



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Roland Hayes School

Intermediate School 291

**Palmetto Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: Sean Walsh

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Reviewer: Joy Richardson

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 school has 897 students in grades 6 through 8. It is organized into three academies. Currently, one has grade 6 students and two have students from grades 7 and 8. The school has 7% special education students and 20% of the students are English language learners. English and Spanish are the main languages spoken. The school population is 63% Hispanic, 34% Black, 2% Asian and students from other ethnic groups, and 1% White. Title 1 eligibility, at 94%, is above the average in similar schools, and high in comparison with all City schools. The attendance rate of 87.6% is below the average in similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has restored order to the school and refocused it on learning, demonstrating a strong capacity to effect change.
- Strong instructional leadership and commitment to professional development are improving teaching and learning.
- The school is making progress in improving student outcomes.
- The administration and faculty are working together well in developing a shared vision and ambition for the future.
- The school is developing a good range of support and enrichment programs for students.
- The school is taking steps to ensure promotion to high school and to reduce the number of held over students.
- Students feel safe in school and know that their voice is heard.
- Budgeting decisions and improvements to the facilities are driven by determination to meet students' needs.
- Students' horizons are being broadened by visits and participation in activities beyond the school.
- The school is working very effectively to improve attendance so that students can succeed in learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure accurate assessment and purposeful use of data by all teachers to increase progress made by each student.
- Accelerate the progress of English language learners.
- Monitor the effectiveness of interventions and of each teacher in improving students' learning.
- Build the involvement of parents in working towards student and school goals.
- Develop a cycle of planning that sets interim goals, measures progress towards them, and holds staff to account in taking action to meet them.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with proficient features.

The current principal was appointed 10 months ago to a school in crisis, with a mission to improve instruction and to accelerate students' progress. He has had a remarkable impact in a short time in bringing the school into order as an institution for education and setting it on the road to recovery. Much has been achieved in providing direction, improving teaching and learning and raising expectations. As a result, the school is now proficient in a number of areas.

The school recognizes room for improvement. Systems and procedures are not yet fully embedded or consistently implemented. The school is undeveloped in its use of data to improve progress at all levels and in planning for sustained action to achieve its goals. Many plans are being made for next year, building on what has been learned this year. The school is moving forward with confidence in its capacity to improve further.

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.

The principal has gained a clear overview of the data and what it shows about students' performance and progress. Trends are analyzed, in the light of the school's history, to monitor the extent of improvement on past performance and in relation to similar schools. Tracking of the comparative performance of classes, grades and subjects, and of ethnic groups and special education students, is beginning to be developed as a basis for action. The school's leadership identifies groups where performance lags behind that of others. This has raised important questions, for example, about the slow progress of English language learners.

The use of data is being directed towards helping each student make better progress and holding teachers accountable for this. The principal reviews all the students' report cards. The assistant principal for instruction is playing a key role in helping to make the connection between student outcomes and classroom practice. Careful attention is given to students where promotion is at risk, with a view to reducing the large number of overage students. An individual graduation plan for each student has been developed this year to show the progress necessary to graduate. This is giving a baseline for measuring progress, although the implications are not being worked through routinely with students, staff and parents.

Teachers generally collect data from tests and exams, and from each marking period. They are beginning to be more pro-active in using assessment as a tool to find out what students know already and to pinpoint where teaching is needed.

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 undeveloped.

The school has the goal of increasing the percentage of students reaching proficiency level in English language arts and mathematics. Percentages show an upward movement from the level previously achieved. The school’s leaders are involving the faculty in focusing on these goals, and opportunities for collaborative planning are increasing. Much progress has been made, from a low baseline.

However, procedures are not yet embedded for using data to map the route through successive steps in learning to achieve projected goals. The school has been working to ensure that teachers carry out regular testing to gain information about the progress being made. A few teachers are not implementing appropriate testing and the accuracy of information generated is not always reliable. This means that data cannot be used to full effect.

Information about students’ progress from different sources is not pulled together to ensure a plan of action to which everyone subscribes. The school recognizes that the involvement of parents, which is missing in many cases, is an essential part of this. It has introduced a parent compact and it is taking steps to draw parents into school, for example by offering a range of classes and equipping a reading café for their use. Increased parental involvement is a priority for next year, reflecting the school’s concern to monitor the progress of individual students more closely and to pre-empt problems.

The academy structure is set to evolve next year so that the three academies each have students from all grades. Leadership within the academies does not provide sustained oversight of individual progress over time, with an all-round view of each student’s personal, behavioral and academic growth.

The school identifies those students most in need of improvement and works to meet mandated requirements. A culture of high expectations for these students, though espoused by the principal, is not yet evident across the whole school community. There is not enough focus on monitoring progress in order to accelerate learning, particularly by English language learners.

