



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Rose E. Scala School**

**Elementary - Middle School 071**

**3040 Roberts Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10461**

**Principal: Lance Cooper**

**Dates of review: February 4 - 6, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Bruce Berry**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Rose E. Scala is an elementary/middle school with 1600 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 5% Black, 45% Hispanic, 45% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 12.5% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 92.1%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals provide good leadership and drive for the school's continuous improvement agenda.
- The teachers work well in collaborative teams to plan curriculum and instruction.
- The very good support systems for students in greatest need of improvement are leading to good gains in achievement.
- The school makes extremely good use of data to track the progress of student achievement.
- The teachers are using the new data systems extremely well to monitor progress and identify areas for improvement for individuals and groups of students.
- The curriculum and enrichment programs provide students with high levels of engagement and interest for their academic and social development.
- The highly effective communication systems keep parents updated on the progress their children are making.
- The parents have great praise for the quality of education and the level of care their children receive in the school.
- The school is a respectful and orderly community where students feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- There are excellent procedures in place for supporting the induction of new teachers into the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Create a more consistent approach for setting whole school improvement goals based on the students' present and projected outcomes for each subject area.
- Strengthen strategic planning to include interim goals in more subject areas to establish uniformity in the monitoring of the school's progress in achieving its long-term goals.
- Continue to expand the present initiatives for providing the extra challenge required for the high achieving students to reach the upper levels in State tests.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

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

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is well developed.**

Since the last Quality Review, good progress has been made in engaging students with the use of rubrics, assessment of their learning and in meeting their short-term goals. The very good leadership of the principal and assistant principals is providing the drive for continually improving student outcomes. Teachers are using data extremely well to identify areas for improvement for individual and groups of students. Students in greatest need of improvement are very well supported and make rapid progress in their achievement levels. The broad and varied curriculum provides good engagement and high levels of interest for student learning. Teachers work effectively in teams to plan the curriculum and instruction.

There are excellent communications with parents, who have high praise for the quality of education and care their children receive. The school has a wonderfully respectful and caring culture, which creates an environment where learning is exciting and fun. The inquiry team is focusing on the use of language in math with a focus group of upper grade boys. There is not yet a consistent approach to the setting of whole school and interim goals for improving student and teacher outcomes. The instruction is not, at present, consistently challenging the high achieving students sufficiently to reach the upper grades in the State tests.

### **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 uses data very well to track the progress of student achievement and to plan instruction. In reading, regular teacher assessments and external tests are used to monitor the achievement levels of the students. Student progress is graphically charted, with progress being reviewed by senior leaders against periodic benchmarks established for each grade. As a result, students are making very good progress in their reading, with many students at or above their expected level. In math, tests, quizzes and teacher assessments provide an effective measure of the progress of students. Teachers have received excellent training in the use of the Acuity assessment system. They are successfully making use of the predictive and other tests to identify specific skills in need of improvement. They use the data well to inform their instruction and plan interventions

for students where a need is identified. Special education students make very good progress because of the valuable support they receive. The students are taught in collaborative teaching groups or small self-contained classes depending on their level of need. Specialist teachers work closely with the classroom teachers to provide important coordinated push-in support. English language learners make excellent progress in their achievement levels, with many rapidly gaining the advanced level or proficiency. The students receive helpful pull-out support in line with their identified needs.

The school has a clear understanding of the performance of the different subgroups. They have identified that boys are underperforming, particularly in the higher age groups. As a result, the school ran a pilot scheme of single sex classes in math, which has resulted in higher achievement levels in the State tests. There are plans to extend the scheme to other subjects where appropriate. The school has a clear picture of their progress from year to year. It demonstrates a significant growth in achievement levels over the past five years. However, the teachers are not yet consistently providing the necessary challenge for high performing students. The school compares its own performance with that of similar schools and has links with a particular school with a similar student population. The staff visit their link school to share good practice and as a result have introduced effective practices for supporting low achieving 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.**

The school sets measurable improvement goals for the academic subjects and for attendance. In reading, challenging benchmarks are established at the start of the year and reviewed periodically. However, the goals in other subjects are not consistently based on the students’ present and projected achievement outcomes. Teachers set goals for students linked to their next steps for learning. The students have a conference with the teachers to undertake a valuable written review of their own progress. The students in greatest need of improvement make extremely good progress as a result of the supported programs provided for them. The teachers provide academic intervention services for their own students when a need is identified. Saturday classes and test preparation sessions give further valuable help to the students. This has resulted in the students making excellent progress, which is demonstrated by the very low percentage of students at Level 1 in the State tests.

