



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II

Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 17K484

**430 HOWARD AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11233**

Principal: Michele Luard

**Dates of review: May 23-24, 2013
Lead Reviewer: Buffie Simmons**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II is a/an Junior High-Intermediate-Middle school with 165 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 88.0% Black, 12.0% Hispanic, 1.0% White, and 0.0% Asian students. The student body includes 5.0% English language learners and 20.0% special education students. Boys account for 59.0% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41.0%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 86.7%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is developing alignment between organizational decisions and the school's instructional goals to meet student learning needs. (1.3)
 - The principal, who was assigned to the school in November of 2012, has collaborated with the School Leadership Team (SLT) and modified the school's budget, which was allocated prior to her start. The school was challenged with the need of additional staff with limited budgetary support. In order to accommodate this need and to support the school's instructional goals to increase students' literacy and math proficiency, a decision was made to reduce an administrative position. This enabled funds to be directed towards teaching supports. With the budgetary adjustments, the school is developing more flexibility in meeting the instructional needs of its students. For example, the school was able to invest in an automatic phone dialer to improve the home school connection to increase student attendance rates which are beginning to show some improvements. The school maximizes the use of human resources, such as teacher teams who collaborate with the principal to share their expertise around meeting the school's instructional goals. Teacher teams are available to meet a minimum of one period per week and are grouped in common planning teams based on subject and grade level to review student work. In order to improve, the instructional cabinet consisting of the principal, lead teachers on each grade, network support and the UFT chapter leader, is in the process of building teacher capacity in English language arts (ELA) and math. To this end, the cabinet provides support to teacher teams regarding data analysis that is used to plan tasks and curricular units aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), in order to support more rigor in tasks and curricula adjustments. As a result, teams have the ability to make instructional decisions that will impact the quality of work students produce which is beginning to create structures to improve student outcomes.
- A respectful tone in the school is developing a culture that supports academic and social-emotional growth for students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school has developed a safe learning environment which is promoting student growth. The school is co-located on the Dr. Jacquelyn Peek Davis campus. Both principals stand at the entrance and escort the students into the entranceway. Because of the small size of the school, all students are known by at least one staff member and the principal knows all students by name. Furthermore, the principal has fostered a support culture through an open door policy for parents, students and staff to discuss issues and address concerns. Additionally, the principal, guidance counselors and teacher specialists meet to review data and identify students who require additional academic and social-emotional interventions. The school has begun *Respect for All* training to focus on the importance of promoting respect for diversity and creating an inclusive school climate so all students and members of the school community feel safe and respected. The school staff uses attendance data and incident reports to gain feedback from parents to improve supports for student learning. For instance, teachers meet to review attendance and incident reports to discuss intervention strategies. The staff is currently being trained in *Overcoming Obstacles*, as an avenue to

support social-emotional development to improve the school's environment and create a positive learning culture in the school for both students and adults. As a result, the school is collaboratively focused on building its tone which strengthens the culture and simultaneously is starting to increase students' academic and social outcomes.

- The school leader utilizes a classroom observation system and provides differentiated professional development, resulting in reflective practice in order to increase student outcomes and strengthen teachers' professional growth. (4.1)
 - The school leader has identified key areas as the focus of classroom observations. Observations focus on preparation and planning, student engagement and questioning. Cabinet meetings that include school leader and instructional leads concentrate on this feedback, recommendations and the additional support as next steps for teachers. The administration is beginning to provide teachers with more frequent feedback on their teaching practices and recommendations for the next steps. In observation feedback reviewed, the next steps typically suggest that teachers meet with the principal or colleague to ensure accountability. Consequently, classroom practices such as text based writing, is beginning to reflect professional growth as evidenced in student essays.
 - The principal provide professional development opportunities for all staff based on their staff needs. As an onset, the principal put into place and created a differentiated professional plan for staff members. This collaborative and focused work is beginning to elevate teacher practice. The school is participating in the Teacher Effectiveness Program. Teachers are analyzing student work to inform practice. During a teacher team interview, a teacher expressed that she did not know what she didn't know before Principal Luard. Teachers have the opportunity to be reflective of their practice and meet with the principal to discuss lessons. The principal has provided feedback to teachers in areas such as the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), assessment, data analysis and the Danielson Framework. As a result, expectations for teacher practice are clearer with staff becoming aware of their strengths and next steps to improve.

