

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Rufus King School**

**26Q26**

**195-02 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue**

**Queens  
NY 11365**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Rufus King is an elementary school with 655 students from Pre K through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 17% Hispanic, 9% White, 64% Asian, 1% American Indian, and 2% Multi Racial students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal's strategic leadership promotes organizational decisions that clearly support different levels of goals to constantly improve student outcomes and student progress. (1.3)
  - The principal has had some register growth that enabled the allocation of per session funds to provide for an early morning acceleration/enrichment program and an after school academic intervention services (AIS) program. Additionally, additional funds are earmarked to purchase the iReady computer program for use with English language learner, AIS and acceleration programs to assess and provide appropriate and challenging individual lessons that engage students and increase academic progress including those students performing in the lowest and upper third. The last four SMART Boards were purchased this year so that every classroom is now outfitted. Also, seventy five computers on carts now enable students to access technology in their classroom, providing the technology for students to write first drafts and research, during and after specific lessons, improving the quality of student work products. These decisions support the school's goal of improving English language arts achievement in reading and writing, as evidenced by changes since September in the Fountas and Pinnell reading levels where 85 % of students moved one level, 12% moved two levels and 3% remained the same. Writing levels increased as evidenced on rubric scores for argumentative writing by 50% in grade 1, 60% in grade 2, 70 % in grade 3, 65% in grade 4, 30% in grade 5 and narrative writing by 70% in kindergarten, 75% in grades 1 and 2, 80% in grades 3, and 4, and 50% in grade 5.
  - Staff time is structured so that horizontal teacher teams meet regularly once a week by grade level and include cluster teachers. The vertical team consisting of grade level leaders, the principal and assistant principal (AP) meet once a month. The school has approved a School Based Option (SBO) that provides one hour lunch for teachers thereby enabling additional fifty minutes a week for professional development or additional teacher team meetings. These meetings focus on the increasing number of student now attaining level 3 and 4, 60% in English language arts (ELA), improving reading comprehension for English language learners on the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test: grades 2-5 by 3% and 75% scoring Level 3 and 4 on the ELA for the first time, and the goal of 80% of students showing progress in using evidence to support arguments on the New York City Performance Assessment for grades K-4 and the Pearson Benchmark Assessment in grades 4 and 5. As a result, teachers now implement lessons with multiple entry points for individual and small groups, and there is an established and coherent grading policy within and across grades.
- School leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer a range of learning experiences that challenge all students and support their learning. (1.1)
  - The school purchased "Wonders" by McMillan McGraw Hill, as its' English language arts program and "My Math" from the same publisher as it math program. Both programs are aligned to the common core learning standards (CCLS), the city-wide instructional expectations (CIE) and instructional shifts. Curriculum and pacing calendars have and continue to be adapted to ensure

coherence of content and instruction across all grades and is aligned to meet students' needs with remediation and acceleration, thereby enabling increased student achievement and growth in content areas. The focus for English language arts is on argumentative /opinion writing and to construct viable arguments in math. Every classroom utilizes thinking maps to increase the level of thinking and organization in reading and writing. School wide displays of CCLS tasks, with rubrics, identify standards and next steps, beginning in kindergarten, and build upon the previous year's learning objectives resulting in horizontal and vertical alignment. This instructional curricular coherence and the integration of the instructional shifts are undergirded by the focus of promoting college and career readiness for all students.

○Teacher teams meet at least once a week, analyzing data and student work, including that of English language learners and students with disabilities, to increase their growth and academic achievement. Teachers use various resources, including Engage New York and Department of Education (DOE) sample lessons, to plan additional multiple entry points to allow a diversity of learners to be cognitively engaged. For example, in a special education teacher support service provider's classroom, students were provided with two different graphic organizers and two stories to compare and contrast. While the level of the stories was the same, one had highlighted vocabulary for comparing and contrasting words while the other did not. Also, in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade math class, six groups of students were each working on differentiated multi-step math problem with the highest achieving students receiving a more complex problem and the medium and lowest groups receiving less complicated problems. The lowest group, containing English language learners and students with disabilities received additional vocabulary support from the teacher. Likewise, six different entry points into a science hands on electricity problem within different groups offered varied levels of problem complexity. These appropriately planned activities enable all students to have access to curricula and tasks, and be cognitively engaged, thus ensuring building thinking and reasoning skills for future success.

- Assessment practices reflect effective feedback resulting in strategic adjustments to instruction and clear next learning steps to accelerate student learning. (2.2)

○The schools' assessments are CCLS aligned and collected by classroom teachers and school leaders on a regular basis. Assessments administered and analyzed include pre- and post- tests, and unit assessments in Wonders and My Math programs, Fountas and Pinnell reading level assessments 4 times a year, science and social studies formative grade level tests, Department of Education benchmark assessments, iReady assessments, and conference notes with next steps. Rubrics are on all display boards and attached to work products in student folders. Student self-assessment checklists for reading and writing are evident in kindergarten and 3rd grade, enabling students, including English language learners and students with disabilities to reflect upon their learning. Exit slips are beginning to be used in some classrooms to indicate student understanding at the end of lessons. As a result, teachers and students are engaging in feedback regarding student achievement that results in appropriate planning, scaffolding and individualizing instruction for all students to accelerate learning. The 2012-2013 Progress Report shows an A on student progress with 76% median adjusted growth percentile and 85% in median adjusted growth percentile for the school's lowest third in English language arts; 72% median adjusted growth percentile and 81% in median adjusted growth percentile for the school's lowest third in math. According to the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement test 80% of English language learners achieved proficiency level and 66.7% moved

one level; students with disabilities gained 66.7% in English language arts and 57.6% in math.

