



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Ronald H Brown Community School**

**Public School 155**

**130- 02 115th Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11420**

**Principal: Dorothy Morris**

**Dates of review: May 22 - 23, 2007**

**Reviewer: Richard Woolf**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Ronald H Brown School is a pre kindergarten through grade 5 of approximately 650 enrolled students. The majority of students are in general education with 6% English language learners and 9% special education students and both groups are on a par when compared to similar or other City schools. The school population is made up of 46% Black, Asian and others 31%, 21% Hispanic and 2% White. There are more females than males in the school. There are four full time pre kindergarten classes with an honors class in each of the other grades and provision is made for special education classes where appropriate.

The school qualifies for Title 1 funding and has a number of eligible students which is similar to other schools. The rate of attendance is currently 93% and this compares favorably to both similar and other City schools.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school uses data well to drive instruction.
- The principal drives school leadership very effectively.
- The school's staff are committed, hardworking and loyal.
- Students articulate well about their individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Effective differentiation results in good progress.
- Staff and students fully respect each other.
- The parents rightly believe the school to be a place where their children are safe and also achieve.
- The school celebrates the work of students effectively.
- There are good incentives for students to achieve.
- The school sets high standards and is beginning to demonstrate improvement.

### What the school needs to improve

- Set more challenging targets for higher achieving students.
- Pay greater attention to the different achievement of boys and girls.
- Make better use of timeframes when measuring overall progress.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well-developed features.**

Over the last four years this school has made significant progress in raising the achievements of its students by very good use of all effective data. A great deal of this success must go to the principal who was appointed at a time when the school was at its lowest point.

Through her tenacity, drive and professionalism she has blended together a staff with an excellent balance of experience and youth. Together they are realizing the potential of all their students to achieve at higher levels than initial data would suggest. This is beginning to impact on every facet of school life and the students are responding admirably to the challenges they are facing. The students themselves are particularly pleased of the incentives they are offered to do well in their academics and social responsibilities. This is exemplified by the school's mascot Kelso the Frog who is the arbiter of all good things in the school. There are a growing number of parents who value the work of the staff in developing the life chances of their children within a safe and secure environment.

The school appreciates it has come a long way in a short time but there is no room for complacency. As a result they are constantly looking to improve their instructional techniques and monitoring procedures to further challenge themselves and the whole school community.

### 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 has a comprehensive array of data which it uses in a systematic way to impact upon all groups of students. This includes the formal State and City tests and on going diagnostic reviews, for example from Princeton Review and Voyager. This is further enhanced by the individual teacher records which are stored and constantly updated on palm held computers.

The administration analyzes the data in detail to include the performance of individual students, classrooms and grade levels. The sophistication of this analysis is clear, systematic and consistently used by staff. The results of this year's English language arts tests have been efficiently disaggregated and compared with previous performance. Once this data has been validated, each member of staff is given details of their class and comparative data at grade level based on previous performances. The staff members are also shown how to use the data to make it an even more effective tool for future instruction. This is over and above the very detailed data they have on students as a result of their daily record keeping.

The administration breaks down the data in detail to show how each ethnic group, English language learner and special education student has performed against the previous year's data. This close analysis clearly identifies which groups have performed well and signals those who did not manage to reach expected targets. The outcomes also trigger very close debate as to the reasons for improved achievement or areas where there are deficiencies. Individual student's scale scores are also considered as an indicator for further development. The school does not yet analyze other groups, like high achievers, or analyze aspects of gender with the sustained high rigor that they apply to other subgroups. The administration acknowledges this aspect is currently not as well developed as they would like and intend to review this in their next planning cycle. The school continuously scrutinizes its data against that of other or similar schools. This includes English language learners and special education students as well as the general education population.

**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.**

Planning and goal setting is an integral part of the work of the school. The data plays an important part in this process by setting both long and short term goals through the Comprehensive Education Plan. However the school does not yet fully recognize the impact that the use of timeframes can have in monitoring progress to date.

An overarching goal has been set to improve literacy across the entire school community and improving the grades of individual students by the setting of individual goals. There are good examples of how the school is trying to develop this through the 25/30 program, whereby students have to read this number of books during the school year. Parents also play a huge part in the monitoring of this by becoming actively involved themselves in the process. Similarly there are programs in place for students to become involved with reading in the grade level above them should their proficiency warrant it, and for those who may struggle, smaller groups with extra support are formed.

