

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr.
Elementary-Middle School 279

**2100 WALTON AVENUE
BRONX
NY 10453**

Principal: JAMES WASLAWSKI

Dates of review: May 7 - 8, 2012
Lead Reviewer: Nadya Awadallah

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr. is a K-8 school with 997 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 16% Black, 78% Hispanic, 0% White, 4% Asian students and 1% other students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 21% 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 91.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is a nurturing learning community where all constituents share opportunities to grow academically and socially to achieve their personal best. (1.4)
 - o Classroom visits provide strong evidence of students carefully following rules and protocols while actively participating in all learning activities. Classrooms maintain effective procedures such as developing caring, supportive relationships with and among students that support student's personal development. Additionally, hallways and bulletin boards carefully display student's academic work and artwork, which effectively shows pride in their work as a way to celebrate school's culture. A guidance counselor provides support such as whole class, small group, and one to one counseling during the school day, and middle school students receive at-risk interventions through the Overcoming Obstacles curriculum delivered by the at-risk counselor and attendance teacher. As a result, students treat each other and their teachers with respect and are actively engaged in their schoolwork.
 - o Students participation in extended day and guidance groups to discuss all areas of school, including class grades, ensure that their academic needs are being monitored. These structures and practices ensure that each student's personal and academic needs are well known by an adult in the school and barriers to student learning are appropriately addressed. Students stated that they receive both academic and personal support from their teachers before, after school, and even during lunch periods, and that the guidance counselor also assists them with their individual needs. As a result, students feel that they are well known by an adult in their school who helps them with any issue.
- The school's strong partnerships with numerous outside organizations and families support students in learning and promote academic and personal growth. (4.4)
 - o Staff members responsible for at-risk services meet on a regular basis to provide social emotional support for students as well as provide tutoring for students to gain insight into their behavioral and academic issues. Services include whole class, small group, and one to one counseling provided during the school day. In addition, the school works with numerous outside organizations that provide different services such as workshops, family counseling services, parenting skills and help to improve communication. As a result, students receive appropriate interventions services while teachers and parents learn strategies necessary to address students' needs in class and at home. Additionally, the guidance counselor and parent coordinator organize workshops for students and parents on the high school application process, which prepares them for the next phase of their education. Accordingly, the Learning Environment Survey indicates high scores by both parents and teachers, indicating they are able to get the help necessary to address students behavioral and learning needs. Students express that there are programs and people in the school to help them resolve issues and prepare them for the transition to the next level in their education.
 - o Partnerships such as volunteer reading, math clubs, teachers college, TASC extended day program, boys & girls basketball teams, Caribbean culture club, chess club and LEAP support the schools performing arts programs and academics by expanding students experiential background, and providing real life learning opportunities to support their personal interests and future career

goals. Students who participate in the chess club compete in locally and nationally recognized competitions, and receive awards and recognition for their skills. Thus partnerships provide opportunities for students to expand their vision of future career and college possibilities, resulting in improvement on student achievement and in their personal growth.

- The school's use of resources, including time and teacher assignments, are aligned to the schools instructional goals and engage students in performance tasks for increasing achievement. (1.3)
 - o Literacy teachers in grades kindergarten through grade 8 have a consultant assigned to support, guide, and help in the implementation of effective teaching practices. These consultants also work on the development of lesson plans and effective assessments as well as analysis of data to guide next steps. Push-in guided reading teachers on grade kindergarten through grade 5 provide consistent, effective, and small group differentiated instruction. The school's extensive array of technology and its purchasing of a range of software programs specifically address English language learners and struggling students. Small groups of struggling students are assisted in reading skills through technology programs, which enable learners to receive the tools for individualized support. As a result, there are meaningful products in student work folders and on the bulletin board displays throughout the school.
 - o The school schedule enables teams of teachers to meet regularly to share best practices, examine student work, track and monitor assessments, prepare next steps to guide instruction and plan for curriculum that are aligned to the new Common Core standards in literacy and math. As a result of the inquiry teams, teachers report that students are more engaged in classes and their academic performance has improved as noted in quarterly assessments and by student work.
- The schools coherent curriculum aligns well to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), strategically supporting student learning. (1.1)
 - o The schools administration actively engages members of the school community, to revise curriculum maps, units of study, grade, and subject rubrics to include key State standards and new Common Core learning tasks. A strategic use of benchmark papers, common assessments, and grade specific rubrics, measure student progress. These collaborative decisions help align the curricula to promote rigorous work to enable students to be engaged with relevant, aligned tasks to raise student achievement. As a result, students' products reflect higher level of cognitive engagement across grade levels.
 - o This school offers a vast array of enrichment, rigorous course requirements, and intervention courses before, during, and after school. To cognitively engage the English language learners and students with disabilities, there are blended learning platforms such as powermylearning.com, Rosetta Stone and help math. The school also uses computer-based literacy programs to accelerate student comprehension and retention of academic vocabulary. As a result, student progress is evidenced by the increased reading levels in kindergarten through grade 8.
- School leaders use a research-based framework to ensure that they provide teachers with consistent and cohesive feedback leading to improved teacher practice and self-reflection. (4.1)

