



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Rocco Laurie Intermediate School

Intermediate School 72

**33 Ferndale Avenue
Staten Island
NY 10314**

Principal: Peter Macellari

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Reviewer: George Wallace

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Rocco Laurie Intermediate School is a large school with 1776 students from grade 6 through grade 8. Forty percent of the students are Title 1 eligible. There are 49% White students, 14% Black, 20% Hispanic and 17% Asian and other students. The proportion of students requiring special education is 5%, which is higher than similar schools and broadly similar to the average across the City. The proportion of English language learners is nearly 5%, which while higher than similar schools is much lower than the City average. The attendance rate has been rising over recent years and for the school year 2005-2006 was 93.4%, in line with similar schools and above the City average.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School routines are excellent and the day to day running of the school is extremely smooth.
- The academy structure works extremely well and is supported by all connected with the school.
- The principal is respected by the staff, students and parents, and is a strong leader, who manages the school very well.
- School generated data is used effectively by assistant principals providing them with clear information on how well individual students are performing and what steps should be taken to improve their performance.
- Staff morale is high and teachers are enthusiastic.
- Team work is very strong throughout the school and within each academy, which ensures that there is a continual focus on students' academic and social development.
- Parents and students are highly supportive of the school and feel that it works very strongly in their interests.
- Staff are accessible to parents and students.
- There are good quality systems to monitor students' progress, involve students and their parents if required, to help ensure future student success.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to refine data analysis of the different student groups so that any patterns of success and underachievement can be more easily detected.
- Further enhance professional development to improve teachers' skills in planning and teaching of students of varying abilities in the same class.
- Build on the high quality discussions between students and the assistant principals through more precise recording of agreed targets for improvement

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

Rocco Laurie Intermediate School serves its student population well. The principal is a strong leader and effective manager of a large team of staff. He is ably supported by four assistant principals who are responsible for the smooth running and high expectations of students in each of the school's four academies.

The school is strongly focused on improving the social development and academic standards of its students. Teachers are enthusiasts and are committed to ensuring that students succeed. They work well in academic and subject teams across the four academies. The principal and assistant principals know their students well. The school values each student as an individual and has worked hard to produce a safe and caring institution with good relationships throughout. The principal has overwhelming respect and support from the students, parents and teachers alike.

Staff at all levels use information well to keep a check on their students' progress and as a result, standards in English language arts and mathematics have been rising steadily. Professional development is managed well and seen as highly positive by staff. The school has identified that teachers' skills at planning and teaching a differentiated curriculum need further improvement to enable them to more closely meet the needs of every student in each class.

Parents are strong advocates for the school. They feel that it performs well and supports their children very well, sometimes in difficult circumstances. They are pleased with the progress their children make. They also recognize that the school is very good at reaching out to parents. However, despite the school's best efforts, it does not succeed with some parents in involving them fully in their children's education.

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 generates a wealth of data on each student and this is used well by the assistant principals to keep a check on students' progress. Students are tested early in the school year in English language arts and in mathematics, and several times again during the school year. The results are analyzed and action is taken as necessary. For example, those students who are not making the gains in knowledge and understanding as projected are then more closely tracked by their teachers. These students also attend frequent meetings with their head of academy to discuss reasons for falling behind and what they need to do to improve. The system works well and reasons for students slipping behind are known accurately and acted upon promptly. Goals are agreed between student and principal, but subsequent meetings rely too much on informal records on which to base evaluation of progress.

The school has data for the different groups of students and uses it to design specific courses of study for special education students, and those who are English language learners. The school measures its performance year on year, but does not make full use of comparisons against similar schools or look at patterns which may emerge from year on year analysis.

The subject leadership and academy structure allows the school to very successfully monitor students' achievements closely. Each individual's performance is tracked carefully in each subject. At regular points in the school year this information feeds into a formal appraisal of each student's achievements. This strategy of analysis of achievement data on individual students leads directly to action for improvement, especially for students not reaching the required levels.

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.

There is a strong focus on staff knowing all individual students well. This approach is successful at all levels, from teachers and assistant principals to the principal. Regular conferences between individual students and their teachers are a strong feature of the way data is used and applied to bring about improvement. At these meetings, each student's progress is reviewed and the improvements needed and the best ways forward are agreed. The school has an excellent understanding of how individual students are doing but does not look in such depth at how individual performance relates to overall achievement of different student groups.

