

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

P.S. 3 Raul Julia Micro Society

K-8 school X003

2100 LAFONTAINE AVENUE

BRONX

NY 10457

Principal: DENISE BROWN

Dates of review: October 28, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Sarah Goodman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 3 Raul Julia Micro Society is an elementary-middle school with 421 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 28% Black, 68% Hispanic, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 9% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 90.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school community creates a safe environment for students to develop and learn within. (1.4)
 - o Parents, students, and staff feel overwhelmingly protected in the school. The entire faculty is committed to identifying and holistically addressing student behavioral issues. Incidences within and outside classrooms are initially dealt with by the dean and the assistant principals. This team seeks to uncover the root of the student's behavior issue and then creates an action plan with the student, parent, and teachers. This relentless drive to help support all students at all times has led to limited instructional interruptions and more than a 50% reduction in suspensions over the last few years.
 - o Programming, that includes a range of activities with teachers, supports students' academic and social/emotional development. Twice a week, extended time with homeroom teachers works as an academic advisory program allowing students a chance to catch up on work or skills they need help with. Middle school clubs build student engagement through a choice of weekly activities that include the arts and technology, culminating in a final project or performance.
- The administration makes strategic resource decisions that support instructional goals. (1.3)
 - o The principal places student needs at the center of her planning while creatively working within budgetary constraints. The school's ample supply of books, technology, art supplies, and other needed resources are constantly integrated into lessons. Class size is small, allowing teachers to know their students well and offer continual tracking and support of their class work and homework. When budget cuts forced the principal to reduce staffing, a librarian was reassigned into a classroom teaching position, but only after training the staff to continue to utilize the library on their own. Support personnel, such as the newly hired literacy consultants, impact the teaching effectiveness of the writer's workshop, resulting in an increase in the quantity and quality of student journaling. A continued partnership with a valuable math consultant supports a strong math curriculum, evidenced by last year's State test scores that outperformed the district's.
- The school leadership supports teacher practice with observations and targeted professional development leading to lessons that are more effective across the school. (4.1)
 - o The administration's scheduling of short, frequent cycles of observation as a primary way to positively influence instruction at the school is determined through periodic review of student data of all teaching staff. In addition, new teachers are frequently observed by the principal, assistant principals, and mentor teachers, in order to support implementing the workshop model and data tracking. Observation data, shared amongst the mentors, consultants, and administration, is utilized to inform weekly professional development sessions for new teachers and/or grade teams. As a result, new teachers feel supported as they implement effective classroom routines.

- The principal promotes distributed leadership to provide staff members with suitable support to address school goals focused on raising student achievement. (4.3)
 - o Every morning, the principal and two assistant principals review their vision for the school relative to addressing the immediate tasks to meet the needs of students. In addition, these three leaders are continuously involved in their own practice of professional development and goal setting resulting in a school that constantly develops leadership capacity.
 - o Professional development opportunities for teachers are guided by the school's goals to strengthen the workshop model in all subjects and to focus on the content and skills required by the Common Core Learning Standards. As a result, teachers are able to implement research projects in science and social studies, daily writing exercises, and open-ended math problems, to support students in college and career-ready skill development.
- The school communicates high expectations to students and families that support achievement. (3.4)
 - o Tracking missed hours of school attendance over a period of several weeks, allows staff to identify at-risk students and meet with parents to address the loss of instructional time, leading to students attending more regularly. If students are at risk of failing a class, faculty reaches out to students and parents to let them know that additional tutoring is offered before and after school. This has increased pass rates in scholarship reports across grades.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of rigorous tasks to address key standards that leverage student achievement. (1.1)
 - o The school has developed several activities across grades and subjects that integrate the Common Core Learning Standards. Many teachers are working to engage students in writing with supporting details and are focused on key math standards. However, while some teachers utilize tiered assignments to address a diversity of learners, daily assignments for many students inconsistently require students to call on higher order thinking.
- Strengthen teacher practice so that it incorporates differentiated learning opportunities for students, promoting cognitive development. (1.2)
 - o Teachers across classrooms utilize the workshop model, turn, and talk partners, and hands-on games and experiments to support student participation. However, within teaching activities teachers generally ask low-level questions that require students to recall a character's name, the placement of a country on a map, or a math fact, without allowing students to think through the "how and why" type questions. Consequently, students are limited in engaging in higher order thinking activities.

- o Although, one of the school's stated core beliefs posted on every class door involves differentiated pedagogy, and all teachers have identified at least three levels of students in their classrooms, groupings are not consistently flexible and teaching strategies did not show evidence of sufficiently meeting the needs of students with disabilities or English language learners, a subgroup for whom the school did not receive additional credit on their Progress Report.
- Promote consistent assessment practices across the school to gather information on student learning that will guide instructional decisions within classrooms. (2.2)
 - o Teachers across the school are beginning to incorporate conferencing notebooks; though the structure and use of them is still developing. The school also utilizes rubrics across grades and subject areas. However, while students understand the four point grading system, many are not provided with the rubrics while they are working on assignments, thus limiting their ability to self-assess their work. In addition, teachers do not consistently use rubric grades to formatively understand student progress and adjust instruction to address immediate concerns.
- Improve upon professional collaborations to strengthen the learning of the adult community. (4.2)
 - o Administration's creation of teacher programs allows for weekly formal planning meetings, often led by consultants that focus on curriculum development and teaching strategies. Small groups of teachers informally use common preparation time for additional curriculum work. However, the school does not yet utilize a teacher-led inquiry process that integrates protocols for looking at student work and data to guide instructional decisions. This limits the internal development of teacher capacity and timely changes to instructional programs to meet the needs of their students.
- Utilize interim benchmarks that monitor progress towards yearly goals to ensure meeting set targets. (5.3)
 - o Although administration looked at a wide range of data from the previous year to set instructional goals for the present school year, they along with teams of teachers have not established specific interim goals for targeted groups of students. Thus, they are limiting the school's ability to adjust practice and modify decisions that affect the performance and progress of individuals, relevant subgroups, and all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: P.S. 3 Raul Julia Micro Society	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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