



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Roosevelt Island School

Intermediate School 217

**645 Main Street
New York
NY 10044**

Principal: Mandana Beckman

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Reviewer: Barbara Kwiecinski

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

This elementary/intermediate school has 463 students on roll from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The majority of students are general education students, 8.4% are special education students and 11.6% are English language learners.

The school's population comprises of 41% Black and Native American, 15% White, 23% Asian and 20% Hispanic students. The percent of enrollment of recent immigrants is three times as high as New York City schools. The school has no Title 1 funding. Attendance at the school was 92% in 2005 which is higher than New York City schools. The percent of utilization of the school's capacity is lower than that for similar schools. A challenge for the school is to retain students through to eighth grade.

The principal has only been in post for a short length of time and is committed to the Roosevelt Island School and its community and raising all students' performance and progress.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and the assistant principal have put many systems in place to support the school's use of data and understand student progress since their appointments.
- The school has a collegiate atmosphere where the staff, students, parents and caregivers feel supported by the administration.
- There are improved communications with parents and caregivers including effective parent workshops which look at how students can reach their academic goals.
- The introduction of assessment binders is helping teachers to understand student performance, track progress and share information.
- The parent information packet and curriculum map effectively inform parents of the Roosevelt Island curriculum and school vision.
- The school provides a child centered learning environment for a culturally diverse student body.
- The talent program supports and extends the academic curriculum.
- After school instruction supports students with the greatest need and the Saturday math program provides enrichment and remediation.
- The principal frequently visits classrooms, knows all students and congratulates them on their progress.
- There are close links between teachers and the academic intervention team resulting in positive support for students with the greatest need.

What the school needs to improve

- Use all available data to understand the performance and progress of groups of students, including the progress of boys.
- Improve the consistency in the delivery of instruction including planning and differentiation to improve students' and groups of students' outcomes in the middle school.
- Make better use of the school's well resourced library to support student learning.
- Share data across grades so that learning is seen as a continuum and tracked year on year.
- Further refine plans and interventions to include dated and measurable goals related to data in order for plans to be refined and new targets set.

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

The principal and assistant principal are new in post and have begun to put procedures in place which will improve student performance. They are committed to the Public School / Intermediate School 217 community and recognize the challenges presented by the uniqueness of Roosevelt Island and its diverse community. Already they have improved communication and both staff and parents speak very positively of their work. They recognize the difficulties of managing a transient population where families who work for the permanent mission to the United Nations are part of the school for three years or less and also the problems associated with students admitted and discharged at various times throughout the school year. The school has some systems in place to track student progress. These are particularly effective in identifying and meeting the needs of the students who require the greatest support. The performance of subgroups of students is not measured and there is underperformance by boys in both English language arts and mathematics at grades four and eight, according to the 2005 School Report Card.

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 undeveloped.

The administration has started to put systems in place which will help teachers to use data more effectively to understand student progress. Prior to the principal's appointment teachers kept individual assessments of student's work, but the structures and systems were inconsistent. Assessment binders are now being used which follow the same format and are updated monthly. Teachers are being encouraged to be consistent in data collection and the use of data is improving.

The school has systems in place for collecting and analyzing data relating to the performance and progress of each individual student at classroom and grade levels. In addition to performance in mandatory tests, the school has procedures in place for identifying students at risk and providing appropriate interventions. This is a strength of the school, students having difficulty in meeting the standards for their grade are either supported in the classroom or through a 'pull out' model.

Data is used to track the progress of English language learners and special education students, but as of yet the school does not use data to understand the performance of ethnic groups or other categories of interest to the school. The new administration is aware of this and is considering how the under performance of boys in both English language arts and mathematics, and the variation in progress of different ethnic groups can be addressed.

The Saturday mathematics class is helping to support third, fourth, and sixth grade students and it is the principal's intention to extend this. As a consequence student performance in mathematics is improving.

Performance and progress between academic subject areas is beginning to be addressed and the reasons for the low science results in both fourth and eighth grades and the rising number of students who fall below the standard is being looked at.

The cabinet meets regularly and in a short space of time has begun to address the need to consistently gather data and make comparisons with the school's past performance and comparisons with similar schools.

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 coaches manage weekly grade level meetings where student data is analyzed. Formal bi-monthly meetings are held between the principal, assistant principal, coaches and the academic intervention team where the support needed for each student is decided. Plans are refined and immediate improvement strategies are put in place, but as yet the plans and timeframes for reaching long-range improvement goals in all academic subjects is less developed.