- The Optional Elementary School Report, developed by the leadership, is collected by the principal and used as supplementary assessment to track and monitor student progress for the lowest one third students 4 times a year in all content areas. The principal intends to add the top one third to this tracking system. Additionally, every teacher submits a list of all students' achievement from the lowest to the highest in math, English language learners, Response to Intervention (RTI), and support services to the principal so that progress is monitored quarterly. The New York State Education Department Item Analysis is also used to track student needs and set individual and small group goals. The principal and assistant principal visit classrooms to observe instruction, analyze student work folders and notebooks, and speak to students regarding their assignments and learning. These actions enable the school to adjust curricula and instruction for all students with more flexible groups and differentiated materials of various lexiles for reading. A fourth grade integrated co-teaching class had six groups using various reading levels and thinking maps; a third grade had four leveled groups for reading an informational text with leveled assignments. These modifications have increased student performance for all level of students.

- Teachers benefit from an observation process that is grounded in the Danielson framework and ensures the implementation of effective instructional techniques and strategies that lead to improved teacher performance. (4.1)

- The principal has completed half a cycle of formal observation visits that include pre- and post- observation meetings. The assistant principal has completed two cycles of unannounced observations using the Danielson rubric to assess effective teaching. All teachers have met individually with the principal and/or the assistant principal and have received feedback with next steps both verbally and in writing. The principal states, "adults learn by doing, by having necessary the materials and strategies modeled so that expectations are clear." A new teacher is supported by a teacher mentor with planning, use of materials and demonstrations of lessons, while another teacher new to the school is supported by an experienced teacher on the grade at least once a week. The assistant principal models lessons to encourage differentiation and multiple entry points and provides individual planning sessions for staff when needed. The principal's open door policy fosters trust and enables teachers to freely discuss lessons that worked well and continuing struggles. One teacher frequently visits the assistant principal to discuss whether her lesson is good enough. Administrators also analyze student work products during classroom visitations and provide feedback to teachers on the appropriateness and challenge of the assignments. Some classes are beginning to use choice boards that provide students with choices of work products by levels. Several teachers are scheduled for inter-visitations to visit integrated co-teaching classes at another district school. Additionally, two lead teachers attend network meetings for English language arts and math, and two English as a second language teachers attend network training for English language learners. These teachers turnkey knowledge gained at horizontal and vertical team meetings and faculty conferences to support teacher development. As a result, teachers' questioning has increased 2% each from effective to highly effective and from developing to effective.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen the use of teaching strategies that embed multiple entry points in the curricula for all learners, including relevant subgroups, so that higher-order thinking skills are evident in discussions and student work products. (1.2)
  - Multiple entry points were observed in some classrooms with differentiated work assignments and higher level questioning. In a third grade class, students were reading the same article for paraphrasing but had four different assignments based on achievement levels, including English language learners and students with disabilities. Students in one fifth grade class were engaged in student- to- student discussions for an argumentative writing assignment with a conversational prompts chart displayed to help with appropriate responses. Likewise in a kindergarten class, students had a think aloud chart to help them in discussions. These discussions promoted higher order thinking and enhanced cognitive engagement. However, the implementation of Depth of Knowledge higher level questioning and student- to- student discussions, as well as, differentiated work assignments and multiple entry points into lessons were not evident to the same extent in all classrooms. High quality extensions and supports were also evident in some classrooms, but overall, the use of these extensions and supports for English language learners and students with disabilities were not as prominent in all classrooms, resulting in fewer opportunities for all students to engage in challenging tasks.
  
- Further develop processes and systems to regularly evaluate and adjust curriculum, instructional and organizational practices to meet learning needs of students and expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. (5.1)
  - The school is collecting data on a regular basis to adjust instruction and curriculum for all students, focusing on the lowest one third, and has received a high number of credits (45 out of 60) equaling an A for student progress on the latest progress report. Currently, the school is revising and rewriting specific units of the new English language arts and math curriculum units to ensure CCLS alignment and pacing of lessons. School leaders and teachers all use student assessment binders for analysis of student progress and individual needs. However, there is not yet an agreed upon cohesive system to evaluate the new curricula or instructional practices. The principal attends every Parent Teacher Association meeting and meets with the parent coordinator to discuss concerns and issues. A Parent Book Club that meets once a month has been implemented but attendance has only been fair. The workshop for thinking maps was very well attended with parents. The school's orientation packets for each grade, distributed at the parent orientation meeting in September, are inclusive with expectations, rubrics, policies, and content and instructional goals. Members of the PTA and SLT voice their opinion at meetings and parents attending workshops complete an evaluation form. The school has recently created a questionnaire to evaluate the culture and parent thinking for distribution twice a year. Teacher teams meet regularly with the principal and assistant principal attending many of the meetings. They receive agendas and minutes informing them of the team work and they often observe and discuss their evaluations and recommendations at the vertical team meeting. The lead teachers of the vertical team meeting share the evaluation and recommendations with the teacher teams. However, there is no written form distributed. This prevents the teacher teams from having the actual record to further interpret for discussions and future planning, thus hindering the school's ability to strategically evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their decisions.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Rufus King PS 26	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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?			<b>X</b>				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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?				<b>X</b>			
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?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			<b>X</b>				
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?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>