - 4, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Myrta Rivera

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Rocco Laurie is a Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 1620 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 19% Black, 25% Hispanic, 18% Asian students and 0% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 91.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and staff work together to create a safe and respectful learning environment that supports students' academic and social emotional development. (1.4)
 - o The school successfully provides a positive learning environment where students and staff cooperate during the regular passing of classes to provide for an organized, safe and orderly transition. The large number of trophies, awards, student work, and the posted list of ARISTA members is evidence of the school's positive tone and pride of its accomplishments. The school's effective review of data on a daily basis further helps to maintain a safe environment, resulting in the reduction of incidents to 24 as compared to 49 at this time last year, and to the increase in attendance from 91% to 94%.
 - o Students benefit from smooth transitions through the grades in an academy structure, where the assistant principal, dean and guidance counselor transition up the grades with students and coordinate their supports. Students say that many adults in their school, especially their teachers and dean who help them with any problem, know them. The school uses the "Pupil Path" website to track student achievement, attendance, and guidance services in a seamless manner. Parents report the academy structure and the "Pupil Path" program provides them with information and instant communication with staff.
- The school has strong partnerships that provide students, teachers, and families with services that support students' academic, social, and emotional needs. (4.4)
 - o The small academy structure provides students and their families with regular guidance/advisement support. Curriculum conferences inform parents of the graduation and grading policies. Parents and their children sign contracts acknowledging the rules of behavior, classroom, and promotional policies. Students meet with a guidance counselor each marking period to discuss their future. Classroom intervention provided by substance abuse prevention and intervention specialists and guidance counselors, along with workshops at teacher team meetings, effectively support the academic and social emotional development of students. These coordinated services of staff allow for informed parents and students as to their postsecondary readiness.
 - o The College of Staten Island provides academic and guidance support in math and science through the "STEP" program on Saturdays and after-school. "Achieve Now" includes guidance support as well as academic assistance for students and their families. Close to 700 students, participate in real world opportunities through the Cancer Awareness walk. As a result, the school provides students and families with youth development and academic supports that assist students succeed.
- The school effectively provides a rigorous standards-based curriculum aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards that meets the needs of all learners. (1.1)
 - o Faculty aligns the Common Core Learning Standards with a framework for units of study in literacy and math with a focus on writing as their key standard. The revised literacy and math pacing calendars assure school-wide consistency of instruction and a framework for teacher teams to develop academic tasks. In order to close the achievement gap and promote postsecondary readiness in all

grades, the school is offering Regents classes in American history and earth science for the first time this year. It continues to offer the algebra Regents with a success rate of 98.9%, enabling 38% of grade 8 students to earn high school credit, a rate that is higher than their peer schools and the City and three languages, offered for three years, provide students with the opportunity to take State proficiency exams in Spanish, Italian, and French. Thus, the school's coursework exposes students to a variety of coursework focused on infusing rigor into their learning.

- o The honors program, designed after reviewing student work and data, addresses the needs of higher achieving students by enabling them to take Regents' classes. Students in collaborative team teaching and special education classes receive supplemental instruction in the "Dimension U" laptop program, leading to extra credit on the Progress Report in math achievement for students with special needs.
- Teachers align assessments to the curriculum and make adjustments at the classroom level. (2.2)
 - o The social studies teacher team creates common assessments and a rubric aligned to units of study. Based on results from these assessments, teachers provide additional support to students in small group instruction every Wednesday, track student progress, and create goals for students. As a result of their analysis of class work and assessments, teachers modify their instructional strategies by identifying common problem areas and provide additional support to targeted students. Preliminary results show improvements for targeted students. As teachers share student work, one teacher says, "I cannot believe how much progress the student has made this year."
- School leaders effectively align resources and make organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - o Based on analysis of subgroup data, reassignment of math teachers allows for effective use of their expertise and consistent instruction for special education students, resulting in 4.5 additional credits on the Progress Report.
 - o Through the school based option, teacher teams meet twice a week to work on curriculum and review student work to adjust instruction relative to the needs of all learners. Interdisciplinary grade teams and subject area teams provide a school wide alignment of instructional practice that is evident in student work products.
- Classroom instruction aligns to the curriculum and promotes rigorous tasks that meet the needs of all students. (1.2)
 - o The school's shared belief that all students benefit from rigorous instruction is evident by the use of visual prompts and whole group and small group instruction across all classrooms. Smart boards that are used to support instruction engages students in stimulating lessons. All lessons have a performance objective aligned to the curriculum, and assessment strategies measure the effectiveness of lessons. As a result, student performance has improved from a 54 to a 71-percentile rank as documented in Progress Report data.
 - Classroom instructional strategies, including partner work and small group instruction, engages students in group activities and facilitates ongoing interaction with their teacher and peers. Discussion techniques require students

