

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Robert Randall School

R373

**91 Henderson Avenue
Staten Island
NY10301**

Principal: Ilene Goldstein-Harnett

Dates of review: April 28-30, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Sheryl L. Watkins

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert Randall School is an elementary to middle school with 461 students from kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 29% Black, 36% Hispanic, 30% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 95% special education students. Boys account for 80% of the students enrolled and girls account for 20%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 88.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Administrators and faculty strategically plan and refine rigorous and coherent curricula that include high level tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards to challenge all students to increase levels of achievement. (1.1)
 - This year the Go Math program and Treasures for literacy are cohesively implemented across standardized instructional classes. Everyday Math and District created literacy units that are enriched to include specific writing task that embed the instructional shifts to include citing evidence from text and increased nonfiction materials at the school level for alternate assessment students. Recognizing that the Treasures program lacked Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) alignment, the school completed Common Core alignment across grades and ensured horizontal alignment by creating supplemental documents that include high level skills, tasks and the instructional shifts such as students creating original literary texts as an extension to genre study that include the creation of characters, contain a plot, setting and events. Teacher teams regularly review student work products and end of unit tests and plan refinements and extensions to learning experience such as adding additional components to future units of study in math to support ongoing attention to deficit skills for identified students and providing extensions to units of study to be completed during school vacations at home, ensuring additional instructional time during Academic Interventions Service (AIS) periods that target specific students and provides them with focused instruction to remediate deficit skills. As a result, across grades, students demonstrate over a 40% increase in mastery of the foundational skills identified within the expanded Treasures program, a 20% increase in responses to short answer questions, and a 34% increase in writing with providing evidence to support opinions from texts and students explaining their responses to math problems either orally or in writing since October 2013. The attention to high level skill instruction sets a very strong foundation for future educational experiences leading to college and career readiness.
- Teaching practices reflect a coherent set of beliefs and practices that ensure all learners have entry into learning to demonstrate high levels of thinking, ownership, and participation. (1.2)
 - Lessons consistently demonstrate the school's belief that learning takes place when teachers engage in the "I do, we do, you do" process, that includes high level questioning to students, to ensure understanding, a focus component of the Danielson Framework. To ensure this practice, teacher teams collaboratively created, adjust and uniformly use a lesson plan template that begins with a focused teaching point, includes the three step lesson format, the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies such as the provision of multiple means of representation and the provision of multiple tools for construction and response, and HOT questions (Higher Order Thinking), at varied levels such as explaining why multiplication and repeated addition are the same predicting how long it will take grass to grow and explaining what the

author of a fable wants you to learn to ensure high levels of engagement for all students. In addition, the “you do” phase of lessons includes multiple entry points such as visual supports, manipulatives, the use of Thinking Maps and modified student work products, all supported by small group work with either the teacher or paraprofessionals assigned to classes. Aligned to the school goal of improving writing to include evidence from texts in arguments, these high quality supports and extensions, specifically the use of Thinking Maps, such as bubble maps, tree maps and sequencing maps, along with students’ writing samples which demonstrate an increase of 34% more students, including English language learners who have met or exceeded the grade appropriate Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in writing since October 2013.

- School leaders and peers support teacher development through frequent observations, intervisitations and focused professional development resulting in elevated instructional practices school wide. (4.1)
 - Having spent two years transitioning from the Professional Teaching Standards to full implementation of the Danielson Framework for teacher development, administrators frequently visit classrooms and provide feedback that includes a review of student work products and targeted next steps to teachers such as providing opportunities for students to monitor their own understanding, raising the level of questioning and providing discussion time for students, and suggestions for teachers to focus students on using text evidence in their writing, in full alignment with the Danielson competencies, and supporting the school’s goals. In addition, teachers, not only those new to the school, have initiated intervisitations between themselves so that they learn from each other, grow as professionals and ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of curricula. These collaborative visits, observation and feedback cycles consistently include the school’s targeted area for growth, specifically questioning and discussion, in order to ensure meeting the school’s goals in literacy and math. The strategic year-long month by month professional development plan supports four key areas; the Chancellors instructional expectations, supporting student’s ability to provide evidence in argument, the Danielson competencies and District initiatives. After analyzing rounds of observations, this plan is adapted to ensure meeting the needs of all teachers through the provision of supports such as district coaches, individual peer mentors, or teacher team meeting support. To date, across sites, over 70% of staff observed has mastered their targeted areas for improvement, resulting in 92% of staff falling within the effective or highly effective range of performance.
- The strategic creation and use of assessments by all teachers allows for ongoing analysis of student performance and adjustments to classroom practice that improves student performance. (2.2)
 - In addition to curricular based assessments, the school has developed Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) checklists, foundational skills checklists and promotional criteria checklists. These documents identify specific criteria and competencies from the Common Core Learning Standards that students need to meet in subject areas, grade levels and individually to meet promotional criteria. They are used on an ongoing basis to determine student progress towards subject, grade, individual

