



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Rego Park School

Elementary School 139

**93-06 63 Drive
Queens
NY 11374**

Principal: Monica Powers-Meade

Dates of review: June 2 - 3, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Rego Park School is an elementary school with 785 students from kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 4% Black, 25% Hispanic, 36% White, and 36% Asian students. The student body includes 17.5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 95.3%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

A further 15 special education students from a neighborhood special education school are full-time students in inclusion classes, but are not counted in the school numbers. There is a gifted class in each grade from 2 through 6.

The principal was appointed in September 2007.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school gathers standardized and informal data to gain a full picture of performance at student, class and grade level.
- Teachers use data as a matter of routine to set measurable goals for their students and use these as the basis for their instruction.
- Students and their parents have a clear understanding of the areas where students need to improve through sharing student goals.
- The principal makes clear her high expectations of academic progress and performance.
- The administration encourages and supports teachers to be creative in delivering the curriculum content to increase student engagement.
- Teachers are committed to improving their professional knowledge and skills in order to raise student learning.
- The administration team works hard to promote partnerships with external organizations which enhance learning and professional development.
- Teachers and administrators work together diligently to review data and make necessary changes to improve instruction and learning.
- Teachers new to the school or to a grade receive effective, collaborative support.

What the school needs to improve

- Set out a long-term plan that sets out the actions, with measurable and time-related interim goals needed to achieve the school's long-term vision.
- Extend the school goal-setting process to ensure that teacher goals are precise enough to allow progress towards them to be monitored.
- Build on existing practice so that teachers make greater use of students' preferred learning styles, technology and the performing arts.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different intervention programs and instructional approaches using data on student progress and performance.
- Examine data in greater depth to identify variations in learning outcomes for different groups of students.
- Ensure that all written feedback after classroom observations shows how teacher actions and recommendations relate to student learning.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The principal has quickly established herself as a strong and caring leader determined to improve instruction and learning outcomes for all students. She dealt with the issues raised in the last Quality Review as a priority and this helped set her agenda for change. She has implemented systems which ensure consistent gathering of data which teachers use effectively to plan instruction and set goals for students. Teachers and administrators monitor formal and informal data regularly to review student progress. They use their reviews to identify where changes of instruction or intervention are necessary in order for a student or group of students to continue to improve. Currently teachers do not take student learning styles fully into account when planning instruction.

The school now has a clearer picture of the progress of different ethnic and gender groups as a result of careful tracking. The inquiry team is effective in tracking the progress of specific cohorts of students to monitor their progress from one year to the next as the first stage in setting up longer-term tracking of progress. The administration team monitors the impact of new initiatives by reviewing the progress of individual students. It does not compare the progress of students receiving interventions to determine the effectiveness of different types of intervention. Although the school has a good understanding of individual student progress and performance, data is not presented in ways that make it easy for staff to discern the progress and performance of groups, classes or grades which limits the insights into the success of changes to instruction. The school has made significant progress in dealing with the issue relating to training staff in the use of City tests as teacher assessment binders reflect their confidence in analyzing Acuity data.

Students understand the school's high expectations for their learning and one described this as, "The principal tells us we're the best but teachers talk to us about what we need to do so that we can be." The administration encourages teachers to be creative in delivering the curriculum and imaginative instruction is successful in engaging students and promoting learning.

Teachers use data to set goals for students and share these with students in ways that they understand. Teacher goals are not sharp enough to allow systematic monitoring of progress towards those goals during the year. Staff throughout the school show high levels of commitment to improving their work. The school has extensive partnerships with external organizations, including many of which enhance the professional development available to 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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school has a good understanding of student progress and performance through systematic gathering and analysis of data from standardized assessments and teachers' informal records. The school follows these systems with just as much rigor to track the progress of the 15 students who receive full-time inclusion at the school and the students enrolled as special education students. Teachers take great care to break down the performance of the English language learners and analyze the differences in progress and performance among the most commonly used home languages. Data on the progress and performance of gender groups of students shows that girls consistently outperform boys and this reflects in the proportion of girls in classes for higher-achieving students. The school does not currently analyze other sub-groups although the administration team is aware of variables affecting small numbers of students. The current emphasis in data analysis does not give insights into how students' sustain progress, as tracking relates to the previous year's results only.

