



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Raymond York School

Public School 65

**103-22 99th Street
Queens
NY 11417**

Principal: Beth Longo

Dates of review: May 14 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: Ronnie Solow

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Raymond York School, Public School 65, is located in the Ozone Park section of Queens. The 534 students in grades kindergarten through 5 are 53.4% male and 46.63% female. The ethnic composition of the school is 43.8% Asian and others, 41.4% Hispanic, 7.7% White, and 7.12% Black. English language learners comprise 13.1% of the students. Special education students account for 11.8% of the student body.

The school has received a multi-million dollar grant from a private benefactor to support Success For All, the academic program of the school. School funds support reduced class sizes through the third grade.

The school receives Title 1 funds for 80% of the school which matches the average of similar schools and is better than the average for City schools. The attendance rate is 94.33% placing the school ahead of similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principal have a highly visible presence and are readily accessible.
- The principal is well respected by students, parents and staff and has a clear capacity to manage change.
- The use of data underpins the instructional program well.
- The staff is collegial and teachers support one another effectively in their professional growth and development.
- Rules, regulations, and procedures are well known and followed by all.
- There is a culture of mutual respect and support between students and staff.
- Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are closely aligned to student needs.
- Students are well known across groups, classes and grades.
- Students are actively engaged in their learning.
- The building is well maintained and decorated with examples of current student work.

What the school needs to improve

- Create a staff handbook from the memorandums that are distributed at the opening conference.
- Expand youth development activities to develop a student government organization.
- Increase data collection to include additional subgroups of interest.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal has been at the school for the past four years and has put together an effective administrative team with skills in mathematics, literacy, English language acquisition, special education and subject area expertise. In cooperation with the staff, the team has created a professional community that has had a positive impact on the learning outcomes for their students.

The staff works collaboratively in grade teams to regularly analyze data and use the information to prepare appropriate lessons and evaluate student progress effectively. Literacy and mathematics facilitators support the teams, along with the principal and assistant principal, other related service providers and tutors trained in the Success For All programs.

The school uses the Success For All reading and mathematics programs that group students based on skills and needs across grades. Every staff member at the school provides instruction during the 100-minute literacy instruction block enabling the school to reduce teacher to pupil instruction ratios. The principal and her cabinet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school collects and analyzes data from many sources to educate their students better. There is an effective system to monitor the performance of every student, group, class and grade across the school. A database has been developed that incorporates information on all students from intake through the present and includes biographical information, examination history, related services, academic intervention services, and current performance levels. Each teacher uses relevant assessment data, their own informal assessment information and conference notes as well as the results of State tests, Princeton Review interim assessments, Region tests, and the Success For All progress reports data.

All data is used to monitor the performance of students, according to ethnicity and especially English language learners and special education students. The data from these subgroups is further disaggregated for those students attending the school for more than three years and less than three years to assess progress towards meeting the benchmarks in literacy and mathematics. The principal recognizes the need to refine data analysis further for students with medical conditions that affect school progress and a growing population of students with little or no formal education prior to coming to this country, in order to better understand their specific needs.

The administrative team regularly reviews performance in literacy and mathematics from school-generated data every eight weeks. Student progress is examined for individual growth and progress, literacy group progress, class growth and grade improvement. All students are placed in literacy instruction groups based on the outcomes of the eight week Success For All assessment data. Student groups are then matched with teacher strengths in order to provide the optimal learning environment. Every quarter, the literacy groups are redesigned dependent upon the outcomes illustrated by the data.

The principal participates in her network group and regularly compares the data with other regional and City schools. All data analysis and utilization of the information gathered enables the administration to monitor performance outcomes effectively and to share the information with the staff at team, grade and faculty meetings.

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 Success For All instructional model requires a high level of collaborative planning among the staff, students and parents. The school uses the data broken down by individual, class, grade, ethnic groups, English language learners, and special education students to set measurable goals in reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies taking into account the priorities of the Region and City. The cabinet closely examines all data prior to presenting it to the staff at team, grade and faculty meetings. The knowledge gathered from the analyses is used to establish goals that are reviewed during the eight week cycle. Parents are included through individual conferences, parent association meetings and the school leadership team. Data is fully explained and parent input requested. Staff members can articulate and explain how the use of data has informed their classroom practices and how they regularly use the data to regroup.

Each school-wide literacy group is created based on an item skill analysis of assessment information and teacher observations and includes all sub groups. Additional services are provided by appropriate staff using the push-in or pull-out models of instruction based upon student needs. All students who are not performing on grade level in reading, and mathematics receive individual tutoring from grade level specialists trained in the Success For All model. The pupil personnel team uses the tutorial data along with the previously gathered information to determine the need for additional services such as phonics instruction, special education teacher support services, or referral to special education. Students identified as being at-risk also receive academic intervention services in the extended day program, after school or during the course of the day.