The school shares its goals with all members of the school community through the parents’ association, leadership team meetings and regular newsletters. The curriculum goals are presented to the parents at the start of each new academic year. All members of the school community generate very high expectations for student achievement. The parents spoke strongly about the high quality of education and care their children receive in the school. Parents get regular feedback on the progress their children are making. The very good communications provide regular updates and parents are able to share any issues or concerns with the staff at any time. Parents attend helpful meetings each month, where workshops are provided on many school and social related issues.

**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 curriculum provides excellent and interesting opportunities for students' academic and social development. The school follows the mandated curriculum and provides a wide range of other exciting enrichments for the students. There are a variety of stimulating arts subjects, technology and two foreign languages available for them. Some subjects are grouped homogeneously and in some classes, boys and girls are taught separately. The teachers are varying the learning styles to provide a good match for the individual learning needs of the students. The school has links with CNN Television Company and the students are working with CNN staff to create a television broadcasting service within the school.

Walkthroughs by senior leaders ensure that instruction is creating relevant and stimulating learning opportunities for students. Student engagement is very high because teachers use a range of strategies to actively involved students in their own learning, such as in science when live insects are studied to learn more about their anatomy and habits. There is good differentiation of learning in some areas of the curriculum, but it is not consistent in all subjects. There is inconsistent challenge for the high achieving students to enable them to reach the highest level in the State tests. Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are used imaginatively to provide excellent support for the curriculum and instruction. The school has invested well in technology, which is providing variety in the instruction. Small groups have been created and specialist teachers hired to support the arts and special education. The school has a highly respectful culture in which the students feel safe and enjoy their learning. Students work is celebrated in colourful displays in the classrooms and the corridors. The very good attendance is testimony to the high value the students place on their education. The school has good procedures for maintaining high attendance levels, with celebratory pizza parties and pictures of students with 100% attendance on display.

**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.**

The principal and assistant principals undertake effective lesson observations to monitor the quality and appropriateness of the instruction. They give valuable feedback in a variety of ways to help the teachers to improve their instruction. Personalized programs of support are created for teachers based on the outcomes of lesson observations and walkthroughs. Data is analyzed, teacher assessment binders are monitored and portfolios of student work reviewed on a regular basis. Professional development programs create excellent opportunities for the teachers to extend their knowledge and skills. They are supported well by staff developers and consultants, who provide after-school and Saturday workshops on a range of topics focused on improving instruction. The teachers work extremely well in collaborative teams to plan their instruction and curriculum. Grade leaders provide a focus for grade team meetings to ensure continuity

and consistency in the curriculum and instruction. Staff developers work effectively with teachers in common preparation time to provide support for planning differentiated instruction. Teachers have valuable opportunities to undertake intervisitations and learning walks to other teachers' lessons to observe and share good practice. The new teachers receive excellent support from the mentors assigned to them. There is a full program of induction for the teachers and the mentors meet weekly to plan the activities. The very positive impact of the program is demonstrated by the way 75 new teachers have been integrated and inducted into the school in the last three years.

Students receive excellent support for their academic and social development from the guidance, advisory and support staff of the school. The older students have an advisory lesson each week, which provides an excellent focus on a range of issues relevant to students of their age group. These include major areas such as drug awareness, health matters, gangs, bullying and other social issues. A variety of outside speakers from industry, the police and other organizations provide valuable input and role models for the students. The school runs extremely well due to the excellent procedures, which are understood and followed by everyone. Students behave in a calm and orderly way. Any disciplinary issues are dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner. A wide range of partnerships provides very good academic and enrichment opportunities for students. They include homework support, dance programs, actors working with students to produce a show, ballet, robotics and many other exciting activities.

**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 well developed.**

The school has clear plans and goals for improving student outcomes. There are interim benchmarks in reading for monitoring the progress made by students over time. However, there is not a consistent approach to the creation of interim goals across many subjects to enable the staff to monitor accurately the progress in reaching long-term goals. Many of the the long-term goals are imposed on the school and do not accurately reflect the present and projected student and teacher outcomes. Teachers make excellent use of the periodic data to analyze specific skills in need of further development for individual and groups of students. The teachers effectively plan valuable academic interventions for their own students in the after-school and Saturday programs. The teachers work extremely well together to analyze and discuss the outcomes of periodic assessments. They analyze the specific skills in need of improvement and make immediate adjustments to the curriculum and instruction based on the identified need. As a result, the achievement levels for the majority of students have increased considerably over time. School leaders similarly respond to the data outcomes by adjusting plans and responding to the changing needs of the students. For example, the introduction of single gender classes resulted from the low number of high achieving students gaining the highest level in the State tests. Teachers work in teams to review the impact of the curriculum and instruction and plan the curriculum maps and pacing calendars for the following academic year. The school leaders ensure that the teachers from successive grades have time to plan together to ensure continuity for the students as they move from one grade to the next. The whole school community is united in their vision for improving student outcomes in a caring and safe environment.

# Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Rose E. Scala School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>