



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ronald Edmonds Learning Center

Intermediate School 113

**300 Adelphi Street
New York
NY 11205**

Principal: Khalek Kirkland

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Reviewer: Jan Lomas

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Part 1: The school con

Information about the school

Ronald Edmonds Learning Center serves 866 students from grade 6 through 8. The percentage of students eligible for Title 1 funding, at 74.2%, is higher than that for City and similar schools.

The population consists of 81% Black, 15% Hispanic, 2.9% Asian and other and 1.1% White students. A low percentage (1.7%), are recent immigrants. In 2005, the countries of birth for these students were Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and St Lucia. The percentage of English language learners is small at 3.7% but has doubled since 2005. Just under 7% of the students are special education students.

Attendance in 2005 was 93.4%, which was higher than the figure for City and similar schools. Currently, attendance figures are commensurate with this figure.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal leads a collaborative team who work hard to support the students in their care.
- Students feel safe within the school.
- The school has made positive steps to begin to address the performance of gender groups.
- Promising progress is being made with the use of regular interim assessments in all areas.
- Parents are supportive of the school and feel that communication with the home is effective.
- Students appreciate the opportunities they have to develop skills and talents in performing arts, fine arts and environmental studies/technology.
- In performance, students show great commitment and displayed art work also celebrates students' good achievements.
- The school supports the integration of the efforts of the school, home and the child in taking each student forward.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase teachers' capacity to use data to tailor well differentiated instruction that is matched to all students' needs.
- Improve strategic planning as a meaningful tool that underpins well-focused school improvement and enables effective monitoring and evaluation.
- Sharpen the tracking and monitoring of sub-groups, particularly by ethnicity, to ensure that teaching and learning are effective for all.
- Implement strategies to ensure precise goal-setting at whole-school, grade, and group level in order to use data to best effect in furthering student progress.
- Continue to develop specific strategies to support and enhance the progress of English language learners.
- Strengthen curriculum planning and mapping in order to scaffold teaching and learning effectively.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Ronald Edmunds Learning Center, provides a suitable range of opportunities for students to develop their skills and talents alongside the core areas of academic learning. Students appreciate and enjoy the chance they have to develop their skills in performing arts, fine arts and technology. The enthusiasm and concentration shown when taking part in the school production to celebrate Black History Month is one example of the commitment many bring to this learning. The school supports the approach that students' social and academic success can only be enabled by equal effort from home, school and the child. This is reinforced by the entrance hall bulletin board which displays photographs of the student, staff member and parent of the month.

The school is now using, and is continuing to develop, interim assessments. Overall, these assessments are a positive step forward and are supporting the school in putting a clearer focus upon areas where student progress needs to be improved. This is assisting in the improvement of short term planning for students' needs as well as the whole school strategic planning that underpins ongoing improvement.

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 proficient.

In this academic year, the school has developed regular interim assessments across the curriculum in order to keep an updated overview of how students are progressing over the year. These assessments are enabling a clearer picture of student needs. Scrutiny of the results is assisting in revising how the curriculum is delivered and the planning for instruction adjusted. They also allow the administration to keep an overview of how classes and departments are progressing. This is enabling ongoing discussions with teachers about students' comparative performance. Comparisons of student achievement data for grades and subjects is also undertaken using results from the outcomes of formal State and City tests. There has been insufficient time to see the positive impact of interim assessments within the academic year and beyond, when making year to year comparisons. However, the school is now learning from the messages that are emerging from these new strategies in order to focus more accurately upon student needs.

Progress and achievement for English language learners and special education students is monitored through the schools' routine procedures. In addition, specialist teachers keep a close eye upon the progress of special education students, supplementing their view by monitoring developments against individual education plans. The specialist teacher for English language learners knows the small group of students well, analyzes results of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test, and keeps records of individual skills development.

Historically, the school has used information from the record card for its view of the performance of different ethnic groups. It has also used such data to recognize significant differences in the performance of boys and girls and has put some strategies in place designed to address these. However, the new interim assessments now provide an opportunity to improve tracking of the relative performance of these, and other key sub-groups, in order to assess the impact of strategies, improve performance and check whether teaching is effective for all. The principal has used comparative data to identify another school with a similar context and population and has used this opportunity to gain new ideas, arrange intervisitation and discuss common issues

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 develops the Comprehensive Education Plan through collaborative activity between the principal and staff. Although some goals are directly measurable, they are built upon a notional percentage increase rather than the systematic analysis of data. The school’s longer term goals for year on year improvement are also not adjusted in line with such analysis. At present, setting interim targets for classes and individuals is not routine practice. However, the school is aware of the potential of the recently introduced interim assessment strategies to enable precise goal setting at all levels. The development of these assessments is already enabling the school to see some better ways of ways of focusing upon priority areas in order to address the need for further improvement.

The school identifies students who need additional support from the academic intervention services and provides extended day opportunities, particularly for students achieving level 1 or 2. Saturday school is provided for test preparation. Opportunities are offered for capable students to take Regents examinations by the end of year 8. There is an awareness of the differences in performance between girls and boys in a number of areas. Discussions with gender groups have been held to ascertain issues that students think impact upon relative performance. In addition, some single gender classes have been created although the impact on performance is, at present, slow and additional monitoring is needed in order to fully review the strategy. The school has placed an appropriate emphasis upon special education students and has changed its approach so that they are now taught by different teachers for each subject. This means that professional strengths can be utilized to assist students’ progress. The school is very keen to enable special education students to move to less restrictive environments when this is appropriate to their individual needs. Although there are a small proportion of English language learners, the school has usefully extended the provision for them by increasing the amount of specialist support teaching. It hopes to be able to extend this further.

