

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Robert Van Wyck

Middle School 217

**85-05 144th Street
Briarwood, N.Y. 11435**

Principal: Patrick Burns

Dates of review: November 12 -13, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Beverly Ffolkes-Bryant, Ed.D.

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Robert Van Wyck is a middle school with 1700 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 16% Black, 41% Hispanic, 6% White, 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 36% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 9% 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 93.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Expectations for delivering the standards-based curriculum are clear and supported well by curriculum maps and instructional calendars that include progress-monitoring checkpoints in order to support student mastery. (1.1)
 - The teacher team's document "*CCLS Gap Analysis by Grade*" is used to see how many times a particular Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) is covered in the curriculum in order to find gaps in the CCLS standards found in the English language arts (ELA) curriculum against the list of CCLS ELA standards. If a certain standard is not covered, teachers fill these gaps with supplementary resources in order to ensure that all CCLS standards are taught and assessed consistently during the school year. In addition, the standards that have been identified as targets based on our item skill analysis are revisited frequently over the course of the curriculum. Additionally, English language arts (ELA) and math teachers use Mentoring Minds' Comprehensive *Common Core Standards and Strategies Flip Chart* to align the curriculum program to the standard by referencing standards, checking that learning objectives are CCLS aligned, and by using instructional strategies suggested in the flip charts. Science teachers use close reading protocols with a specific emphasis on citing evidence from the text and use non-fiction libraries and eScience to support alignment to ELA CCLS and instructional shift expectations. Lastly, science teachers are leveraging the developing Core Proficiency Series found on the Engage NY website. A principal's memo to teachers highlighted and color-coded the standards teachers need to teach students based on the recent item analysis of the State tests, and categorized groups of students, particularly English language learners (ELL) and Students with Disabilities (SWD) so that teachers plan additional interventions. Vertical teacher teams use the memo to plan which standards they need to teach students, including both present grade and a grade below. Teachers' use of these resources results in focused instruction that supports student mastery and ensures that the entire community is aware of what is being taught and connections to the CCLS. As evidenced in teachers of the ELA department cross-referenced the ELA department that recently released NYS Item Skills Analysis against the Expeditionary Learning CCLS Gap map created. The findings were then used during the ELA department analysis of their mostly recently administered Marking Period One ELA exam. Teacher teams reviewed the data to track student proficiency, and to look for correlations in the identified item skills targeted from the NYS Item Skill analysis and EL CCLS Gap map. Teachers utilized the data findings to create small group and one-to-one instructional plans. In addition, the findings were used to revise EL curriculum plans.
- The principal makes informed and effective organizational decisions across all aspects of the school to support improvements in learning. (1.3)
 - The principal's funding to continue the United Federation of Teachers' Teacher Centers' teacher position allows for 60% of her schedule to provide professional development to teachers. Funding is also provided

for two Peer Instructional Coaches (PIC). By astute scheduling, their programs allow for ongoing teacher support, a primary focus of the school's targeted professional development to teachers, and for them to be part of the instructional cabinet. Partial funding allows teachers to participate in the Leaders in Education Apprenticeship Program (LEAP) for aspiring administrators. Finally, per-session funding was set aside for teachers to meet afterschool for curriculum development. This meticulous use of resources promotes accountability by teachers and enhances school wide goal attainment as evidenced in student work displayed on the outside bulletin boards.