The cabinet compares the progress of students in each grade and class and the tier one interventions of additional instruction within the classroom have become more focused. The school has been recognized by the city as a model intervention site and the students with greatest need are well supported. The underachievement of boys and the progress of ethnic groups has not been identified as a priority and goals have not been set for these subgroups of students, but their individual needs have been acknowledged.

Parents speak positively about the new principal. Since her appointment communication with parents has improved dramatically. The parent information packet clearly outlines procedures and the curriculum map explains the academic curriculum for each grade as well as enrichment opportunities. The elementary school report card has been redesigned and parents believe that the new principal is setting very high standards. Students in pre-kindergarten to grade 5 understand their targets and work hard. The principal is working hard with all the coaches to achieve the same high standards in the middle school.

Staff have common planning time and in most grades work together to plan how to improve student performance. The principal and assistant principal are working with all teachers to develop their use of data to inform planning and reduce the inconsistencies.

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.

The school is a balanced literacy school focusing on maintaining standards in listening, speaking, reading and writing. There is a great emphasis on accountable talk and in the pre-kindergarten through 5th grade classes, students are becoming active listeners and participants. The transition to the Everyday Math Curriculum has improved student progress. Mathematics and English teaching are aligned to the State and City standards and the mandated curriculum. The school has a well resourced library with many books and computers, but it is not used sufficiently to support individualized student learning. The need for literature for high achieving students is recognized, with new books ordered to engage students and raise performance.

The administration is striving to make teachers realize the importance of accountability, visiting classrooms on a regular basis. This has highlighted the fact that there is inconsistent practice and not all teachers plan and differentiate their instruction to meet individual student need. Positive individual meetings are beginning to help teachers who are uncomfortable in using data to improve outcomes.

Staffing decisions have not previously been made by the needs revealed by student data but will be in the future. The Comprehensive Education Plan is beginning to be used and the cabinet is working hard to set the direction for the school and make the vision real. The talent program supports the academic curriculum and students speak positively about this.

Students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade enjoy their work and speak positively about their achievements. They receive praise and support from their teachers and the good classroom displays reinforce learning. Instruction in the middle school is more variable, as is the classroom organization. Where the instruction is good students are keen to answer questions, work hard and make progress. In other lessons in the middle school students are not sufficiently challenged and make little progress.

The eighth grade students are proud of their newly formed student government.

The principal is working very closely with the guidance counselors to involve students and parents to ensure good attendance. Lateness is also being tackled and parents have welcomed the higher expectations.

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 principal has gained the respect of staff, students and parents in a short time. She knows her staff, students, and parents and appreciates the Roosevelt Island community. She sets high standards. She is very visible, has an open door policy and is encouraging all staff and students to follow her example. One of her long term aims is to select staff who can reach students academically and who would be willing to learn and grow. The cabinet supports each other and talk openly about student performance. They are beginning to develop consistent, accountable teams where teachers are accountable and feel comfortable about being self reflective.

Teachers attend a wide range of the Teacher's College professional development workshops. There is some self selection of courses and decisions are also made by the coaches in order to address the teacher's perceived need. Professional development is now been driven by the needs revealed by student data and teachers are becoming more accountable through summarizing the workshops they have attended at grade level meetings in order to improve instruction.

The principal and assistant principal frequently observe lessons on an informal basis and liaise closely with the coaches to discuss the professional development that teachers need. The coaches model the improvements the principal has asked teachers to make. The principal carries out formal observations and teachers welcome her feedback and agreed strategies to improve instruction. She knows that the high standards and expectations of students set by most teachers now needs to happen consistently.

Most teachers work together in teams to plan instruction to meet the varying needs of students in their classes. Teachers from support services are part of the team and use data from assessments to help students reach academic goals. The majority of areas of the school run smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.

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 principal is beginning to put structures in place to check how well the school is performing. Examples of structures that are evaluated are school safety, discipline and consequences, attendance, lateness, the thirty seven and a half minute program, the after school program and examining effective teaching practice. The cabinet meets frequently to review and evaluate the school's actions, so plans can be adapted and updated. However the setting of frequent interim goals and the progress towards these is a new and emerging priority.

The support for students with the greatest need and comparisons of their progress towards their goals is a strength. Extensive data is shared by the academic intervention team. Some of this is presently not shared at whole school level or used by individual teachers to compare student progress within and across classrooms. Comparisons of students progress is not compared with other schools when goals are being set.

Improved communication between all members of the faculty means that plans are continually revised and the cabinet is beginning to link data to goal setting.

The task of the principal is extensive as she inherited a situation where there was no clear structure to consistently evaluate each student's progress throughout the year. Her supportive philosophy is helping this to happen and she is trying to move the entire school to accept change as a positive vehicle for achieving goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Roosevelt Island School (IS 217)	∅	✓	+
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		