



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Rego Park School

Public School 139

**93 - 06 63 Drive
Queens
NY 11374**

Principal: Fern Chosed

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Reviewer: Peter Williman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 139 is an elementary school for grades kindergarten through 6 located in the Rego Park section of Queens. The school community has more than 37 languages spoken among a population drawn from 80 countries or ethnic origins. There are more students who have recently arrived into the country than in other schools. These students were mostly born in China, India and Uzbekistan. The total school population of 770 students is made up of 35.9% White students, 35.5% Asian students, 24.7% Hispanic students and 3.9% Black students. At approximately 95%, attendance in 2005 was higher than that of similar schools and much higher than schools across the City. There are fewer special education students than in similar or City schools, but more English language learners.

The school is well maintained and presents a clean, bright environment with generally good-sized classrooms. A large gymnasium, two dining rooms, and an auditorium provide additional flexible accommodation. Classroom libraries and the spacious central library are well stocked. The schoolyard is large and provides appropriately for recreation with good quality play equipment for younger students in a specific partitioned area. Expenditure per student from the last available calculation in 2004 was below the average for similar and City schools. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

The school has a very active Parent Teacher Association, which provides a stimulating range of arts and athletic enrichment activities after school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has high expectations of its students and consequently achievements in English language arts, mathematics and science have risen consistently.
- The school collects a comprehensive range of data to understand the progress of students and uses it very effectively to inform next stages of instruction and to determine student groupings and support.
- The school is effective in adopting new programs, projects and strategies to achieve its instructional goals.
- Teachers know their students well and use a range of techniques to ensure that the students' next steps in learning, especially in English language arts, are soundly based on available data.
- The principal leads by example in her commitment and determination that the school should continue to drive forward academic standards and enrich the curriculum for all students.
- The assistant principal ably supports the principal and together they give strong leadership to the collaborative and constructive work of grade teachers.
- The school uses its data effectively to provide high quality programs for gifted and talented students, for English language learners and for special education students.
- The school places high value on progress in reading and has developed comprehensive school wide systems to provide good quality reading material and to monitor progress to ensure teachers match students consistently at an appropriate reading level.
- The school is a caring community, which, by its open communication with parents and the support it gives to their understanding of the learning process, promotes commitment and loyalty.
- Professional development strategies are evolving to create a reflective learning culture in which teachers are spontaneously engaged in school and personal enrichment.

What the school needs to improve

- Overview and compare the performance for all groups and categories of students to identify gaps and set measurable goals that will make a significant difference to performance.
- Use data to track the progress of grade cohorts of students to set proactive, challenging and measurable goals and targets for subjects, individuals, classes, grades and groups.
- Identify and compare, through qualitative and quantitative data, the value added to students' achievement in the above categories as a result of the strategies and new initiatives introduced by the school.
- Train all staff in analysis of the data from the new City assessments to set explicit goals that can inform planning and differentiation.
- Promote the school's best practices in data and assessment recording in order to encourage mutual understanding of the school's student information.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

A visitor to Rego Park School immediately has a sense of purpose and pace in the culture of the school. This sense is generated by the high expectations, determination and commitment of the principal. Second best is not good enough. Her classic remark is "If you got 99% what happened to the last percentage point?" As a result, with the assistance of her cabinet, the principal has organized the school to promote high achievement for students of all capabilities.

Teachers know their students well and share this knowledge with parents. Special education students are very well supported while high achieving students are challenged and receive enrichment through the projects they undertake in Kappa classes. The school uses the comprehensive range of data it collects to understand the progress of students and to underpin its policy for excellence. The latter is very apparent in a walkthrough of the school where bulletin boards give examples of the overall high quality and progression of students' achievements in writing against set criteria. Data is used very effectively to inform next stages of instruction and to determine student groupings. The school has recognized that to continue to ensure high standards in a data rich environment, it must refine its understanding of data and the consistency with which teachers can understand and use data effectively to promote student learning.

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 a comprehensive range of data to understand the progress of students, particularly in English language arts and mathematics. Regular State and City assessments are complemented with commercially-produced assessments, bought in by the school. Together these provide a spectrum of good quality analysis of students' individual progress and a breakdown of students' strengths and weaknesses through which to inform instruction. The administration and teachers each have data appropriate to their level of decision-making. The administration has an overview of school performance and closely scrutinizes the performance of each grade and class. The administration has begun to recognize the value of tracking the performance of student cohorts year-over-year to understand progress in a more relative manner. This is not yet an institutionalized practice. Teachers have good quality records from frequent conferences with students and observation of student progress through which to understand student progress. Assessment binders keep data in an accessible form, helping teachers to track progress through reference to a range of records and to identify groups of students who may have similar difficulties.

English language learners and special education students are well served because of the close attention the administration and specialist teachers pay to data that informs support

and instruction. Additionally, the administration and the leadership team have, after very careful consultation, identified the need for specific programs for talented and gifted students. As a result, 'Kappa' classes have been instituted for high performing students in grades 2 through 6. The challenging and enriching instruction in these classes clearly demonstrates the success of the strategy. The school is generally proficient in comparing whole school performance with that of the past. There are also systems in place to use data to compare individual student, class and grade performances, although this information is more explicit in the administration's knowledge than in recorded analysis.