to support their arguments by referring to the text and making oral presentations of their group work. Student portfolios, that transition from year to year, include good examples of student work with teacher feedback. As a result, classroom instruction promotes thinking, discussion, and work projects leading to an improved academic performance score of B on the Progress Report.

What the school needs to improve

- Revise the professional development plan to include differentiated support that enables teachers to evaluate and refine their classroom practice to further improve learning outcomes. (4.3)
 - o The professional development plan addresses the Common Core Learning Standards by listing monthly topics to be addressed during department conferences, team meetings, faculty conferences, academy meetings and during inquiry team meetings. However, the plan fails to address the needs of subject teachers and lacks differentiated support for individual teachers based on goals, thus hampering their professional growth and self-reflection.
 - o School leaders provide time two days a week for teams of teachers to meet and discuss their instructional practices, and some teachers work with the coaches or attend workshops outside the school. One teacher shared how learning about and now implementing a color-coding strategy for grouping has helped her differentiate instruction. However, the teams are new and have not yet fully connected their work to improving teacher practice across the school. .
- Refine the system to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams engaged in collaborative inquiry to support teacher leaders. (5.4)
 - o Even though, teacher teams create journals of their agendas and notes of meetings are maintained by assistant principals, school leaders do not yet provide feedback to teams on their work. Therefore, teams that are in various stages of development lack a system to evaluate their work, thus jeopardizing their future work and effectiveness.
 - o School leaders are knowledgeable in identifying teachers' experience and expertise and make assignments accordingly. However, student assessment data is not yet used to evaluate the impact of the teams' work or effectiveness of individual teacher on classroom instruction and student performance. Thus, as acknowledged by the principal, the efficacy of teacher hiring linked to the tenure process is not yet fully developed, limiting the value of final decisions around teacher retention.
- Develop a system that includes clear benchmarks for monitoring progress towards interim goals and support making adjustments during the year to improve the delivery of instruction. (5.3)
 - o School leaders have developed clear goals for the school year that includes implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards in literacy and math, grade level inquiry teams, and the inclusion of action plans for two new Regents courses. The principal meets with cabinet and the instructional team and school leadership team, to discuss student progress and make adjustments to support struggling students. However, interim goals with clear benchmarks to measure progress and possible adjustments to these goals are not clearly defined thereby limiting the attainment of goals and monitoring student progress.

- o Teachers develop student goals based on periodic assessment data and class assessments and meet with students quarterly to review these goals. However, interim benchmarks to monitor student progress based on their goals are not clearly defined, impacting student progress.
- Refine the system for monitoring teaching practice that reflects use of data and analysis of student work to provide feedback that supports teacher development. (4.1)
 - o School leaders provide feedback to teachers through classroom observations. However, the feedback to teachers is not focused on analysis of student data and student work products. Even though, students maintain a portfolio of student work products, there is no evidence that school leaders review the work to provide teachers with feedback on academic task or feedback to students. This lack of concrete feedback to teachers, limits their effect professional growth and student progress.
 - o The school has implemented a research based rubric to provide feedback to teachers on their teaching practice. However, teachers have not yet developed professional goals in collaboration with the school leaders that addresses their personal goals. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to further support teachers' professional growth and reflection.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Rocco Laurie	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		
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
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