- The school's organization into four academies, with each academy having an administrator, guidance counselor, dean, and teachers representing all four-core curriculum subjects, has created small learning communities. In addition, students have lunch by their academy, thus giving teachers daily common planning time. As a result, there are optimum conditions in which teachers can analyze and reflect on improved instructional practices to promote accountability and enhance school wide goal attainment.
- The school has established effective systems for monitoring teaching practices with a clear focus on improving instruction. (4.1)
 - Administration uses Teach Boost that includes a Teacher Competency Matrix, where all of the teachers are listed with the Danielson Competencies, which is color-coded on a 1-4 scale, to track observations and teaching trends and to see if additional support is needed. As a result, if the majority of teachers score a "1", they receive targeted professional development (PD) led by a Peer Instructional Coach (PIC). Administrative feedback includes next steps, a plan for the PIC, a link to a professional article, as well as a timeline of when the suggestions will be revisited to see if suggestions are followed. New teachers are assigned mentors who utilize the TeachBoost data to structure their mentoring practice, and Lunch and Learn PDs. In addition, the observation data for both new and existing teachers is utilized during instructional team planning to action plan differentiated PD opportunities for teachers. This process results in actionable feedback to evaluate pedagogical strengths and meeting teachers' professional development needs, thus leading to teachers refining their teaching.
 - Teachers are provided with opportunities to self-assess and plan for improved teacher practice based on observation data provided by Teach Boost. This program allows administration and teachers to view ongoing proficiency relative to Danielson's Framework for Teaching and can be accessed by teachers to communicate with administrator's regarding actionable feedback regarding pedagogy. Additionally, teachers are able to provide peer feedback during intervisitations to lead teachers in their department so that instructional strategies and targeted areas for growth are acted upon. The feedback becomes a resource for future differentiated professional development. In addition, self-selected teacher teams are participating in a pilot for using low inference observations, consistent with Danielson's framework, to identify and plan for effective instruction. The impact of this timely feedback is improved instructional practice that is evidenced by written administrative feedback during follow-up sessions and teachers learning from each other.

- The principal's positive leadership and goal setting is fully embraced by all staff and is the driving force for the very effective systems for the school with a clear focus on improving student learning. (5.1)
 - The principal created a Wiki page, which allows staff to add, modify, or delete content in collaboration with others. Teachers, supervisors, professionals, and school aides, who all have membership and access to the school wiki review it regularly for minutes and agendas of department, house, and team meetings, and to consistently update curriculum maps, instructional expectations, and resources for teaching. Various sections reference relevant information around school expectations, State standards, and various resources, so that each department can link to curriculum maps and modules, pacing calendars, and the EngageNY website. Updates on the Wiki, provides the principal with instant notification. Consequently, this internal online resource supports evaluating and realigning what is taught, how it is taught, to whom, and by whom, thus benefiting students learning.
 - Parents are given regular access to Pupil Path, a web-based program by Datacation so that they can receive immediate information on their children's performance, including notes from teacher conferences, grades, tests, and standardized scores. Furthermore, Pupil Path as the student's grade book, generates student report cards, mid-year progress reports, and homework assignments. During parent meetings, parents expressed satisfaction with the communication between the home and school because it allows them to email any member of the staff at any time and teachers respond directly through the site. All parents on the system receive monthly emails inviting them to various parent workshops as well as provide links to the presentations on the school's website. The teachers log anecdotes in the system and notify parents and administration immediately regarding issues dealing with positive and negative behavior. Thus, using this resource effectively allows the school to monitor ways in which expectations and relevant information about the school is shared with families, and ensures that parents are aware about what is being taught and their children's progress relative to the Common Core Learning Standards.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the good practice of using accurate formative assessments to differentiate learning and provide rigor to challenge classes to maximize student learning. (1.2)
 - As mentioned in the School Self Evaluation Form (SSEF), teachers not only align curriculum maps to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), but utilize the Danielson framework as a template when making curricular adjustments, to ensure that the proper resources and supports such as scaffolds, multiple entry points, and extensions are embedded to meet students with varying needs, including Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English language learners (ELLs). While there was some evidence of scaffolding and multiple entry points across classes observed, this is not a consistent practice. The English honors class grouped students by student-head count, and a social studies class was

heterogeneously grouped. As a result, the individual learning needs of students are not sufficiently targeted, higher achievers are not regularly challenged, and there are missed opportunities for teachers to facilitate and extend learning experiences that involve higher order thinking and full participation for and by all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

- Provide consistent feedback to students with detailed reasons of their success and clear next steps for improvement based on specific rubrics to help them set and achieve goals. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams recently created content specific rubrics using a Level 1 through Level 4 system to evaluate student work school wide. These rubrics include a space for student reflection and teacher feedback based on the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). However, although this school wide practice allows teachers to provide feedback and next steps for student work, the information shared with students reflects on what they are not doing without sufficient positive feedback and good next steps. Additionally, while teachers are focused on assessment to inform their work, the limited use of on-going checks for understanding during lesson delivery was not evidenced. As a consequence, students miss out on seeing their potential via the feedback and there are missed opportunities to inform planning and support students working towards even greater levels of success.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Robert Van Wyck	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, databased 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