The information from the meetings is used well to steer parent and teacher conferences, particularly where individuals are not reaching the expected levels. In these meetings the strengths and weakness are discussed, together with agreed recommendations about the need for the student to attend after school classes, or Saturday school, or both. Priority for attendance at these additional sessions is given to those students with the greatest needs.

The school operates several intervention programs to ensure that learning difficulties are resolved. Expectations are high and students know that their teachers have a strong interest in them succeeding. Specific programs of work are given and precise demands are set for students to complete tasks. There is a strong drive across the school to ensure that all students succeed.

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 is organized into four self-contained academies, one on each floor, so that student movement around the whole school building is kept to a minimum and little time is lost in transition. Each academy teaches the whole mandated curriculum to all grades, but each one also has a specialty that impacts on the work it does. For example, there are the Academy of Environmental Sciences; the American Studies and Government Academy;

Mathematical Applications; and the Academy of Communication Arts and Humanities. Teachers and support staff work to specific academies each of which is led by an assistant principal. This model is very strongly supported by staff, teachers, parents and students and is highly successful.

The school curriculum is strongly based on the mandated curriculum, with additional features such as foreign language instruction for all students and advanced courses for higher-achieving students. Students and parents strongly recognize that teachers and the senior leaders of the school have high expectations and are keen to ensure that students give their best in the pursuit of success.

Teachers find the school dynamic and enjoyable. They have good opportunities to assess and then as teams consider the students' progress. Good quality data on achievement drives these discussions. The school structure strongly ensures that the curriculum serves the students well because teachers are scheduled to meet within their different academies, specific grades and also within the same subjects. This provides a coherent strategy which ensures that the curriculum is reviewed, modified where necessary and support planned to assist the teachers. New teachers especially value this collegiate approach and the help that is available.

The system of regular and frequent self analysis, discussion and review has already identified further improvements that could be made. The school has identified that students find lessons more enjoyable when they are more directly involved in their learning through paired and group work. Plans are in hand to help staff improve differentiation in their teaching and create a closer match between the individual needs of students and the challenges set for them.

Budgeting decisions are firmly based on the school's needs. The principal knows his staff very well and ensures that teachers work to their strengths. Scheduling decisions are well managed to meet the best interests of students.

Good levels of student attendance are a high priority. Attendance has been improving over recent years and stands at 93.4%, which is higher than the average for City schools. The school cares passionately for its students and students know they have adults in the school they can turn to at any moment for support.

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 school carefully selects staff across a range of essential skills and provides a well-structured induction program. This ensures that new teachers know and understand the routines of the school. The quality of induction is further enhanced by the academy structure where new staff come under the direct supervision of an assistant principal.

Professional development decisions are driven by the students' needs which are identified through the use of school data and various staff forums. Teachers help to identify whole school needs as well as their personal professional development needs.

The principal knows his school extremely well. Along with the academy leaders, the assistant principals, and coaches, he routinely observes lessons and knows the strengths

and areas for development of his staff. Teachers also have the opportunity to observe each other. Teams of teachers meet to plan their work to ensure that the curriculum is covered fully and that any areas for development or support needed by individual teachers are addressed.

The school is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. It runs very smoothly because there are good communications between staff and students throughout the school. Students, parents and teachers have enormous respect for the principal. They recognize that he has high expectations and that he cares for the students, their families and the community. This commitment is shared by staff. External groups support the school well through by running additional activities such as the Junior Leadership Cadet Corp and the annual drama production.

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.

The school has systems to measure the success of the programs it offers. Intervention strategies are securely in place, as is the effective monitoring of students' progress. Overall school plans are clear and evaluated against precise goals.

Information is gathered regularly from teachers and submitted to the assistant principals, who use it to diagnose the needs of students and to overcome any particular barriers to learning. The wealth of information the school has is used very well at an individual student level to promote successful learning and achievement.

The school makes good use of the information it gathers to revise plans. The assistant principals use their data to stimulate discussion about weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and the modifications that should be made. Where test scores are lower than expected or progress reports show weaknesses in students' achievements, the teachers and the assistant principals, work closely to bring about improvements. The Comprehensive Education Plan is well written, with goals, objectives and strategies for improvement made clear. It acts well as a summative end of year document but is less assuredly used to check progress at other times.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Rocco Laurie Intermediate School (IS 72)	∅	✓	+
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