- o The development of teacher goals are based on school leaders' findings and recommendations as a result of classroom visits, and reciprocal discussions allow for ongoing feedback relative to instruction practice. This exchange of ideas and strategies result in teacher self-reflection and differentiated support, including clear next steps towards attaining professional growth and effective instructional delivery.
- o The commitment to the professional development of all teachers is evident in the hiring of instructional specialists and administrations providing needed support such as a literacy coach, guided reading teachers, bilingual coordinator, and literacy consultants for staffs' professional growth. The outcomes of the professional development sessions have resulted in the reorganization of some teacher assignments to grades or content areas so that their areas of expertise are well matched and positively impact on student outcomes.
- Individual teachers as well as teacher teams work collaboratively in the use of formative and summative data to identify academic supports for students and teachers in order to leverage change in the classroom practice. (3.2)
 - o Teacher teams as well as inquiry teams focus on assessing student work in order to identify factors impeding student progress. Teachers' constant communication helps develop a common language as they incorporate CCLS tasks into their instructional practices, leading to initial stages of tiered work based on students needs. Members of the team speak with students about their interests and help build their motivation leading to goal-setting discussions, resulting in student's self-awareness of their academic needs.
 - o As teachers meet to discuss their data findings, they identify instructional trends for grade-level foci. Once these patterns are determined, teachers rank students accordingly into strategy-driven small groups resulting in targeted instruction. Teachers also look at sharing best practices for classroom implementation to contribute to school-wide instructional growth.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop the skills of teachers so that all students have multiple entry points to engage in a challenging curriculum that encourages high levels of cognitive engagement and student participation in their learning. (1.2)
 - o Consistent in all classrooms is evidence of differentiated tasks, strategic grouping, teacher modeling, effective questioning techniques, and classroom routines to provide for multiple entry points into the lesson. However, in some classrooms, teacher planning of student tasks and assignments did not leverage the high range of cognitive challenge aligned to the rigorous curricular expectations within the school leading to general levels of student thinking and participation in their learning.
- Improve the development and use of tools to aggregate and disaggregate data so that trends in student subgroup performance are clearly evident and can be used to make informed decisions to meet specific instructional needs. (2.2)
 - o Teacher teams use ELA and math item analysis information as well as Acuity predictive and interim assessment data to identify student performance. However, at this time, they do not consistently incorporate the use on ongoing formative assessment data into their daily practice to make immediate adjustments to lessons. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks

are not always strategically revised, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

- o Currently teachers analyze data on student subgroups provided to them by administration and/or coach and use this data to identify strengths and needs of students. However, this data work does not highlight subgroup growth or stalls, therefore not all subgroups are included in discussions around instructional implications on student learning or when curricular revisions and decisions are made at the team or classroom level, leading to missed opportunities for effective adjustment of instructional practices that address all learners.
- Enhance systems and the use of data to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher teams, collaborations, and capacity building to accelerate learning across the school. (5.4)
 - o The principal and her cabinet attend teacher team meetings to support teacher collaborations and review artifacts, such as agendas, minutes, curriculum maps, performance task, assessments, and student work. Furthermore, teacher teams analyze data and student work to adjust their instruction and build coherence around learning. However, there are limitations around sharing of timely information to further boost instructional practices and student learning.
 - o There are systems in place to evaluate opportunities for leadership development and key staff members to take the lead. In addition, the school strategically measures the growth of teachers using short cycles of observation. However, a transparent, measurable system documenting how teacher teams and other school decision-making processes are evaluated to support the development of teacher leaders is not yet available at this time, minimizing the potential to use this information to its fullest benefit.
- Enrich the use of teacher feedback on student work to support students and families in having a clear understanding of progress and next steps to increase learning. (2.4)
 - o Parents speak highly of Engrade, the technology system that informs them on a daily basis how their children perform on homework, behavior, and assessments. The school sends home timely progress reports in all subjects. However, only some teachers make specific comments on student work with next learning steps. This restricts building home-school partnerships by sharing with families and students clear next steps in the learning process and increasing learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Captain Manuel Rivera, Jr.	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	
1..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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