Parents’ representatives are supportive of the school and its work and feel that communication between home and school is very helpful in keeping parents informed and able to support the school’s expectations. For example, the website enables students to find out about homework should they be absent. Workshops are offered on topics such as mathematics and there are annual meetings about expectations for each grade. Students are appreciative of the ways that their teachers support their progress. Examples are re-teaching elements of the curriculum, using games to review learning and giving feedback on specific aspects of assessments that show where individuals need to improve.

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 proficient.

Outline pacing calendars to support the curriculum have been established although these documents do not show a breakdown of other information, such as key skills and concepts and main resources. The school provides for enrichment of students’ skills and talents by assigning each to one of three programs for a three year cycle. These programs are fine arts and design, academy of performing arts and environmental science and technology. There are opportunities for the extension of students’ study by undertaking Regents examinations in mathematics, American history and earth science. All students have access to the computer room but equipment is currently limited or old and the school is proactively seeking funding to remedy this.

Students talk with enthusiasm about their work within their skills and talents area but some are less enthusiastic about other core subjects. The school differentiates instruction by support and interventions for different identified groups and individuals and by extension to the curriculum. However, differentiation by, for example, task, groups or resources is sometimes less evident in core subject classrooms. This means that, although most students are willing to concentrate and apply themselves, teaching is less likely to fully motivate, or meet the needs of all. Teacher accountability is being strengthened by the discussions arising from interim assessments. The school is aware of the need to continue to improve the use of data in order to help teachers to tailor their instruction. Staffing, scheduling and the use of the budget are proficiently managed overall in order to meet the school’s plans and needs.

One student commented that ‘teachers are like family’, and most representatives feel that they could readily turn to someone in school for help with a worry. Parents feel that students are well prepared for life at high school. The school employs a sufficient range of strategies to maintain attendance rates near to historical figures, which have been somewhat higher than those for City and other schools in recent years.

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 proficient.

Staff members are appropriately recruited through a process which includes interviews and demonstration lessons. Questions are included about how applicants would use data to plan for the needs of a particular group. Teachers are surveyed to identify professional development needs and topics are also identified through classroom observations. Teachers attend courses at venues such as teachers’ centers and City colleges. Special education teachers’ recent attendance at a course about differentiated instruction has enabled colleagues to turnkey some new ideas. This presents a useful starting point for increasing the capacity of all teachers to deliver effective and stimulating differentiated instruction that is well linked to the analysis of data about students’ needs. Useful support from literacy and mathematics coaches is provided in classrooms and through guidance at common preparation times. Coaches attend cabinet meetings in order to enable effective communication about development issues.

Collaborative meetings, which include times for departments to meet, also provide opportunities to share planning and strategies and discuss school agenda items. There is awareness that it would be helpful to extend opportunities for teachers to meet more formally with specialist and intervention colleagues. For example, the school hopes to provide more specialist teaching for English language learners. Potentially, this includes time to support general education staff with their instruction of such students and reflects awareness of the needs of this small group.

Classroom observation takes place as mandated and appropriately includes pre- and post-meetings and written feedback. This follows a tick-list format which uses a four-point grading system for bullet-points organized under headings covering planning and preparation, classroom environment and instruction. The proforma identifies 'highlights' and areas headed 'something to think about' and is sufficient to prompt some reflection. Teachers report that intervisitation is encouraged and walkthroughs provide opportunities for individual and generic written feedback points

The principal leads a collegiate team of staff who feel that they are treated as professionals by an approachable administration that operates an open door policy. Parents' representatives express their respect for the principal's leadership and the opportunities the school affords their children. Students generally behave appropriately in class although the principal is aware of the need to continue to ensure that lessons start promptly and time spent in hallways is minimized.

The school routinely uses partnerships with organizations to enrich opportunities for students to learn. For example, Long Island University provides an after-school program for homework and tutorial support alongside chances for students to experience chess, African dance and debating.

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.

The current Comprehensive Education Plan contains goals which are not always directly measurable. Action plans contain some of the strategies which are needed to achieve goals but do not include detailed timelines for when key activities will happen. Success criteria and interim check-up points are not sufficiently clear in all areas. This means that the document is not yet a tool which can be meaningfully used by all to enable effective monitoring and evaluation of progress towards school improvement.

The school is aware that the program of interim assessments now needs to be explicitly built into the new document during the current planning cycle. However, interim assessments are already usefully enabling the school to make comparisons of student progress across this academic year and are assisting a clearer focus upon priorities. For example, the assessments allow for focused discussions with teachers about emerging student data and the strategies they are using to move students on with their learning.

Common preparation times, team meetings and informal discussions are used to consider adjustments to classroom planning as well as review of broader school issues. The school encourages dialogue and welcomes an ongoing flow of ideas and views from staff. An example of the ongoing development of strategies is the current thinking about how

'backwards mapping' of the curriculum can better scaffold teaching and learning and alignment of the standards. The outcomes of testing have also shown the need to revisit areas of learning through, for example, homework assignments, and this is now being emphasized. The school recognizes that the use of the principles of the quality review process offers opportunities to strengthen and formalize on-going review and self-evaluation systems. Consideration is being given to establishing a quality review committee drawn from the staff team.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ronald Edmunds Learning (IS 113)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		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"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		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"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	