and groups of student goals. In addition, ongoing data collection and analysis directly aligned to individual educational plan (IEP) goals by all teachers ensures high level monitoring of student progress, and allows for adjustments at the team and classroom levels to ensure a direct focus on closing the gap between performance and expectation. Rubrics are consistently used to both drive the creation of student work products and assess performance. Students' self- and peer evaluation of works in progress ensures ownership of learning experiences for all students. Acknowledgement of accomplishments and next steps provided by teachers were noted on all student work products reviewed that are stated in child-friendly language, in the form of "I can" statements and aligned to rubric expectations. Classroom visits surfaced students using white-boards to display responses, enabling teachers to immediately identify misconceptions or gaps, and adjust instruction accordingly. These practices have led to 98% of alternate assessment students demonstrating gains in foundational or emergent literacy, 47% of students progressing in literacy and in math, and 60% demonstrate meeting anchor standards in math related to the application of problem solving to real world situations.

- A highly developed mutually respectful school culture for students and adults ensures personal and academic growth in a safe environment for all learners. (1.4)
 - The school has collaboratively developed a comprehensive system for behavioral and social emotional support. All staff has been trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). Students submitted recommendations and then voted to adopt the wolf as the school mascot, undergirding the behavioral support systems, PAWS, which stands for prepare, achieve, wisdom and safety, which has assisted in the development of the school and classroom charters to identify and behavioral ideals across the school. In addition, students approached the administration with a desire to acknowledge their teachers for "Teacher Appreciation Day". The school then funded the cost of celebratory and congratulatory buttons that students presented to their teachers. Building upon the tenets of the Emotional literacy program that focus on self-awareness and self-regulation, the inclusive culture ensures students and adults have and apply proven strategies for dealing with challenges or conflicts that arise. Last year, the school was identified on the Department of Education's watch list for persistently dangerous schools. As a result of these strong cohesive systems, on-line occurrence reporting identifies over 150% reduction in reportable incidents, placing them in position to have this designation removed from their school status.
 - Teachers, related service providers such as speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, along with social workers and support personnel, such as paraprofessionals and guidance counselors all know students well and carefully monitor student behaviors, achievement and attendance. For example, daily communication notebooks and telephone logs evidenced attention to high levels of initiative to personalize individual supports for students as needed. Students, during a large and small group meeting, report that there are multiple adults to go to to help them with academic and personal issues, such as building social skills, conflict resolution, and how to deal with a bully. Hence, these supports demonstrate a decrease of 35% in referrals

of students to the Crisis Room, allowing them more time in classrooms to focus on and improve their learning outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Enrich the high levels of communication with parents to include curricular based initiatives and supports to enable them to better support their children's learning at home. (3.4)
 - In addition to Department of Education (DOE) embedded reporting systems of report cards and IEP progress monitoring, the vast majority of teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis. Phone logs, communication notebooks and individual teacher notices to parents of high need students provide information on issues pertinent to activities of daily living and upcoming school events. Students in standardized learning programs receive curriculum embedded letters that identify high expectations for academic achievement in order to inform families of current units of study and to connect learning to home. The school delivers cohesive curricula for alternate assessment students. However, there is not the same depth of communication related to what alternate assessment students are studying, nor are explicit supports for parents routinely included in communication notebooks or newsletters. This limits parent's abilities to support their children's progress towards academic competencies that fall outside students targeted IEP goals in order to provide even higher levels of support for their children to reach the next academic level.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Robert Randal 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 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