

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Nelson A. Rockefeller

Elementary-Middle School 121

**5301 20 AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11204**

Principal: Anthony Mungoli

Dates of review: January 23 - 24, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Isabel DiMola

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Nelson A. Rockefeller is an elementary-middle school with 378 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 4% Black, 41% Hispanic, 40% White, and 15% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 94.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Curricula align to the Common Core learning standards provides all students with opportunities to engage in rigorous instruction that builds the skills necessary to be college and career ready. (1.1)
 - Data analysis of summative and formative assessments as well as student work products of individual students and sub-groups drives curriculum development. Teacher teams plan Common Core aligned units of study that integrate the instructional shifts and specifically outline scaffolds to ensure that all students including English language learners and students with disabilities have access to content and skill development. For example, curricula include alternate text that aligns to the language skills of English language learners. These texts are complex yet adjusted to ensure that this group of students participates in rigorous learning while building language skills. The focus of curriculum across grades and subject areas is to articulate entry points for all students to use complex text to formulate and communicate independent ideas in English language arts as well as to solve complex problems in mathematics. Students have exposure to learning that include essay writing, group projects and real world situations and problems that have clear purpose and rigor providing opportunities for productive struggle of complicated ideas across content areas that promote student persistence and perseverance. The curricula and use of resources results in instructional coherence throughout the school for all students with clear pathways for students to achieve academic and personal goals.
 - Through analysis of student assessments and work product, teachers plan and refine curricula and tasks so courses of study reflect the learning needs of all students. For example, a vertical teacher team is studying mid-year data across grades, subject areas, and by sub-group. This team has identified gaps in the curricula based upon item analysis and trends across the grades, recognizing that students across all grades are having difficulty with stamina when reading. Consequently, the team members are currently examining units of study and lesson structure to identify opportunities for students across grades and sub-groups to have opportunities for sustained reading within the school day. Thus, school leaders and teachers are aware of student learning and are taking action to ensure that the curriculum supports all students in making progress toward reaching and exceeding learning goals.
- Teaching practices demonstrate the school's vision on how students learn best resulting in instructional coherence and opportunities for all students to be cognitively engaged and demonstrate higher order thinking. (1.2)
 - The school embraces the notion that students learn best when they are provided with the tools necessary to ensure access to content and opportunities to interact with each other in a meaningful way that allows for demonstration of high levels of cognition and an understanding of accountability for their learning. Teachers are explicit in explaining the why and what they are learning so students can clearly articulate the purpose of the lesson. The majority of class time is structured for students to be involved in discussions or projects that promote student-to-student interaction where they question and support each other's

learning. In order to provide these opportunities, a plethora of scaffolds are provided in individual subjects to help all students access the work. Students use sentence and conversation starters, a variety of graphic organizers, checklists, and manipulatives, to engage in meaningful work that promotes higher order thinking. To engage English language learners, teachers front load lessons with visual presentations and relevant vocabulary building exercises to support language needs. As a result, all students are having rigorous conversations around content and are working together to solve complex problems. Mid-year data demonstrates that a majority of students are reaching or exceeding expected benchmarks with 58% of English language learners making expected gains in English language arts as measured by post-unit assessments that measure progress in reading and writing across genres.

- The principal makes effective, strategic organizational decisions that align with school instructional goals and support all efforts toward improving student learning. (1.3)
 - Data analysis as well as anecdotal feedback from teachers, students, parents, and staff, together with overall observation by school leaders of school functioning, results in effective decisions on how to use resources that meet the school's immediate and long-term needs. A review of student outcomes in math reveal that students are not making expected gains. The hiring of a math coach with demonstrated experience in building effective math instruction is resulting in purposeful curriculum revision in math ensuring alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards. In addition, ongoing professional development by the coach builds teacher capacity in offering instruction that meets the needs of students in the subject area. Student mid-year assessments in math reveal that most students are making gains with a third of English language learners and students with special needs reaching benchmark targets. An ASD Nest program that supports learning of high functioning students with autism spectrum disorders through an integrated team teach model, currently services kindergarten through third grade. As such the hiring of a full time guidance counselor supports the social emotional needs of students in the program as well as students across the school. Guidance counselors push-in to classes and work with students to build positive academic and personal behaviors. Student self-evaluations lead to goal setting and structures for student reflection. The most at-risk students are showing improvement in attendance with 51% of targeted students improving their overall attendance rate and demonstrating improvement in their overall academic performance.
 - School leaders are thoughtful when hiring teachers and other staff members ensuring that there is expertise in content areas, willingness to learn, and an overall agreement with the school's philosophy of how students learn. Applicants for positions meet with the principal and other school leaders and perform demonstration lessons to showcase their ability to plan engaging instruction and ability to frame high-level questions that support student cognitive growth. There are clear professional expectations for teachers and a faculty that is supportive of the school's overarching philosophy adding to the instruction coherence and levels of consistency throughout the school. Teacher programming is strategic with careful thought about grade and class collaborative co-teaching pairing to ensure that students receive the highest levels of support and instruction. ASD Nest teachers are specially trained in the philosophy of the program and the practice to engage the learners in