What the school needs to improve

- Redesign the curricula for alignment to key State standards to emphasize rigorous habits and critical thinking skills in an effort to cognitively engage all learners with college and career readiness skills. (1.1)
 - Although school leaders and faculty are beginning to align their curriculum to the CCLS, there is not yet a cohesive curriculum that outlines key standards across the grades. For example, in English language Arts, teachers plan weekly with minimal guidance on a process to revise their curriculum or with a focus on targeting specific skills in need of development and refinement of tasks, in order to support student engagement. As such, the themes throughout the grades lack specificity and little evidence that key standards have been identified and reinforced. A task observed in a Science class, involved students including using textbooks to define words and or responding to basic

informational questions from a textbook. In a Math class, there was sparse evidence of work that encouraged students to demonstrate conceptual understanding. In a few classes during the classroom visit, In a Math class, there was sparse evidence of work that encouraged students to demonstrate conceptual understanding. In a few classes observed during visits, students were generally compliant but were not cognitively engaged in the lessons. During the student interviews a number of students expressed that most days in school are not challenging and they are frequently bored. Consequently, there was a significant decrease in students' academic progress as evidenced in data analysis of State assessments in ELA and math from 88% in 2010-2011 to 27 % 2011-2012. Currently, in the teacher team meetings, student work samples in math and ELA are beginning to show some improvements.

- Develop consistent, learner-centered pedagogical practices and build teacher capacity to deliver effective instruction that offers authentic differentiated learning opportunities, resulting in student thinking and active participation. (1.2)
 - Instruction is almost entirely teacher centered, consisting of teachers asking recall questions and the same few students responding. Few lesson plans showed evidence of group activity, individual work with students or opportunities for students to engage with one another in any form. Several lessons ended without summary or assessment of the task. In the classrooms, where group work was observed, teachers circulated the classroom and had discussions with small groups about the tasks with the aim of providing additional guidance in completing the tasks. For example, in a history lesson about Japanese-American internment during World War II, students analyzed documents and watched a mini- documentary to support their skills in “reading like a historian”, such as using evidence to support their inferences. In a Science class, students determine the difference between genotypes and phenotypes in Genetics. Students explain the significance of Gregor Mendel’s experiment to the study of genetics. However, across classrooms structures to ensure that all students participated in tasks, as well as structures for differentiated questioning during independent work were not consistent, thereby resulting in limited supports for all students to produce meaningful work.

- Align rubrics to curricula and key standards and incorporate ongoing checks for understanding so that instructional decisions are adjusted for increased student outcomes. (2.2)
 - Teachers have begun to use assessments to look at student work in order to provide feedback to students and inform teachers’ instructional strategies. However, this practice is focused on scoring of student work around previously identified skills in summative and periodic assessments and does not align with the standards indicated on each unit of study. The skill-based focus of classroom assignments contributes to confusion around next steps as skill outcomes changes from unit to unit. In addition, teachers’ use of rubrics is sporadic and inconsistent. This results in limited ability to accurately diagnose student strengths and weaknesses, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction.

- Across classrooms, there are limited checks for understanding during classroom instruction. Few teachers conference with students to assess progress or use other ongoing checks to monitor students' comprehension. Additionally, there were limited opportunities for students to explain essential questions and the purpose of the lesson. As a result, knowledge of students' understanding is hindered with few options to inform teachers' ability to adjust instruction, consequently limiting the potential for specific student support for all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II	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