Students are engaged in collaborative teams on projects designed for their group while the teacher monitors the class activities. Every teacher holds conferences with students to discuss goals and provide feedback on progress. High performing mathematics students meet with the mathematics facilitator once a week to work on challenging assignments. Parents are active partners in the school. Information is provided through regularly scheduled events such as back-to-school parent orientation, curriculum meetings, report cards and informal meetings. Newsletters, parent-teacher association meetings, school leadership team meetings and workshops designed to increase parent engagement are additional opportunities for conveying the high expectations of the school, keeping parents informed and gathering information from them.

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.

Because a significant minority of students was performing below grade level, the school examined several programs designed to improve performance outcomes and selected Success For All. The school uses a wide variety of measures in order to differentiate instruction based on student needs. Data is used to differentiate instruction for high performing students, those on grade level and those performing below grade level expectations. The staff also incorporates the balanced literacy approach to reading and writing instruction using leveled libraries in the classrooms. Science and social studies instruction follow the mandated State guidelines.

Grade teams meet weekly in collaborative planning sessions and informally over lunch to assess grade trends, plan lessons and units of study, and make suggestions to the administration regarding pacing and alignment of unit topics. All qualitative and quantitative progress data is used to inform these decisions. Students are actively engaged in their learning and can articulate their goals, strategies being used and levels of performance. Teachers are accountable for improving student outcomes by actively engaging their students in goal setting, conferencing, accountable student talk activities, engaging parents and providing additional support when it is warranted. The homogeneous literacy groups allow teachers to follow the scripted curriculum plan but also to modify it according to the needs of the students in their current group.

The principal is a very effective manager. Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are clearly based on the identified needs of the students. The budget supports reduced class sizes in grades kindergarten through three, as well as the specially trained Success For All tutors for students falling below grade level expectations. Students reported that there are many adults they know and trust, including the principal, in the school. The attendance rate at the school is higher than similar schools. Absence triggers an immediate response from the school. An incentive program using certificates and parties rewards students and their parents for excellent and improved attendance.

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.

Staff members are hired based on subject area expertise, use of data, interpersonal skills and knowledge of the teaching of literacy. All professional development activities support the needs of the staff and students. Examination of students work folders, school data and classroom observations by the administration, facilitators, staff developer and individual education plan teacher help to determine professional development needs. A consultant from Success For All works with the staff on a quarterly cycle to improve instruction. Professional development also includes Regional priorities in science, early childhood education, mathematics instruction and special education strategies. In anticipation of the delivery of Smart Board technology, teachers are now being trained in their use. Ongoing training in the use of data is a regular activity at team, grade and faculty conferences. All professional development activities are monitored for success through the examination of student work, data trends and classroom observations. All members of the staff are

observed by the principal and assistant principal. The thorough observation process includes a timely written report with suggestions for strengthening the teaching and learning in the class. Informal visits result in a brief note about the observed lesson or technique. Team meetings and inter- visitations support teacher skill development. One effective measure is the demonstration of particular strategies by the facilitators, principal or teachers in order to build capacity.

The principal is well respected and described as a supportive, caring and dedicated to the entire school community. Rules regulations and procedures are spelled out in various staff memorandums. The principal acknowledges the need to incorporate them into a readily accessible staff handbook in order to institutionalize them across the school. The school is a quiet, orderly learning environment. Youth development activities are effectively tied to the academic and social programs at the school. One focus is the development of social responsibility through fundraising efforts for various charities. Activities include after school tutorial and recreation programs for students and adult education programs for parents. The principal is currently investigating the creation of a student government in order to further the social growth and responsibility of the student body.

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.

An innovative approach to developing the school calendar is utilized. Where most schools plan the academic year from September to June, this school plans from March to March. This calendar allows the school leadership team to modify and revise plans based on the analysis of the most current data received from State and City sources as well as the school-generated data. The Comprehensive Education Plan is then developed after a thorough review of all data sources and determines the school-year priorities. Every eight weeks the Success For All data is analyzed and new literacy groups are formed. Analysis of this data revealed that some students were having difficulty making the leap from level 2 to level 3. The school incorporated the universal strategy from Success For All to assist these students as an interim strategy to increase comprehension skills development. It has proven to be an effective measure that has increased student capacity.

Modifications are easily instituted based on the eight week cycle of assessment, data collection and analysis. Students not making sufficient progress are identified and referred for additional services and interventions. The school has also developed a check list that monitors test preparation skills attainment through item skill analysis. The teachers use it after giving in-class tests to check whether the class has mastered a particular skill or whether that skill needs to be revisited. Student portfolios are used in every class and reflect the work the student has accomplished. The portfolio travels with the student from year to year and, along with the school database information, provides an accurate picture of annual performance and progress.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is developed by the school leadership team and reflects the goals and objectives developed after a thorough and rigorous analysis of the existing goals and objectives, including measures of success. The principal and her administrative team are continually evaluating, monitoring and modifying the goals and plans as a result of the extensive database information.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

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| SCHOOL NAME: Raymond York School (PS 65) | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| Quality Score | | | X |

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| 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.

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| 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 |

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| 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 |