



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Robert H Goddard Middle School**

**Middle School 202**

**138-30 Lafayette Street  
Queens  
NY 11417**

**Principal: William Moore**

**Dates of review: May 15 - 16, 2007**

**Reviewer: Frank Knowles**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Robert H Goddard is a large middle school with 1193 students enrolled in grades 6 through 8. Three local elementary schools now enroll students from kindergarten through grade 8, and this has resulted in a recent fall in the number of students enrolled at Robert H Goddard. The school's students come from diverse backgrounds. Nearly 42% are Hispanic, 27% come from a range of Asian and other backgrounds, 21% are White and 10% are Black. The percentage of English language learners is 7%, lower than the City average and that for similar schools. The main home languages spoken are Spanish, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and Chinese. The school does not receive Title 1 funding. Just over 9% of students follow special education programs, slightly higher than average for the City and for similar schools. However, the proportion of overage students for their grade is, well below the average for similar schools and the City average. Attendance is broadly in line with the average for the City and, at 91%, is just below the average for similar schools.

The school is one of 21 iTeach/iLearn schools in New York City which focus on the application of technology in students' learning. All students in the current grade 7 are assigned the personal use of an Apple laptop computer, with the remaining students receiving them in September 2007. All classrooms are equipped with SmartBoards. In addition, the school has a fully functioning broadcast studio, including video editing equipment, in partnership with Queens Public TV. Students' informational and entertainment productions are broadcast locally on this station.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school utilizes an extensive range of data to gain a clear view of the performance of students, classes and grades as well as a range of different groups.
- Teachers use data well to align the curriculum and instruction to the needs of students, who are actively engaged in their learning.
- The school's focus on the application of computer technology supports students' learning very well and helps to engage them effectively.
- The school has a challenging and wide-ranging curriculum, especially for higher achieving students, while supporting special education students well in a variety of classes.
- Data on student performance is used to set annual goals within the framework set by the region.
- Regular lesson observations are used to bring about improvements in instruction and to align professional development to the students' needs.
- The principal is respected and delegates effectively to empower assistant principals and teachers to play a full part in planning and in the running of the school.
- The staff work well collaboratively, especially on professional development activities.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the students in their classes and students feel that there is always someone to turn to if they need help.
- Attendance is a high priority for the school and systems are in place to bring about improvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the analysis of data to include the performance of different groups of students of interest to the school to identify areas of the school's work that are successful and where improvement is needed.
- Sharpen the Comprehensive Education Plan to include interim goals and timeframes, both at whole-school and department levels.
- Develop regular interim reviews of the school's plans so that department and whole school goals can be modified as needed.
- Ensure greater consistency in the use of open-ended and higher-order questions in classes and the selection of students to respond to them.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well-developed features.**

The school's involvement as an iTeach/iLearn school has had a considerable impact on staff and, most importantly, students in grade 7. Most teachers are now using computer software to approach instruction in different ways, sometimes radically so. Parents use the school's website to communicate with teachers about the progress made by their children. Professional development in data analysis means that many more teachers are confident to analyze and interpret data from a range of sources and use the outcomes to influence the choice of curriculum material they use and to improve their instruction. Their good relationships with students and a commitment to help students achieve as much as they can both serve to reinforce the view of students that one of the best things about the school is, collectively, its teachers.

At all levels, the school knows a lot about the performance of its students and works hard to ensure a good match of curriculum and instruction to students' needs, and especially for those who need additional support or intervention services. This information is fully used to plan staffing, resources and scheduling to support high achievement. Annual planning and review are in place, but the absence of interim goals in plans means the school is not able to review progress using them and then modify short-term goals as necessary. This, and the inclusion of some cross-cutting analyses of data, are the next steps in a journey of improvement that is firmly underway and is being taken forward enthusiastically by the school's committed staff.

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The school makes very good use of the available data from City and State tests and the Princeton review, supplementing this with its own test results obtained at the end of each marking period. This data is available to all teachers and they have had professional development in its interpretation. The data is analyzed to give a very clear picture of the performance of individual students, of each class and of each grade, enabling the school to group students with similar needs. The school also analyzes its data by gender and ethnic background, using the analysis to provide specific support for Black students, for example and noting improvement in their performance as a result. However, it does not do any cross-cutting analysis by the various types of class in the school, for instance to compare the progress of chorus and band classes with other classes to identify differences that may need exploration.

Some teachers are adept at using the functions in spreadsheets to show increases in students' performance and to create lists of 'at risk' students so that they can focus specifically on their needs. In one case, for example, identification of reducing test scores enabled the school to bring in academic intervention services to prevent further decline.

The school is also fully aware of where it stands in comparison with other schools, using a group of similar schools and a group of local schools. It makes similar internal comparisons between classes.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is proficient.**

The school’s goals, set out in its Comprehensive Education Plan, are based on the region’s goals with modifications to take account of the circumstances of the school. The process of arriving at goals is collaborative and new programs are selected utilizing data to identify need. For example, improved test results from splitting a class into two instead of allocating ‘push-in’ support has led the school to a preference for this method, reflected in its goals. The main drivers for the work of the school are the department plans, which set out clear goals and how they will be achieved. However the school’s plans, at whole-school and department level, do not set out any interim or short-term goals, with timeframes for their achievement, against which progress can be measured.

