



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Caesar Rodney School**

**Public School 164**

**4211 14th Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11219**

**Principal: Margaret Choy-Shan**

**Dates of review: December 14 - 15, 2006  
Reviewers: David Taylor and Chris Andrews**

## Content of the report

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Overall evaluation

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

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Caesar Rodney School (Public School 164) is an elementary school serving students from pre-kindergarten through 5th grades. It is situated in the southern part of Brooklyn, in a neighborhood with a strong Jewish community which has its own schooling. The current enrollment is 494 students, of whom 24% are special education students and 22% are English language learners. There is one bilingual Spanish class. Many of the students are bussed in from other districts. The school is a 100% entitlement Title I school. Sixty percent of students are Hispanic, with just under 20% of students coming from White backgrounds. A further 18% of students are Asian with the remainder being Black. The main home languages are English, Spanish and Bengali. The average attendance rate is around 94%, compared with the New York City average of 92.4%.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has an excellent climate for learning and fosters warm relationships.
- Students' engagement with learning is outstanding and they are attentive, focused and eager to succeed.
- The school makes excellent use of the extensive data it collects to shape its goals for the future.
- Close, productive links are established between the data collection and the school's resource management, with well-directed budget and staffing decisions.
- There are consistently high expectations of students, who produce high-quality work and make good progress on public tests.
- Teamwork is good, with well-focused use of extensive professional development and effective collaborative team teaching.
- Teachers plan and evaluate instructional programs in a focused and resourceful way.
- The school and its hard-working and effective principal and assistant principal are highly regarded by the school community, including students and parents.
- The students appreciate greatly the broad range of activities which offer support, stimulus and high aspirations.
- Attention to the needs of English language learners and special education students is a strength.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further refine the use of data by giving even greater emphasis to the analysis of comparative information within the school and with other schools.
- Further develop the school wide use of skilled coaching to ensure consistently good practice and the further enhancement of teachers' skills in specific subjects.
- Continue work on developing a sustained focus on the structure of lessons, in order to further improve aspects of pace and differentiation both in the tasks set and the outcomes achieved.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school is a welcoming and stimulating place for students, teachers and parents. This purposeful climate is established by the dedicated and resourceful principal and her able assistant principal. The skilled teachers work effectively to create well-organized classrooms in which learning can flourish.

Students are known and respected by the staff, who are becoming increasingly successful at analyzing assessment data to plan their programs. They do this, especially at grade level, in a highly collaborative way, supporting each other and developing curricula that are well-aligned with City requirements and students' needs.

The priority given to developing writing skills, linked closely to a challenging reading program, has resulted in clear improvement throughout the school, with rich displays of students' work in classrooms and corridors. Professional development has been effective and has led to significant and sustained gains in the quality of education, reflected by the continually improving test scores of students. This dynamic and dedicated school community is offering a great deal to its students. There is justifiable pride in what it has achieved for them, coupled with a determined commitment to continue to attain its demanding and well-focused goals.

### **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 has particularly effective systems for gathering data on its students and for presenting and analyzing the information it receives. Teachers apply this well in their planning. There is careful tracking of test results, with a close study of trends. The well-focused response to identified needs is manifested by the impressive improvement in results over the last few years. Teachers at grade level review all students across the grade and produce their own clear tabulations of results. Broader forms of assessment, especially through students' portfolios, enable teachers to examine closely students' performance and developmental needs. The school undertakes very detailed recording of performance in individual subject areas, using running records and a regularly updated reading graph to identify, for example, specific reading problems. The school thoroughly evaluates possible reasons for lack of progress, through one-to-one coaching, reading logs, Reading Recovery and phonics-based analysis. Similarly, in mathematics, teachers use item-analysis reports to identify areas of need and plan units of work accordingly.

The analysis of the performance of the different groups within the school is clear and leads to effective follow-up intervention. The school looks carefully at patterns of achievement revealed by the data, and it focuses persistently on any students, especially those with special needs, who fail to make sufficient progress. Monthly meetings of the school

assessment team review any unsuccessful interventions. There is good awareness of how the school is performing, with appropriate analysis of the effect of special education students on overall results.

**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 well developed.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan was the focus of the principal’s recent performance review and has been recently updated. It shows that the school is highly skilled at using its analysis of performance data as a tool for setting goals. Further enhancement of its work with such data to drive instruction has been set as a goal for the current academic year. From reviewing the 2006 results, the school noted that measures had had a beneficial effect, with some striking advances on the results from 2005. Specific plans have been developed within the teaching of literacy, mathematics and science, and these underscore the school’s responsiveness to what it learns about students’ performance. For example, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) data are enabling the school to focus on how to move more students from “advanced” to “proficient.” This is part of a wider philosophy of ensuring that intervention supports most strongly those students who most need to improve.