Data is used very effectively to reflect on the performance of specific groups, although insufficient attention is paid to a fully detailed comparative overview of all performance data. For example, the school record card shows that Hispanic students perform significantly below other groups in English language arts (but not in mathematics) and this is not addressed in school plans. New streams of data will necessarily challenge the administration to review its analysis procedures and paradigms.

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 school leadership team and teachers generally use data effectively to promote students' learning. The administration works closely with teachers to review students' progress with particular attention to students who are not achieving the state standards. Teachers have prescribed time to work together to review teaching practices for their grade and to identify common aims to improve practice to achieve student targets. The principal and the assistant principal often join these meetings both to give guidance and to keep in close touch with student progress and teacher instruction. The principal leads by example in her commitment and determination that the school should continue to drive forward its academic achievement. This has become a shared culture within the school. The school provides high-quality programs for talented and gifted students, for English language learners and for special education students through well-timed interventions based on data review.

The school uses its data well to identify individual goals and student groupings. Its systems are not yet sufficiently refined, however, to be proactive by setting within its goals overt, measurable targets for subjects, individuals and groups which then translate into learning objectives.

The school sets high expectations and consequently students' achievements in English language arts, mathematics and science have risen consistently. These expectations are openly shared with parents who value both their formal and informal involvement in reviewing student progress. For example, teachers keep in touch by email to share everyday issues. They use assessment folders in combination with student work very effectively at parent teacher conferences to explain not only current student performance to parents but also what should be expected in the next stages. New goals are set for students, for example, in reading at the weekly conferences that they have with their teachers.

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

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

The school takes great care in the selection of programs to ensure the mandated curriculum is in place and takes every opportunity within its funding to add breadth and value to the curriculum. The reading and mathematics programs adopted by the school are structured to provide clear tracking of student progress. For example, students’ reading is judged against expected levels for each grade and therefore an overview of individual and group attainment is easily assessed. The principal uses a restricted budget to maintain a depth and strength to the curriculum. For example, she appointed a music teacher to strengthen the arts program and achieves good value for the visual arts by bringing artists in residence into the school.

Most teachers work hard to provide the highest level of service to their students. Planning through grade team meetings broadens the accountability for programs and at the same time underpins consistency in quality. Teachers individually use the data from conferences with students and observation during lessons to plan strategies for instruction. Records reveal common problems, which teachers use to plan group instruction. This ensures that the support and challenge provided to students is effectively differentiated and that instruction actively engages the students.

Staff know the students well. This enables them to meet their personal, as well as academic, needs effectively. Student attendance is afforded a high priority. Effective systems ensure that above average attendance is maintained.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

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

The principal is well respected within the school and by parents for her high expectations. A walkthrough of the hallways is a testimony to these expectations and to the good progress students make in all grades. The principal’s expectations are well demonstrated through the recent appointments to the school. Thorough procedures ensure that the qualities of a teacher’s skills are carefully considered to complement the current staff team. New teachers to the school demonstrate that they aspire to a high quality of instruction, as well as being proficient in managing student records and in using data to inform instruction. These teachers also have useful insights to contribute to their grade team conferences.

Professional development is planned to be pertinent to school and student needs. A priority for the principal, as identified in her review goals, is the development of assessment binders that better correlate assessment data to inform instruction. This process has inherent professional development connotations and is under way. A significant number of staff are already demonstrating good practices, but these are not yet consistent across all classrooms. Further, all staff are not, as yet, proficient in analyzing available data to tease out explicit instructional goals to inform planning and to facilitate differentiation of group instruction. This is work in progress. Teachers’ perceptions of the longitudinal development of learning have been significantly widened through inter-classroom visitations among kindergarten to grade 3 teachers and grade 4 to 6 teachers.

This recently adopted strategy has set a precedent for greater and continued understanding of student development, of which data plays a part.

The principal and assistant principal have a high profile through their frequent walkthroughs of the school. They demonstrate keen perception and the ability to summarize succinctly the qualities of instruction and learning in the classrooms, while at the same time overseeing the effective day-to-day running of the school. Consequently, their follow-up discussions with teachers after both formal and informal visits to classrooms are valid and valued. They use their frequent observation to support teachers where necessary. Effective partnerships with external organisations are used well to broaden and enrich the students' experiences, in music and art for example.

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 proficient.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is based upon substantial analysis of the previous year's developments and student achievement. The overarching planning of the school expressed through it and the planning which arises from ongoing assessments and interventions are only loosely connected, however. While the latter give evidence to the progress of the former, there is no planned relationship between the documentation in terms of explicit interim goals. The objectives within the Comprehensive Education Plan do not sufficiently facilitate the setting of such interim goals, nor the assessment of progress towards them. The school currently has insufficient tracking data to define objectives that are truly valid by being attainable and relevant. Consequently, the evaluation of the impact of instructional interventions and the ability to modify goals and plans more effectively to promote higher student achievement are not always sufficiently timely and effective.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is monitored, but incidentally rather than systematically. Comparisons with other schools are made through available City and State data. Comparisons are similarly made between classes and grades. The evidence within the current plan demonstrates that the school leadership team, which prepares the document, has sufficient understanding to ensure the school's continued growth.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Rego Park School (PS 139)	∅	✓	+
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	