



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ruby G Allen School

Public School 148

**80 - 02 32 Avenue
Queens
NY 11369**

Principal: Andrew Paccione

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Reviewer: Lysbeth Bradley

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

Public School 148 has 1126 students enrolled from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. Unlike the pattern in similar and City schools, there are more girls than boys. The school population comprises 78% Hispanic students, 4% White, 3% Black and 15% Asian and those from other ethnic backgrounds. There is almost double the percentage of students new to the country when compared with similar and City schools, many of whom come from the Spanish-speaking countries of Columbia, Ecuador and Mexico. The numbers of English language learners are steadily increasing and account for nearly 28% of the school population. There has been a similar increase in the numbers of special education students which now stands at 14%.

The school is Title 1 eligible with all students qualifying, a higher proportion than found in similar and City schools. The attendance rate is 94% which is above the average for similar and City schools. This is despite the high levels of student transience resulting from a significant number of English language learners returning to their countries of origin for one or two months during the academic year.

The school has had a long association with Teachers College and is one of their project schools providing professional development for other teachers in the district. The school also maintains a Teacher Center where teachers can obtain information, share materials, and get ideas about the availability and use of technology in all curriculum areas.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and assistant principals have been effective in developing a collaborative learning culture as a basis for managing change successfully.
- Relationships are excellent at all levels of the school and students enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and are eager to learn.
- The administration has established many purposeful systems and structures to promote understanding, reflection and consistency of practice among staff.
- The building is a print rich environment where students' work is celebrated.
- The school has successfully developed formative assessment systems in reading to provide teachers with reliable data with which to plan next steps in students' learning.
- Successful early interventions for those students most at risk have almost eliminated holdovers in the testing grades.
- Administrators, coaches and faculty make good use of a range of data to accelerate the progress of English language learners and special education students.
- Teachers know their students very well and differentiate instruction and learning to meet the needs of groups working at different levels within the classroom in English language arts and mathematics.
- The school makes creative budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions which take good account of all available information.
- The school is successful in reaching out to parents and involving them as partners in their children's learning and in school improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Give increased emphasis to setting learning goals for students in reading, writing and mathematics, make sure that they and their parents understand how to achieve them and involve students in assessing their own progress.
- Sharpen school improvement planning by identifying measurable indicators of success and extend structures and checkpoints to track progress towards key goals over the year in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that new programs and changes to organizational structures are monitored and evaluated rigorously to measure their impact.
- Review the social studies curriculum, and approaches to teaching and learning, to ensure that students are motivated to learn and provide them with genuine opportunities to use their literacy skills.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

This school has come a long way in a relatively short time under this administration. The principal, with good support from his two assistant principals, has worked with a clear sense of purpose to establish strong foundations where effective collaboration and honest evaluation can flourish. Good attention has been paid to using reliable information from a range of sources to improve the quality of teaching and learning, backed up by well targeted professional development. As a direct consequence, students are experiencing greater levels of success and performance is improving, particularly in mathematics where the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard has increased significantly.

The school's partnership with Teachers College is tangible in almost every corner of the building, which is a print rich environment where the learning process is carefully documented and students' work is celebrated. The implementation of Everyday Math is less visible but has made even more impact on students' engagement and enjoyment. In its latest Comprehensive Education Plan, the school has identified that more work is needed to develop the curriculum and assessment in science and social studies in order to tackle pockets of underachievement in both content areas.

The school is now poised to take its planning for school improvement to the next level by introducing greater precision in goal setting at whole school level and for individual students. Not enough has been done to ensure that new initiatives are carefully monitored and evaluated in order to measure their impact and the extent to which human and material resources are assigned for maximum impact.

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 administration takes good account of a wide range of summative and formative assessment data in order to keep a watchful eye on student performance and progress at individual, class and grade level. Comparisons are made regularly, both internally and with schools with a similar student population, to identify any underachievement or better than expected performance. Patterns and trends are identified, analyzed and followed up systematically where necessary.

The school has been most effective in gathering, analyzing and using data to accelerate progress in reading, and there is real strength in this area of the school's recent work. Administrators, coaches and faculty are actively engaged in evaluating the quality of data derived from State tests and periodic assessments. This led to the formation of a study group that looked critically at reading data to determine whether it provided the right information and subsequently developed its own assessment systems.

The school has also developed effective systems to identify the learning needs of English language learners and special education students, and to track their progress at regular intervals. Although the school does not look at the data relating to ethnicity in quite the same depth, it has been active in monitoring the learning of Black students living in temporary housing. The school has identified other groups of importance, such as those students whose promotion is in doubt and those who may need referral for additional support. Good systems are in place to monitor small steps in learning, although the school has not looked quite so closely at data to check on the progress of those students who are working at or above grade level, nor to see whether boys and girls do equally well.

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 proficient.

The principal has enabled faculty and school leaders to get involved in decision making. Goal setting and evaluation of the school’s strengths and areas for improvement are genuinely collaborative and understood by everyone involved in the process. Goals are based on a thorough analysis of data and set at whole school, subgroup and individual level, but do not have measurable or observable indicators of success to enable the school to track progress in relation to teaching, learning and student outcomes.