The school sets high expectations and focuses on raising levels of performance for all students, with much success. Parents see this as a real strength of the school. They also appreciate the level of information they receive, for example through parent-teacher conferences where portfolios are made available. Teachers and parents feel that the school is working hard and effectively to improve students’ performance and life chances.

**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 plans its curriculum in detail, in line with City-wide requirements, and uses curriculum mapping to bring clarity to how units of work are set out. The current focus is on developing science and social studies, especially by integrating them more in literacy activities, such as reading.

The school gives teachers much accountability for the performance of students. There has been a strong emphasis on differentiation, and the school does a great deal to achieve this through the activities and interventions it supports. Teachers are increasingly thinking about differentiation when planning activities. However, in a few lessons there is insufficient distinction in the learning objectives or outcomes as set out for individual lessons. Consequently there is not always sufficient stretch for the most advanced or support for the least. The school is aware of this issue and has been quick to respond. Coaching interventions have already begun to direct teachers’ attention to making sure that mini-lessons are brisk, interactive and focused, with further emphasis on effective classroom techniques.

The school has harnessed resources effectively to its goals, and shows astute financial management. There is a clear thread between decisions about money or staffing and the school's priorities. Schedules make the best use of the available resources. There is some well-developed practice in teacher collaboration, as well as the very effective use of push-in/pull-out mechanisms for working with individuals or small groups.

Relationships between teachers, paraprofessionals and students are excellent. There are high levels of mutual trust and respect. Students speak with warmth and affection about the teachers, as do teachers about students. Lessons are interesting and students are fully engaged in their learning. Their behavior is exemplary and most participate with great eagerness. Working with a partner is well-established: whenever the teacher moves into this mode, earnest and focused conversations take place without hesitation. Listening and concentration are strong features of students' response. In one mathematics class, for example, students sat on the carpet, still and fully engrossed, during a complex and lengthy explanation: this was typical of their strong desire to learn and progress.

The school sets exacting targets for attendance and high standards of behavior. Attendance is currently running at 94%, but the school is seeking to push this still higher, with a much sought after raffle prize offered as an incentive. One parent said that when her daughter was not feeling very well, she said that she had to go to school, so as not to let everybody down.

**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.**

The principal has clear criteria when selecting staff. She looks for "dynamic individuals, ready to go the extra mile"— people who share her vision for the students. A team has been assembled with many strengths. Highly-committed newer teachers are contributing at a high level to the collaborative culture.

The school is focusing professional development on analyzing data to improve instruction and focus on individuals' needs. It recognizes the scope for further refinement. Professional development has many well-developed strengths, and teachers appreciate how the principal encourages and supports their attendance and the quality of courses they attend.

The school gives appropriate weight to the observation of teaching, both formally and informally. Teachers value comments from the principal and assistant principal, and also find that to visit each other's classes is a valuable way to learn. This openness to visitors and new ideas reflects the school's belief in the importance of critical reflection and self-evaluation, as does, for example, the full involvement of all staff in the process of school self-evaluation in advance of the quality review visit.

The principal's energetic and firm leadership is admired and respected. It is based on a thorough understanding of the students and their needs, stemming from her time in the school as assistant principal. A highly productive partnership has been forged with the assistant principal, who in less than a year and a half has settled well into the role. The two lead change in a measured way, focusing on planned evolution rather than wholesale radical restructuring. The school is a calm place, where people move with a sense of purpose and respect. The procedures run extremely well, and time is not wasted.

The school has established many effective partnerships with the wider community. It believes in exposing the students to opportunities that will broaden their horizons: apple-picking, for example, was a great success, as were visits to see musical and dance productions. The school successfully promotes learning of musical instruments and choral singing.

**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 well developed.**

The school has shown a well-developed capacity to use external and internal assessments to review how well plans are working to achieve the stated goals. It has made adjustments to the curriculum, to align it more precisely with individual students' needs. Through its clearly-articulated goals it is well placed to develop further its systems for evaluation and diagnosis of individual students' needs.

The school appreciates the benefits of regularly analyzed data and makes well-advised changes when it receives important information about students. It regularly revises plans to ensure that the focus on students' needs is retained.

The school is adept at evaluation. It has developed well-tuned systems for involving teachers directly, and its responsive manner skillfully gains teachers' commitment. Models of excellence ensure that the school can offer good practice throughout the school.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Caesar Rodney School (PS164)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
<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>			<b>X</b>
<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>			<b>X</b>