

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Richard Rogers

Elementary School 096

**650 Waring street
Bronx
NY 10467**

Principal: Marta Garcia

Dates of review: May 27 - 28, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Nicky Kram Rosen

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Richard Rogers School is an elementary school with 1002 students from kindergarten through grade five. The school population comprises 21% Black, 62% Hispanic, 11% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 92%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers plan and align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), content standards, and the instructional shifts to ensure access and engagement for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school has adopted CCLS-aligned curricula in core subject areas to address the instructional shifts and build coherence school-wide from one grade to the next. Across classrooms the English language arts (ELA) unit plans reflect the instructional shifts as they pertain to elementary school students' literacy development. For example, all students' reading and writing on-demand and performance-based tasks require students to cite evidence from the text via accountable talk during classroom discussions and for each homework assignment. In addition, school-wide culminating math tasks provide students opportunities to develop accuracy and fluency thus requiring students to demonstrate a deeper understanding of key math concepts. Furthermore, in one library task, kindergartners actively engaged in a group reading and developed a creative description portrait using a combination of drawings, dictation and writing to compose an informational text including several details. Teachers' lessons plans included tiered questions and tasks, or scaffolded strategies so that all students have access, are actively engaged in an appropriate task, and can participate in classroom discussions in order to support students' mastery of grade-level specific benchmarks. As a result, across the vast majority of school-wide classrooms, students perform at their highest potential to individually show growth and progress throughout the year. As a result of the school-wide effort to ensure curricula is aligned and coherent, student work products demonstrate performance at a high level with progress throughout the year.
- School leadership makes informed, targeted and highly effective organizational decisions to strategically support the school's goals and students' academic progress. (1.3)
 - In order to improve student learning via the curriculum, the school strategically hired a Go Math! consultant in the spring of 2013 to work with teachers prior to its implementation in order to focus teachers on helping students make sense of word problems in real world situations which requires more application and critical thinking than computation. The school continues to maintain arts programming by providing visual arts instruction and partnering with Dancing Classrooms. Both students and parents share enthusiasm for the instructors and the work produced by students within the arts. For example, a student excitedly shared how she is working with the art teacher to design a mural that will be completed along with other participants once the school building's new annex is complete. In addition the school has leveraged their renovated, Robin Hood library to serve as a resource for students and teachers as well as parents, who have open access throughout the week. Furthermore, as indicated on flyers outside

the main office and nearby library, the library media specialist hosts Saturday library hours and events to bridge the home-school connection, promote the love of reading and support school-wide goals. In addition, the library media specialist not only shares resources with staff and supplements regular classroom instruction, but she also fosters student leadership via the Library Ninja program which is open to all 4th & 5th grade students. The school has been included in a local 21st Century Schools grant and has leveraged their participation to develop rich programming with community based organizations such as The Leadership Program to support targeted student populations. These family programs along with targeted interventions for small groups of students which include English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), are not only strategic, they promote college and career readiness via regular homework help and sessions designed to provide additional practice with key instructional strategies. As a result of meaningful, strategic partnerships, programming and professional collaborations within the school, student work products reflect high levels of critical thinking and demonstrate vast amounts of student progress throughout the year.

- School leaders strategically use classroom observations, inter-visitation, and professional development to improve teacher practice and increase student outcomes. (4.1)
 - School leaders effectively engage in cycles of teacher observation by each year beginning with conversations that invite teachers to self-reflect on competency areas and set professional goals. Supervisors encourage teacher engagement in the process of strengthening their practice. Observations by administrators are followed by debriefing sessions to provide teachers with feedback regarding accomplishments and next steps, which are memorialized in writing to assure that teachers are moving along the continuum of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. In addition, inter-visitations are scheduled by administration to facilitate teachers learning with each other and sharing best instructional practices resulting in highly effective feedback. Furthermore, a review of observations showed that when a teacher's questions to students were solely basic recall, "What is this?", and "Is this an 'X' or a 'Y'?", feedback focused on next steps to improve the teacher's questioning and discussion techniques such as proposing those of high cognitive challenge, eliciting multiple correct answers, or allowing for different approaches and time is allotted for student-to-student discussion. This feedback cycle is repeated multiple times throughout the school year to assure that feedback from administrators and colleagues not only impacts teacher practice, as evidenced upon review of *Advance* teacher data reports, but improves the conditions for student learning and outcomes for students as evidenced by improved progress as per student work products and school-wide data.
 - The school administration analyzes and evaluates student achievement data alongside observation data in order to strategically group teachers on specific grades for professional development. For example, the principal stated how inter-visitations are planned for as well as how mentoring relationships are matched. Deliberate decisions are shared with teachers by the administration to articulate how colleagues can best support one

another thus resulting in the development of effective and highly effective teaching strategies. For example, during the individual meeting, the teachers stated one strategy she saw modeled in her colleague's room was posting the lesson's learning target as an "I can ..." statement. As evidenced by statements from teachers across the school as well as based on observations of teaching, the strategic system of partnering teachers for professional development has led to more authentic adult learning and improving student understanding and work products.