The school focuses strongly on supporting special education students, aiming to mainstream as many as it can once they have achieved highly enough, and general education students whose achievement is lowest. For these students, the school sets goals for them to meet the minimum standards and makes good use of intervention services and ‘pull-out’ support. Identification of higher achieving students allows for separate classes taking the Advanced Regents Program, with or without a special musical talent. The school has good systems for ensuring that goals are set for grades, classes and, within classes, individual students.

Students and their parents and are very aware of the school’s mission to help them achieve as much as they can. This approach is promoted while they are at their previous elementary school, through parent conferences early in grade 6 and by the principal through regular student assemblies. Students are also made aware of the opportunities available to them at high schools and beyond. Not all students are aware of the areas in which they need to improve, however, and how they might make that improvement.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

The school uses assessment data effectively to determine the curriculum followed by students, taking into account its special focuses on chorus and band as well as test scores and the mandated curriculum. Special education students are placed in separate or collaborative team teaching classes, again determined by test scores. Within classes, teachers use test data to shape the curriculum for their classes in more detail, including at what point to begin topics, depending on prior knowledge.

Overlaying this is a curriculum rich in the use of computer technology. For example, much more efficient use of in-class research in social studies using the internet and a focus on

drafting and redrafting writing in English language arts have accelerated learning. The school has noted benefits among Advanced Regents Program students, who gain considerable curricular enrichment, and among special education students, who benefit from faster skill development.

Teachers also use data as a starting point to align instruction to student need, especially at the start of the year and following each marking period. Teachers have also found creative ways of using technology, for example in creating podcasts in English language arts which can be downloaded by family and friends from the school's website, and in the use of broadcast video in media studies. The school's scheduling and budgeting is designed to ensure that classes can make the best use of the school's resources and to maximize the impact that specialist teachers can make, for example in science, music, media, art and languages, while retaining a single class teacher for much of the week.

Students find classes engaging, and those who use laptops are particularly enthusiastic about learning. Some teachers use higher-order and open-ended questions in instruction, although this is not consistent across classes. Similarly, not all teachers select students to answer questions so that all students in the class are involved. Students see their teachers, guidance counselors and deans as adults they can turn to when they need help, and enjoy taking part in class. Attendance remains an issue for the school and it works hard through automated telephone calls home on the first day of absence and following up persistent absence to maintain attendance at near average levels.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

Collaborative work among the school's teachers is extensive. Particularly when undertaking formal or informal professional development, staff are eager to turnkey what they have learned to others. The school's development as an iTeach/iLearn school has, for many teachers, given them increased flexibility over instruction methods. As one put it, 'It enables you to teach as you want, with no limitations'. In addition, professional development needs are effectively identified through the analysis of assessment data, for example when English language learners were found to be underperforming and staff undertook professional development to support classroom practice. Professional development needs are also identified through the school's regular program of classroom observations, snapshots and walkthroughs. Records of these note positive features of teaching but more importantly set out very clearly what teachers need to do to improve. Intervisitation to share practice is common, particularly among teachers of each grade, who share common preparation time.

The school has seen many staff changes over the six years since the current principal took over, and many staff hired have brought with them a specialism of use to the school as well as a commitment to students' education, high expectations and, most recently, a desire to be involved in the iTeach/iLearn development. The principal, respected by staff, delegates tasks and responsibilities effectively, empowering the assistant principals and teachers to develop their practice within the school's goals for the year. Because of this, some teachers have become specialists in specific areas and share their expertise with others to build the school's capacity to move forward, particularly in the use of laptops in learning. As a result, students and parents see teachers as having a high profile in the school. The school makes good use of the various support services available to support

students with specific needs. Communication with staff, students and parents is clear and helpful and the school runs very smoothly.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

**This area of the school's work is proficient.**

Teachers and the cabinet are fully aware of where they are in relation to the goals set for the end of the school year. The school also uses data well from interim tests to compare how individual students and classes are doing and to re-plan interventions and instruction where that is needed. At the end of the year, the collaborative process of constructing the plan for the following year takes account of staff views and data on student and class performance for that year, but this is too late to make any changes needed that would affect the current year's students. While informal changes are made to goals, the absence of interim goals and timeframes means that there is no systematic interim review of plans, either in departments or at whole-school level, which would measure the school's success in reaching them and allow modifications to be made a point where they could influence the current year's students.

Despite the absence of formal systems, the school is flexible in its approach to the deployment of school-based support teachers and paraprofessionals to meet the identified needs of students and about moving students from class to class because they would benefit more from the change. Teachers are also flexible in the modifications they make to instruction to take account of the interpretations that come from data analysis. Overall, the systems for evaluating the achievement of longer-term goals are in place, but they are not sufficiently robust for interim goals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Robert H Goddard Middle School (MS 202)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.</b>	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			X
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			X

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

<b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.		X	
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.	X		
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	