English language learners and special education students have access to a range of support services and there is clear evidence from both internal and external data of the progress they make in relation to their abilities. Identification is made of those students in need of the most support who are given extra assistance through the extended day program and on a Saturday. The principal has high expectations of all her students and staff. These are conveyed to the students on a daily basis. This is welcomed by the parents and forms the basis of a strong collaborative approach to education whereby they and the students are aware of the goals and how they can achieve them. The parents are informed annually by letter from the principal whether their child may be considered a holdover and invited in to discuss with teachers the possible ramifications. Last year three hundred letters were sent home resulting in only seventeen holdovers in the entire building.

The teachers are very aware of how their teaching and planning contributes to improving student progress and as such use all available data to meet those ends. The school is also appreciative of how parents are supportive in their efforts to raise the achievements of the school's students by their active involvement.

**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 uses the mandatory curriculum but has adapted it in order to better service their students’ needs by the development of curriculum plans. This is achieved by the staff working collaboratively with the coaches and using both quantifiable and qualitative data to inform decision making. The outcomes are that student achievements are improving and teachers have more ownership of the learning process.

There is strong evidence to show teachers are differentiating work based upon data which is continuously updated. Teachers are able to clearly demonstrate how groups are formed in order to improve student learning. This type of activity is integral to their daily instructional activities. There are an increasing number of staff being trained in the use of the Schools Attuned program which is also acting as another method of engaging students in their learning.

As a result of close data analysis, that is both qualitative and quantitative, the principal has used the budget to good effect by reducing class size. This a move widely acknowledged by staff has having had a significant impact upon student learning. The principal has also made it very clear to staff members that she will make difficult staffing decisions if teachers fail to embrace changes based upon data that affect the instruction of individual classes or students. Likewise no substitute teacher will be employed who has not already spent time in the school and knows its workings so that student learning will not be impaired.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that learning is clearly student centered. They are eager to learn, are self motivated and have a very strong work ethic. Each student has access to computer technology throughout the week and examples of this type of work are clearly seen in the classroom. The relationships between students and their teachers are excellent and students feel they have adults in the school that can help and guide them.

The attendance rate is a high priority for the school and there are positive strategies in place to acknowledge this. Students are very aware of the need to attend regularly and are encouraged by the recognition they receive for having the best monthly or yearly attendance figures. Immediate attention is given to a non attending student even though the school has been without its own attendance officer part of the school year.

**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 an experienced educator who acknowledges she has a very loyal, hard working staff that is comprised of both experienced and new teachers. The data informs her when appointing new staff as to the type of teacher required to best meet the needs of her students. She is supported by two excellent assistant principals and staffing decisions are made collaboratively.

The full and varied program of professional development is clearly driven by the data and teacher’s own personal goals. In all cases it is designed to build staff confidence and

competence, impact on instruction and is aimed ultimately to meet the school's goals. There is a regular planned program of teacher inter visitation to further sharpen teacher practice. The principal and assistant principals undertake several informal visits to classes, often as a result of a perceived need identified by the data. These visits are over and above formal observations which are carried out regularly to link with improving instruction. A key feature of the staff's work is their ability to work in teams, mostly at grade level, where data is used extensively to inform their planning and instruction. The staff feel that they have an overview of not only their own grade level work but that of others and how it impacts upon moving the whole school forward.

The school is very well organized and managed and the entire school community states the principal has the ability to sustain continuous improvement. The school is supported by outside organizations in its efforts to move the school forward. The Jamaica Children's Hospital clinic established within the school plays a very important role in that process by ensuring care is taken of student health and welfare.

**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 monitoring of goals and targets takes place at a number of levels during the school year. However, the school's current system is not sufficiently rigorous to demonstrate that across all grade levels sufficient progress is being made. Currently sufficient up to date information is available to the school to set new and more challenging short-term and long-term goals for that rigor to take place.

The principal has a clear vision of how goals should be set and the measures necessary to demonstrate success in achieving them. However, her understanding of the way effective monitoring takes place is not yet sufficiently disseminated throughout the whole school to impact upon further goal setting to influence instruction. The school does make comparisons between individual students and across grade levels and the data is used to realign plans. There is evidence to demonstrate English language learners and special education students are constantly assessed as they work their way to achieving their individual goals. The school does not make checks against the Comprehensive Education Plan during the year with systematic thoroughness to allow for any variances in progress toward achieving stated annual goals. This is particularly relevant to the revision of individual student or teacher goals to show progress towards overall targets.

This is a school that cares for its students and is creating rich learning experiences for them. It is in a position to consolidate and move to another phase by comparing student progress across the school and within subject specific areas and grade levels.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Ronald H Brown (PS 155)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul>			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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	