- Across classrooms instructional practices reflect the school's mission, shared beliefs, and key strategies to increase high levels of thinking for all learners. (1.2)
 - The school community shares a vision that students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process and are self-motivated. Moreover, the school promotes the message of teachers as facilitators and how classrooms should serve as an exploration space for students to discuss open-ended questions, express their ideas and thinking, and engage in tasks that require them to make connections to the world around them. Furthermore, the school focuses on questioning skills to support students' inquiry to promote richer student discussion. For example, during a reading lesson in a fifth grade Integrated Collaborative Team Teaching (ICT) class, students were asked to describe the elements of a narrative, drawing upon texts they have read outside of school such as plays, stories, journal entries and, make comparisons. The school administration also uses the Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* to focus specifically on developing teachers questioning and discussion techniques to support students' development and growth in this area. Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers demonstrated the importance of using effective questions or prompts to elicit expansive, student responses. For example, across classrooms, lessons included guided practice constructed around questions to scaffold tasks and increase student voice and engagement. As a result, teachers' engagement techniques and student participation has increased to improve learning outcomes fostering their ability to become more independent and critical in their thinking as evidenced in class visits.
 - The school has adopted school-wide strategies in order to support struggling students, including English language learners (ELLs) and special education students in order to increase students' access to each unit and corresponding task. Teachers use games, exemplars, graphic organizers, writing prompts and sentence starters for students at various proficiency levels. For example, in one classroom, differentiated tasks were given to small groups of students based upon demonstration of understanding on a previous day's task in order to meet their learning needs and progress towards mastery of grade-level specific standard.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine assessment practices to develop common measures of student learning to identify gaps in student understanding, and inform adjustments to instructional practices to support student learning needs throughout the year. (2.2)

- Teachers utilize exit tickets, reading focus sheets, performance task results, conference notes, formative assessments, end-of-unit tests and various other data to form a reading group to provide additional instruction or further practice in ELA and math. One teacher team discussed various approaches they could teach students so they would have strategies to tackle complex assignments. However, the use of common assessment data results to adjust instruction, guide grouping decisions, adjust lessons and shifts in practice, varies across teacher teams. For example, one teacher team used assessment scores to revise performance tasks into smaller, more explicit tasks without considering or setting student goals which hinders the effective use of data results towards understanding academic progress in order to adjust curricula. Therefore, teachers' inconsistent understanding of how to use data to inform and adjust instruction limits the support of student goals towards meeting grade-level specific benchmarks.
- While linking of assessments and instruction occurs, teachers' use of rubrics and checklists are inconsistent across all content areas. For instance, the rubrics used across the school in English language arts provided inconsistent feedback to students. Furthermore, some students' work folders solely contained classwork and peer feedback based on checklists created by teachers on their grade, while other students' portfolios contained performance-based assessments which are scored using CCLS-aligned rubrics. Lack of a school-wide norm around grading policies has led to inconsistent feedback within student work. As a result, the lack of effective, actionable feedback hinders students' ability to improve performance on learning tasks.
- Develop opportunities to further leadership capacity and build on the work of teacher teams to include consistent data analysis of student work that will lead to improved student outcomes for groups of students. (4.2)
 - Some teacher teams have made strong connections between the use of data, their student population, their practice, and can clearly connect modifications in their lesson planning towards improving targeted student performance. In some cases, tailored supports and planned next steps for improving student outcomes are agreed upon by a grade-level, teacher teams. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. For example, one teacher team followed a protocol, Looking Together at Student Work, while another inquiry team used another protocol; one inquiry team referenced class data, while the other only looked at specific students' work. From the student work presented, it was clear, different measures, or rubrics, were used to evaluate student performance and guide teacher feedback in each grade. Thus, the analysis of student progress and the identification of trends are not fully aligned which, over time, inhibits students' ability to internalize or keep track of how their performance is measured.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

| School name: Richard Rogers | 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 |