The school has been particularly successful at improving the performance and progress of those students whose promotion is in doubt. As a result of providing high quality support and intensive monitoring of students’ learning in the early grades and ensuring that the curriculum is matched to their developmental stage, the school has virtually eliminated holdovers in the testing grades.

Communication with parents has been strengthened in recent years and a great deal of effort has been made to engage those parents whose first language is not English, both in supporting their children and in playing their part in the school’s development. Parents really appreciate the accessibility of the principal and his staff. They praise the quality of communication and the safe environment in which their children learn. Expectations of academic effort, punctuality, attendance and behavior are made clear. Although both parents and their children know where they are aiming, students are not given clear enough indications of the small steps needed to achieve the next stage in their learning. Teachers are being effectively supported in providing better diagnostic written comments when conferencing with students about reading and writing as a means of tracking progress, but this has not been extended to mathematics.

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.

Relationships are excellent at all levels and students enjoy coming to school, attend regularly, behave well and are eager to learn. They feel safe in school and know that there are several adults they could turn to should they have any concern, whether personal or

academic. The school has successfully used a wide range of strategies to encourage good timekeeping and regular attendance. This is reflected in the latest figures which show that the levels of attendance increase as students move from grade to grade.

The school has made good strides in developing a curriculum for English language arts and mathematics that not only aligns with the mandated curriculum and standards, but also makes good use of data to promote continuity of learning and encourages students to become actively engaged. Teachers know that they are held accountable for their students' progress and have become skilled in using formative assessment in both these areas of the curriculum to plan suitably challenging activities for students working at different levels with the classroom.

Plans are well advanced for an expanded science curriculum with the emphasis on promoting high quality teaching and learning, meaningful links with literacy and numeracy, and exciting opportunities for exploration. There has been much less emphasis on introducing active approaches to teaching and learning in social studies, a subject which students describe as having little relevance to their lives and no element of fun. The school acknowledges that this is one subject where its aim to provide authentic experiences that connect classroom learning with real life has yet to be realized.

The school makes creative budgetary, staffing and scheduling decisions which take good account of the most up-to-date information and align with the school's mission and goals. One such decision has been to form a small class of students in the early grades whose promotion is in doubt in order to provide intensive and well targeted support. Another is to increase the number of science clusters and to provide a wide range of professional development opportunities that enable classroom teachers to play a full part in developing the science curriculum.

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 has gained the trust and respect of staff and parents through his genuine wish to involve them as partners in school improvement planning. The administration has demonstrated the ability to manage change by bringing staff along with them on the journey, listening to what they need in order to do the job well and then providing them with the necessary resources, support and guidance. The school has established clear routines that enable the school to run smoothly so that all members of the school community can concentrate their efforts on important tasks of teaching and learning.

Decisions about the hiring of new staff are based on their commitment to the school and its students, the ability to reflect critically on their own practice and knowledge of Teachers College practice and procedures. Structures have been established to enable grade teams to plan their work together based on the use of a wide range of information and honest evaluation. This work is developing well and enabling teachers to gain a better understanding of what is happening in other classrooms and other grades, although these meetings are not consistently effective.

Professional development underpins every aspect of school improvement with much emphasis placed on developing the right climate for learning. A wide range of professional development opportunities is provided that is closely aligned to the school's goals and the needs of individual staff. Information is gathered by administrators and coaches from

learning walks, formal and informal observations, and working alongside teachers in the classroom, as well as through staff surveys. This data feeds directly into a considered and effective strategy by the professional development team whose members set up coaching cycles and inter-visitations, and also assign workshops for teachers to attend.

The school has concentrated on improving achievement in English language arts and mathematics and has not yet given sufficient attention to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in science and social studies, or other curriculum areas, in order to secure a consistency of approach and strong links between subjects. However, good attention has been paid to establishing a number of successful partnerships with outside organizations to provide rich experiences for students in music, painting, sculpture and drama.

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 school wisely opted for an abridged Comprehensive Education Plan to chart its goals and plans of work. The small number of goals reflects those areas which have been of high priority for the past year. However, these goals are not always precise enough, nor broken down into smaller, interim goals that would enable accurate measurement of the school's progress at fixed points during the year. This means that although the school is generally making the right decisions during the year it does not always do so in the most timely fashion or in such a way as to produce maximum impact. For example, the school has recently made changes to organizational structures and introduced new programs, but has not identified precisely what it wants to achieve and how it will know that it has been successful in terms of the quality of teaching, learning and student achievement.

Closer attention is paid to the comparative progress of groups of students that the school has identified and for individual students within and across classrooms. The academic intervention service takes account of a wide range of information from all staff who may work with each individual. This enables the team to build up a complete picture of each targeted student and understand what has accelerated progress or caused it to stall in order to reduce, increase or change the nature of the interventions. Teachers also make good use of formative and summative assessments at regular intervals throughout the year to realign the curriculum and resources and to adapt teaching strategies to accelerate the progress of individuals, groups and classes.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ruby G Allen (PS148)	∅	✓	+
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	