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.

From the outset, the principal identified the quality of instruction as the key to school improvement. It is this focus that is giving students a taste of success and motivating staff to aim higher. Although the quality of teaching and learning varies widely, much has improved over the year. The assistant principal and the principal are active in modeling teaching, showing what can be achieved. Students sense a difference of approach, saying that teaching is now more interesting and challenging. Practical participation and involvement, for example in science, help to engage students actively in thinking and asking questions. In some classes, work is differentiated to help students at different levels

to take the necessary next steps in learning. Although much has moved forward, teachers' accountability in using data to improve instruction is not fully established. School goals and plans for each student do not consistently guide the practice of every teacher.

The school aligns its curriculum to mandated requirements and to its own planning for improvement in student outcomes. Faculty groups have reviewed the suitability of current curriculum programs, and well-considered changes have been agreed to for next year.

The school has worked hard on aligning its instructional activity to meet the standards, and to build the understanding of staff in doing this. For example, 6th grade teachers meet regularly to discuss the teaching of units of work in English language arts. A pacing calendar has been introduced to bring greater rigor and urgency to instruction and to keep teachers on the same page. The principal recognizes that the morning intervention sessions, attended by a majority of students, are not fully effective or uniform in their alignment to a leveled curriculum. In this, as in many areas of the school's work, the school is beginning to evaluate what works, rather than what meets minimum requirements, and to implement improvements.

The principal is adept in ensuring that budgeting decisions support the school in achieving its aims, for example by securing smaller class sizes. Scheduling is designed to meet students' needs, and the rapid programming of student schedules at the start of the year contributed to an orderly commencement.

Attendance has risen because absences and lateness are followed up promptly. The impact of absence on performance is explained and this has helped to reduce the frequency of extended vacations. The school provides incentives for students with good attendance and grades, such as trips to Broadway musicals.

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.

The appointment of an assistant principal for instruction, at the start of this year, has had a major impact in developing the confidence of teachers and building their skills. The school is continuing to build a faculty with a shared commitment to doing the best for students. Most staff are enjoying the growing sense of collective endeavor and appreciate the principal's leadership in this respect.

The focus on instruction is carried through into professional development that seeks to address teachers' needs, individually and collectively. There is an expectation that what is learned, from professional development within and beyond the school, will be shared and used to make a difference in the classroom. By this means, the school has tackled a range of issues including classroom management, lesson planning and learning styles. A summer leadership academy for teachers helps to build the school's instructional culture.

The principal is highly respected, by staff and students, for his vision, determination and compassion in turning the school round. His belief in students is demonstrated in the way that he encourages them to express their views, for example in writing letters of appreciation or suggestion. Students feel a growing ownership of the school, as shown in their choice of a name and logo for each academy, and their posters about keeping the school clean and tidy. The principal and assistant principal for instruction take a lead in

observing classes as part of their instructional leadership. Opportunities are growing for teachers to observe each other and to plan together. Teachers are encouraged to bring forward ideas and to make suggestions. The school's leaders respond positively when they do this.

The school runs smoothly. Many procedures have been developed successfully this year to help make this the case. Poor behavior still disrupts learning on occasions, but the school has strengthened systems for dealing with it. In-house suspension is being used to greater effect. The school is introducing a positive behavior instruction and support program. It is helping students to think about the meaning of respect and to act accordingly.

The school establishes effective partnerships with community-based organizations, to help it in extending opportunities for students and raising their sights. For example, students have participated with great enthusiasm in an urban environment project, including the modeling of Brooklyn Bridge and the creation of a garden in front of the school. Funds are being secured for resources and facilities to extend opportunities for the whole school community. The school is making increasing use of an attractive library. A new robotics lab is being equipped and there are plans to provide laptops for students. The construction of a playground is in hand to provide sports and exercise.

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 undeveloped.

The school has yet to embed structures for routinely evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, for monitoring progress towards goals and for adapting plans accordingly. Much ground has been covered this year. The school is now ready to use what has been learned as a springboard to develop its strategic planning, and to formulate specific and measurable action plans in all areas of its work.

The school has yet to ensure that goals for individual students are consistently established and regularly revisited in order to accelerate learning. Information from periodic assessments and other measures of progress are not yet connected up, across individual, class, grade, subject, academy and school levels. The school does not presently have the mechanisms to make sure that the regular monitoring of progress leads to action.

The school is clear about its direction and its broad goals, as set out in its Comprehensive Education Plan. It does not yet have a fully developed cycle of planning that marks out interim as well as long term goals and harnesses the contribution of each individual in working towards them.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Roland Hayes School (IS 291)	∅	✓	+
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		