

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Dr. Rose B. English School

Elementary-Middle School K327

**111 Bristol Street
Brooklyn
NY 11212**

Principal: Dr. Stephen Appea

Dates of review: March 5 – 6, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Ainslie Cumberbatch

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Dr. Rose B. English School is an elementary-middle school with 694 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 72% Black, 25% Hispanic and less than 2% other students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 89.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal aligns resources and organizational decisions to school goals to develop teacher practice and provide enhanced opportunities for student engagement that promotes academic achievement. (1.3)
 - The principal uses school resources and structures time to support instructional learning priorities, including the integration of technology across classrooms and scheduled weekly teacher team meetings. The school has invested in technology devices and programs for most elementary and middle school classrooms to support its goals of building students' comprehension skills and offering differentiated learning. Digital resources are incorporated into students' guided or independent learning experiences and used to expand student learning through blended learning activities. For example, teachers use programs such as Reading Street, iStation, Time to Know and Pearson Success Maker to provide differentiated instructional activities to develop students' comprehension skills. Students in grade 3 and 4 benefit from a new grant-funded and conceptually based, Spatial Temporal Math program which provides a language-independent and visual approach to mathematics. The principal has contracted professional development services to address different tiers of teacher effectiveness, so that individual teachers and teams can better support students' academic growth, aligned to their needs. Consequently, teachers meet at least once a week, to review the alignment of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to the curriculum with emphasis on creating rigorous tasks, as evidenced in English language arts, math curriculum maps and student work products. As a result, students' learning and work products demonstrate increased levels of understanding, reflected in program growth reports that show improvement of approximately five percent which is aligned to an increase in teachers' effectiveness in designing tasks that support students' academic learning needs.
- Through regular use of a range of relevant data, ongoing assessment and grading practices, leaders and faculty analyze student learning outcomes and make informed instructional decisions for student growth. (2.2)
 - Administrators and teachers use multiple common data sources such as; New York State (NYS) test data, Acuity, program assessments, running records, conferencing logs and coherent rubrics to determine students' performance and progress towards mastery of content. Teachers analyze data collected to identify the progress for specific subgroups such as, holdovers, students with disabilities (SWDs), English language learners (ELLs) and students in temporary housing to guide adjustments to curricula and teaching practices. For example, in a seventh-grade English language arts (ELA) class, students received scaffolded instruction and teacher support aligned to their individual goals. While the teacher worked with a small group, other groups of students responded to questions on an article dealing with genetic testing that presented sufficient challenge and increased their level of thinking. The teacher conferenced with individual students and groups to check for understanding. As student progress is tracked through common grade

assessments, tasks are refined to skill-specific activities that extend learning. Teachers identify students' strengths and needs and continuously work to align instruction so that structured learning activities meet students at their instructional level and provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their continued progress.

- The school uses a research-based common teaching framework to provide feedback and support to teachers that result in increased self-evaluation and revision of instructional practice to promote professional growth. (4.1)
 - School leaders prioritize visiting classrooms and engaging teachers in formative and formal observations. Ongoing oral and written evidence-based and timely feedback informs teachers of the quality of their work and their impact on student performance. Currently, the school focuses on designing coherent instruction, using questioning and discussion techniques and the analysis of student assessments in instruction. Administrators identify pedagogical trends across the school and plan for future staff development. This practice supports teachers in improving the delivery of instruction as well as monitoring their professional growth. Consequently, there has been a positive shift in classroom practice as noted in improved teacher lesson planning with scaffolds and extensions that foster engagement and the use of questioning and discussion techniques that focus on depth of knowledge.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop school wide alignment between academic tasks and curriculum development, so that lessons emphasize rigorous thinking and skills to cognitively engage all learners. (1.1)
 - The school uses a range of data sources to align curriculum to key State standards in reading, writing and research. Teachers are making strides in designing and implementing rigorous and engaging literacy and math tasks, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), as noted in classroom visits, student artifacts and units of study. However, this practice is not fully embedded across the school. For example, in one third-grade social studies class students were asked to use a Venn diagram to categorize basic facts stated in a reading selection, thereby minimizing opportunities for them to closely examine subject matter to develop skills and content knowledge and accelerate student achievement. In addition, in some classes, English language learners did not receive support to address tasks that presented literacy challenges. Therefore, not all students are cognitively engaged in challenging tasks across grades and content areas as evidenced in units of study and tasks, thus hindering activities that push their critical thinking in order to accelerate academic progress.
- Ensure teaching practices and curricula consistently align with beliefs of how students learn best so that lessons fully challenge and engage all students, including relevant subgroups, and result in improved learning outcomes. (1.2)
 - The school believes that students should be active in their own learning process. The staff conducts conversations with students about effort and rigor to help them become more purposeful in their learning. Teachers

use the rubric from Danielson's Framework for Teaching to reflect on their practice and more accurately address student needs. To support their belief, some teachers have incorporated more effective grouping and structures for student participation, discussion and accountable talk that generate more meaningful work products. The school requires teachers to use Bloom's Taxonomy, Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Hess's matrix as part of their instructional strategies to strengthen tiered questions and promote higher-order thinking skills. However, across classrooms these strategies are not consistently implemented to provide support and challenge all students to fully engage in classroom lessons and assignments. In some classrooms, students were required to fully explain the rationale behind their answers when responding to a question with support from textual evidence. In other classrooms, while efforts are made to involve struggling learners with CCLS-aligned performance tasks, students were not given adequate opportunity to break down challenging problems or could not fully explain the expectations outlined in a rubric, to show competency in understanding the task. As a result, demonstration of higher-order thinking in student discussions and work products, particularly for students with disabilities, English language learners and gifted students is uneven across classrooms. Consequently, these students are not always fully motivated to participate in discussions to increase their learning.

- Refine school systems for evaluating decision-making processes to increase consistency and effectiveness of policies and practices that accelerate student learning. (5.1)
 - The school's capacity-building practices are developing through the work of several teacher teams, some with a lens on curriculum development and instructional expectations, and others on youth development and professional growth. Teachers use exemplars to isolate needed skills to complete performance tasks so that students have models of what is needed to attain proficiency on tasks. However, despite the school's alignment between school wide needs and instructional expectations, inclusive of what teachers need to learn in support of student outcomes, there is a lack of consistency amongst practices. Consequently, instructional congruence and effectiveness does not yet permeate throughout the building. Evidence reflects that adjustments to practices in response to student achievement levels, based on periodic and program specific assessments, have not significantly affected the movement of the academic performance of the students to a higher level of achievement. Specifically, school scholarship has declined compared to the previous school year, as reflected in the school's Progress Report and State exam data. Some teachers cite a significant decline in the percentage of students in grades 4 and 6 scoring at proficiency level on the 2012 New York State assessments in English language arts and math as a possible unintended consequence of an abundance of blended learning programs that they do not always deliver with fidelity. The principal states that significant changes in personnel led to the decline. As a result, the school is currently evaluating instructional practices and the work of inquiry teams in order to enhance school wide processes to prepare all students with college and career readiness skills.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Dr. Rose B. English School	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score		X					
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?		X					
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		X					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed