Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Rosedale School
Elementary School Q038
135-21 241st Street
Queens
NY 11422

Principal: Julie F. Soussis

Date of review: March 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray
The School Context

The Rosedale School is an elementary school with 201 students from grade kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 85% Black, 10% Hispanic, 3% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.6%.

School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

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**Instructional Core**

*To what extent does the school…*

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

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

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

### School Culture

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**School Culture**

*To what extent does the school…*

3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations

### Systems for Improvement

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**Systems for Improvement**

*To what extent does the school…*

4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning
Area of Celebration

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Findings
The school uses common assessments across classrooms in all grades and subject areas. Assessments utilized track student progress and teachers consistently use checks for understanding in classroom practice.

Impact
The school’s systems that monitor progress through data analysis and during instruction are used continuously to guide adjustments in units and lessons to meet student’s learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments in all content areas which provide crucial information on student performance and progress. Some of these assessments are directly connected with the units of study and include pre and post testing. School-wide formative and summative assessments are administered every six to eight weeks. The school leader uses these assessments to group students. She provides academic intervention services during the school day.

- The school uses Degrees of Reading Power assessments, Teacher’s College running records and Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. The principal collects and aggregates all the data and monitors students’ progress towards their goals. English language learners and special education students additionally use web-based assessments like Achieve 3000, I-Ready and Imagine. These programs meet the students where they are and provide tutorials to strengthen their skills.

- Across classrooms teachers use multiple measures as checks for understanding. These include mid-workshop interruptions and teacher observations of individual and group engagement. Other techniques are individualized conferring, exit slips, peer student checklists and rubrics specific to the tasks. Students use self-assessment checklists weekly and provide peer feedback. In response to student data, teachers have made adjustments such as additional time in guided reading throughout the school day, use of technology to provided tutorials and graphic organizers.

- The principal shared that throughout all content areas, teachers administer a pre-assessment, post-assessment and several interim assessments. Assessments are Common Core Standards-based and uniform for content by grade level. Teacher teams meet weekly to review their assessment data.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies, including questioning and discussion, and routines are beginning to provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
While teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula, they inconsistently provide multiple entry points into those curricula, leading to an uneven demonstration of higher-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the classrooms visited there were limited instructional strategies used to accommodate a variety of learners in the classroom, including English language learners and special education students. Questioning was at the lower end of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge charts usually predominantly at levels one and two. Questioning was low in cognitive demand requiring little more than recall and basic comprehension. For example, in a kindergarten English Language Arts lesson, the teacher read over a big book with which the students were quite familiar. He asked questions that relied entirely on the students’ ability to recall the content of the text and no inferential analysis was evident.

- School leaders use feedback grounded in the Danielson Framework for Teaching to support teachers in implementing the Common Core Learning Standards curriculum in classrooms each day. The school is currently assessing the effectiveness of several multiple entry point strategies and instructional practices that have been implemented throughout the year.

- The school shared that the Danielson Framework for Teaching has enabled the teachers to move their instruction from a traditional teacher-dominated delivery model to one where student engagement is paramount. The framework facilitates teachers placing greater emphasis on student-initiated conversations and classroom discussion. The goal is for students to become partners in their own academic outcomes and initiate questions of their own. Classroom visits revealed little evidence of student initiated discussions. In a grade four English language arts class, students had difficulty explaining the purpose of the lesson and what they were expected to know and be able to do by lesson’s end.
**Additional Findings**

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**  
School leaders and faculty ensure that all curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Higher-order skills are consistently emphasized for all learners across grades and content areas.

**Impact**  
Purposeful curricula decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness. Across grades and content areas, academic tasks are designed to push student thinking.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Reading, writing and math units of study are adjusted by teacher teams to integrate the instructional shifts across the content areas. Examples of planned strategies include tiered-academic vocabulary and word walls, fluency in reading and math, flexible problem-solving strategies for multi-step problems, and text-based writing using complex primary and secondary sources.

- Curricula maps indicate that the school develops and adapts rigorous academic tasks through the resources available from Engage NY, the Department of Education’s Common Core Library, and the New York City social studies and science scope and sequence.

- Lesson plans were available for all the visited classrooms. Plans included learning targets, the Common Core Standard addressed, the assessment, the lesson agenda, essential vocabulary, and essential questions that teachers scaffold over several days. When the school leaders notice individual students and groups of students struggling with a particular skill or standard, they work with teachers to revise the curriculum to meet student learning needs.

- Unit plans in all content areas illustrate many different designs of academic tasks with numerous scaffolds for all students. For example, some math tasks require step by step modeling to teach the procedure, many reading tasks such as big books in kindergarten and first grade required shared reading and guided group practice and some science tasks require careful observation and recording of data. Teachers coach students in college and career readiness skills such as note-taking, accountable talk, discussion techniques and research skills. Strategies for supporting English language learners and special education students include sentence starters, graphic organizers, discussion prompts and visual cues.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently message high expectations to staff via the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching in trainings and other modes of communication. Workshops and performance data keep families abreast of student progress towards college and career readiness.

Impact
Structures that support the school’s high expectations build collaboration and accountability among staff, students and their families. This provides a clear path towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence
- Monthly parent newsletters, regular parent workshops on the Common Core Learning Standards and parent links to the school’s website promote clear communication to families on the school’s expectations and a path to college and career readiness. Parents receive communication through notes home, flyers, emails, phone contact and parent outreach activities on their children’s performance.

- The school leaders conduct frequent formal and informal classroom observations and provide targeted feedback to teachers using the Danielson Framework. Classroom inter-visitations, professional development and informal conversations among the staff hold everyone accountable for meeting expectations.

- Parents shared their satisfaction with the school’s expectations on college and career readiness which culminates in both a career day and college day. Community-based professionals ranging from police officers and firemen to architects and engineers visit the school to offer encouragement and advice on the possibilities of life after graduation. Teachers send consistent progress reports home between regular report cards.

- The school has a character education team that collaborates with parents to promote the social-emotional wellbeing of each child. School rules outline both academic and behavioral expectations. The guidance team and the parent coordinator partner with parents to provide community resources and practical workshops to enable them to work better with their children.
### Findings
Teachers consistently examine student work and data in inquiry-based professional collaboration on teams. The leadership structures provide a methodology for teachers to have input on key decisions about teaching and learning.

### Impact
The work of teacher teams has resulted in improved teacher practice and solid student progress on assessments. The shared leadership structures build a capacity for continuous improvement.

### Supporting Evidence
- Teacher leaders, who represent each team, meet weekly with the instructional cabinet to discuss professional development and instructional practices. They review school data to address school-wide gaps and support the implementation of school initiatives. One such initiative is the provision of academic intervention services during the school day for every child who is not yet on grade level. On the fifth grade in English language arts the number of level three students increased by thirty-three percent between September and January using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Another initiative is the provision of professional development to faculty on Mondays throughout the school year.

- Teacher teams review the results of data from the New York State exams, Measures of Student Learning, formative assessments and unit assessments. They share ideas to adjust teaching practices and increase student engagement based on data and student performance tasks. For example, the second grade teacher was working on analyzing characters in anchor text using evidence directly from the text. Students are then required to defend their thinking with evidence.

- Teachers shared that they were empowered to have quality input to decisions affecting the selection and refinement of curricula resources, the placement and grouping of students and the interviewing of new teacher candidates.