The administration team makes good use of the City peer index to identify areas of strength in comparison with similar schools. They used this data to identify a school with recognized strong performance and gain insights into effective instructional practice by working collaboratively with this school. Comparisons of data have also led to identification of good practice in neighboring schools which leads to the school leaders gaining workable insights into effective practice. Staff across the school have received extensive professional development which now enables them to understand and use data confidently. Graphical interpretations are under-used which makes it unduly complex to extract key facts, patterns and trends from the detailed assessment data on individual students.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

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

Teachers work collaboratively in highly effective teams within and across grades to plan their instruction and set goals. They use data well to set goals for students that are relevant and presented to them in formats that they understand. In many classes teachers stick cards with the goals written on each child's desk, which give students a constant reminder of the areas they need to focus on. In other classes, students have monthly goals which teachers monitor weekly to give them feedback on their progress so that they can focus on improving their learning.

The school prides itself on its capacity to identify the lowest-achieving students who are the English language learners and providing instruction that allows them to make good progress. More than 75% pass the New York State tests in English language proficiency in less than three years which reflects effective instruction. The school is equally as

effective in providing support for these students to help raise performance in math so that it matches that of English language arts.

Parents are very involved in school life and staff work hard to share information with them and make them partners in their children's learning. Teachers work hard to convey their high expectations and goals for students in jargon-free language and keep them informed about their children's progress towards their goals. This helps to build effective partnerships with parents. At the start of the year, the school formally seeks information from parents about their children. This is useful in helping teachers tailor instruction to the needs of the child. However, this information is not gathered at other times during the year.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

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

The administration works hard to ensure that assessment aligns well with the curriculum so that assessments are always reliable and valid. Teachers are confident to experiment and work in new ways in order to improve learning. Some classes are trialing the Japanese lesson model this year. This work showed that a thematic approach to delivering the curriculum allowed teachers to be more responsive to the needs of individual students. A grade 3 class, for example, was transformed into an underwater ocean environment, but without the water, to support effective thematic teaching based on marine life. Teachers meet the needs of higher-achieving students in specific classes from grades 2 through to grade 6. In other classes, the emphasis on differentiating instruction is based on previous academic outcomes, rather than use of other variables such as students' preferred learning styles. As a result, not all student needs are fully met. The school continues to develop teacher skills in providing differentiated instruction to raise this to an even higher level.

Students show high levels of respect for each other and their diverse cultures which results in them acquiring knowledge of global issues as well as cultures. From grades 2 through 6, higher-achieving students participate in enrichment classes that allow them to extend and deepen their knowledge and skills. This also helps to maintain their high levels of commitment and motivation to learning. The focus for the arts is on the visual arts, some music and performing arts. The school is anxious to build on a successful foundation for visual and performing arts for students in all grades. Technology is currently outdated. The principal drives the initiative to upgrade equipment so that students and teachers can use technology to enhance instruction and increase learning.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

Teachers and administrators view themselves as learners and are keen to improve their professional practice and skills. Teachers receive written feedback after each formal

classroom observation. The focus of the content is on what the teacher said and did and this makes it hard to identify the link between instruction and student learning outcomes. The recommendations relate to improving instruction and learning but do not always link tightly to the content of the written feedback or show how recommendations relate to improvements in instruction.

Teachers share and learn from each other in supportive ways in grade teams and between grades. This is particularly evident at the end of the academic year when teachers from each grade observe their colleagues in lower grades to obtain a clear idea of the personal characteristics of the students they will teach in the following year. They also support new teachers and teachers new to a grade well so that new and established colleagues quickly form unified teams. The school uses partnerships with organizations in the community well which develops cross-cultural links, enhances the curriculum and promotes professional development. The school also supports external organizations, most notably through partnerships with universities to support new teachers in their training. The administration implements disciplinary codes with rigor and this is reflected in the increased number of student suspensions this year. As a result the school runs smoothly as students know that the implications for unacceptable actions will be applied consistently.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The administration has successfully established the use of data as a corner stone for goal setting, monitoring and revising of plans. Teachers set goals as a matter of routine for all students and uses standardized assessments well to track progress against these. Teacher goals are less refined but the principal has made a start by asking teachers to identify their strengths and areas to develop. However, these are not yet sufficiently sharp or measurable to support rigorous monitoring through the year.

The use of data to track student progress within classes is well established and teachers are prompt to identify where individual students need additional help to boost their progress. This is particularly evident with the English language learners whose progress is formally reviewed every six weeks. The school is not yet making full use of available data to evaluate differences in learning rates for different instructional approaches, interventions or strategies. The current systems show that students do progress but the school makes no comparisons to evaluate the relative strengths of different approaches.

The principal has a clear vision for the school but this is not set out in a formal plan that links the actions needed to achieve it with school priorities. She is keen to increase the student performance and strengthen the curriculum by adding more enrichment activities and instrumental music. She also wants to build on existing links with other schools especially in providing study programs for parents.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Rego Park School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

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

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic Groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?			X		
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?			X		
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?			X		
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					X

X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?			X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped