

John S. Roberts Educational Complex

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Junior High School 045

**2351 1st Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10035**

Principal: Maria Aviles

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Cambridge Education**

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

This is an educational complex housing three Academies: Science and Humanities Academy, East Harlem Tech. and Raphael Cordero Bilingual Academy. In total there are 606 students on roll, the largest ethnic groups in school are Hispanic (63%) and Black (34%) with almost a quarter of students being English language learners. Approximately 20% are special education students. Many of the students come from low income, single-parent homes, 93% are Title 1 Eligible.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well supported by the cabinet and leadership team and has a very clear vision for the school, which is driving forward rapid improvement.
- The leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is using these well to move progress in whole school development.
- The collegiate approach of the staff and the opportunities for continuing professional development is improving pedagogical and management skills and bringing the three academies closer, giving greater consistency and a shared understanding of the needs of the whole school complex.
- The school gathers good quality data, which is used well to identify the needs of students. This is particularly well developed in identifying special education students (SPED) and English language learners (ELL).
- The management of special education is well developed, clearly identifies students' needs, prepares effective intervention programs to support their learning and is successful at improving their knowledge and understanding in English language skills.
- The school demonstrates how it values students' work through the wide range of high quality displays in all subjects that also provide good models for other students.
- There is a positive culture that is recognized and rewarded through the celebration of positive attitudes and success. This is supported by the majority of students and seen through the high levels of commitment to the wide range of school and after school activities.

What the school needs to improve

- Create a good quality curriculum model for all subjects to create closer links between the scope and sequence and the formative assessments needed to provide evidence of students' growth over time.
- Develop targets and expectations for all subjects at the end of each marking period or topic to monitor their progress and share these rubrics with the students.
- Improve the linkage/alignment between literacy and mathematics and other subjects of the curriculum to reinforce the key skills students' need to improve their performance particularly in writing.
- Use the available data more effectively at classroom level to improve the differentiation in teachers' planning and instruction to provide a closer match of work to students' needs.
- Develop a system that enables all teachers to have the high quality information on students' performance that comes from the intervention programs so they can reinforce and develop students' skills in general education lessons.
- Improve the behavior of the minority of students who do not conform to the high expectations of the school and involve the student body more in promoting the climate and culture that most subscribe to.
- Continue to improve attendance and punctuality through adopting a wider range of monitoring strategies, rewarding improved attendance and increasing parental understanding of attendance issues.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

This school is working hard to improve the life of its students, many of whom have significant issues in their personal lives. The staff of all three academies is working well to create a unified school that shares the same expectations and that achieves success.

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

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient overall.

The school's summative data show that performance for most students is well below grade level in all examination areas. The high proportion of special education (SPED) students and English language learners (ELL) pull down the overall school grade level results. Working to improve the performance of all, the school gathers a wide range of good quality data that it uses well to identify the specific needs of students. There are well developed systems used to identify in particular, the needs of SPED and ELL students. The school uses its data well to identify specific aspects of underperformance and as a result it is able to put successful intervention strategies in place. To further monitor their progress, the performance of these students is carefully measured and recorded over time. However, much of this high quality information is not being shared sufficiently well with all teachers. Consequently the alignment of planning and instruction to students' needs is much less evident in teachers' planning in the general education classes. Some staff has been developing their own strategies but this is not a consistent approach or helpful for the whole school. There is a need to agree clear targets and expectations for students that are used consistently across the school in all subjects and that can be used during marking periods or at the end of topics to measure students' performance. These rubrics also need to be shared with students so they are aware of what is expected of them at all times.

Quality Statement 2: 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.

With the high level of SPED and ELL the majority of students arrive with levels of performance well below grade expectations. Proficient and sometimes good teaching is making a difference to the rate of growth for not only these, but other general education students. Where more needs to be done is in addressing the wide range of needs in classes. There is often not enough differentiation in aligning the curriculum to the needs of all levels in the class and adapting the instruction to engage students more closely and actively. Where this is seen, students respond well and make more rapid progress.

The most effective strategies can be seen in the intervention programs for SPED and ELL students. The well-developed systems and approaches take students through the skills they need to develop in a

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clear and linear sequence. The result of this is that most students make rapid growth, often over a very short time. This is giving them the skills they need for more general education lessons. The system is also flexible, and as students become proficient they can be moved back into general classes full time. However, the high quality data that is being produced in these intervention classes is not finding its way into general classes where teachers could use this to modify their instruction or the scope and sequence of their curriculum planning. This is a missed opportunity to further consolidate these skills and enhance the rate of students' growth. However, the enrichment groups provide additional, good opportunities for students to improve their performance.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

There is much good co-operative work between the subject faculties in the three academies that is beginning to produce well developed curricular plans that have a clear scope and sequence and that will enable teachers in all three academies to work to common criteria. This is being further enhanced by the links being made between different subjects to consolidate and extend the skills being taught. This is work in progress but early indications show that this will provide a comprehensive, whole school approach to curriculum mapping. To make this even more useful, there should be regular assessment points for each subject based on agreed rubrics, laying out the steps students need to achieve the grade levels. These should also be shared with students to involve them more in assessing their own performance. If all teachers, regardless of grade level, have these documents available to them it will enable them to align their curriculum accurately to the needs of all their students.

Staff groups are working well to create a good quality curriculum model for all subjects, which will also create closer links between the scope and sequence of the subject and the formative assessments needed to provide evidence of students' growth over time. While this is work in progress there is an urgent need to improve the linkage/alignment between literacy and numeracy and other subjects of the curriculum to reinforce the key skills students need to improve their performance particularly in writing. This would reinforce the message that all teachers should be teachers of ELA and mathematics.

There is some helpful scheduling of teaching time that blocks classes for certain subjects and gives greater opportunity for extension and development beyond the normal class time. Along with other work this can be seen in the quality of displays around the schools, particularly in the field of arts. Students are also engaged in a wide range of after school activities in sports and leisure, including ballroom dancing, which they enjoy.

Behavior is still an issue in a few classrooms and there is a higher level of suspension than average. However, the 'safe room' works well and promotes the positive approach seen across the school that rewards desirable behavior and attitudes. Good data is collected to record the type and regularity of infractions but this needs further refinement to analyze by, for example, class and subject. This will provide better information for the leadership of the school on where to target early interventions. There is an urgent need to improve the behavior of the minority of students who do not conform to the high expectations of the school. This can also be approached through the greater involvement of the majority of the student body generally in promoting the climate and culture that most subscribe to.

Proficient use is made of the available data on attendance to target students with poor attendance records. There is an active attendance committee that follows up these cases. While attendance overall is below average, the school is working well to improve this but needs additional strategies to encourage and reward regular and improved attendance and increase parental understanding of

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attendance issues and expectations.

Quality Statement 4: 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 overall proficient with some aspects that are well-developed.

There is a well-developed cabinet structure and leadership group that has a common aim of providing the best possible education for all students. This is being promoted through a range of support and development structures, for example, interdisciplinary planning and monthly curriculum planning meetings. Alongside the positive developments in curriculum planning, other strategies being developed are producing a collegiate approach, bringing three schools together as one unit. In these committees, as with the curriculum development groups, there is a high level of discussion leading to agreed principles. This is taking time but the committees promoting whole school culture are developing common strategies and expectations that should give students a consistent approach to all aspects of school life for the future. With changes to the school's structure next year these agreements are fundamental to the smooth operation of the whole school to ensure students receive the same quality of education regardless of the academy they move into.

Good work is being done with Teachers' College both in the recruitment of new teachers and in the professional development (PD) of the current staff. Shared PD and modeling instruction are all building capacity in the school. There are also regular events for teachers such as reading of set texts to broaden knowledge and understanding of aspects of instruction, for example, "Do I really have to teach reading?" was aimed at making teachers aware of the need to be a literacy teacher regardless of your subject area. Other work in SQL techniques is improving teachers' ability to use this but some need further experiences to understand how to apply all of the possible interventions.

Quality Statement 5: 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.

Whole school planning is developing well. The work undertaken by groups representing the three academies in developing common approaches and common curriculum is bringing the different academies closer together. This is also providing a shared culture. To assist this there is a need for better use of some of the data or in some instances having better quality data, for example in mathematics. However, the mathematics faculty is developing a good mathematics intervention program and is carrying out a detailed calibration to agree common alignment of the curriculum to better meet the needs of all students.

The management of special education is well developed, clearly identifies students' needs, prepares effective intervention programs to support their learning and is successful at improving their knowledge and understanding in English language skills. There are well-developed strategies for assessing students' competencies in, for example, reading. From the careful analysis of this information interventions are put in place for SPED and ELL students that are addressing their needs well. This is particularly for the Black American and Hispanic boys. While these programs are heavily structured they are effective in improving students' ELA skills, in some cases with remarkable success. The parallel track for SPED and ELL students is targeting their needs well. However, the high quality data

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that is being produced from the regular assessment is not finding its way into the general education of these students so that the help of all teachers can be enlisted in moving further progress for these students. As with much of the available data, it is not all being used well enough to influence the scope and sequence of teachers' planning to ensure the work and instruction is closely matched to their students' needs.

Other key observations

There are well-developed systems to celebrate all that students and teachers do. Good displays of students' work showcase their talents in a range of subjects and set high standards for all to aspire to. The appreciation assemblies that recognize work and contribution to the school are successful in bringing students and teachers closer together and building greater bonds. These are both positive initiatives that are leading to a more unified school with a common culture.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English language arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are “objective” when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 		X	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.3 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>		X	
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>			X
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>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</p>		X	

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.		X	
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.		X	
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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	
3.6 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	
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.		X	

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	