their class. Observation and data demonstrate that the students that require these special services blend into the class and are not easily identifiable by behavior or outcome. English language learners receive push-in and pull-out services to ensure that they spend most of the time with their peers receiving the same level of instruction with the guided supports necessary to accelerate language acquisition. Students with special needs receive all services required by their individualized educational plans through self-contained and integrated co-teaching models. All special needs students are accountable for the Common Core learning standards and participate in the same learning experiences as all other students while being provided with the differentiation and scaffolding to reach their goals. As a result, the school is truly an inclusive environment where each student participates in an instructional program tailored to their needs, resulting in improving outcomes as measured by mid-year assessments in English language arts and math.

- Pedagogy is supported through highly effective evaluation of instruction and comprehensive professional development resulting in teacher practice that engages all students and positively affects student outcomes. (4.1)
 - School leaders use student data, teacher observation, and content strands of the Common Core Learning Standards, to set school-wide instructional goals. The principal sets forth expectations of a positive environment that supports each individual student's needs and learning styles. To that end, the principal engages teachers in rigorous cycles of evaluation that is informed by and aligned to the Danielson Framework of Teaching, where teachers receive effective feedback and clear next steps toward improving their performance. Supervisors align professional development opportunities to the overall trends that observation data illuminates as well as individualized opportunities for teachers with specific needs. For example, whole school professional development includes support in questioning and discussion to engage learners and provide opportunities for critical thinking. Then based upon individual observation feedback, individual teachers are invited to focused sessions that scaffold teacher learning to build capacity. There is also an expectation that as part of professional growth, teachers go beyond what is offered at the school or network and seek independent opportunities to strengthen their craft. Additionally, all teachers have opportunities to build their leadership capacity with many volunteering to share best practices to support each other. The principal, coaches, and teacher mentors, provide a system of teacher support including new teacher mentoring, peer support, and class inter-visitations. There is a culture of learning at the school where teachers articulate feeling supported by administration, appreciate the opportunities for professional growth, and feel safe to be honest about their professional needs. Consequently, an analysis of informal and formal observation data indicates growing competency among the faculty in ability to use questioning to engage students in meaningful discussion and plan lessons that provide multiple scaffolds for student access thereby moving the school toward reaching its overall goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the practice of using rubrics to evaluate student work to ensure that grades accurately represent student learning and that feedback is meaningful

so that all students have a clear path in demonstrating a mastery of standards. (2.2)

- Across grades the school uses common assessments including performance tasks, end-of-unit assessments in math and English language arts, and writing tasks, to assess student understanding of the standards. School leaders and faculty analyze the data to guide curriculum revision and planning. Rubrics align to the standards and although most teachers stay true to the ratings, there are differing levels of feedback to students. While some examples of student feedback are very clear and provide detailed next steps other instances exist where it is unclear how students can improve their work. As a result, the use of assessments to demonstrate to students the standards they have mastered and how to make progress is not consistently effective in providing clear guidance to further accelerate their work.
- Extend the work of teacher teams toward systemic analysis of student work to understand the relationship between pedagogic practice and student outcomes. (4.2)
 - All teachers participate in inquiry teams that meet across grades, subject areas or vertically to engage in work that supports the integration of the Common Core learning standards into curriculum and instruction. At each teacher meeting, analysis of student work and assessment data leads to understanding of student learning and teachers discuss instructional supports that target specific areas of need. Although the use of this data as a tool to understand the impact of instruction is a priority of the teams and protocols are in place to evaluate teaching practice, there are gaps in evaluating the changes to pedagogy and its impact on student learning. In addition the methods of analyses of student work are not sufficiently systematic to ensure coherence between the standards, task, rubric, and grading, resulting in some pieces of student work receiving grades that do not accurately represent individual student mastery of specific standards. As a result, the data generated for in-depth analysis of student learning as well as impact of instructional practice is in some cases not sufficient.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Nelson A. Rockefeller	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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X	
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				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
--------------------------	---------------------	---------------------	--------------------------