



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future
Technologies**

**Intermediate School 162
600 Saint Ann's Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Maryanne Manzolillo

Dates of review: March 22 - 26, 2007

Reviewer: Cheryl Baker

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

Intermediate School 162 is an Empowerment middle school serving 1034 students in grades 6 through 8. Students are instructed in one of three academies that espouse a technology-related theme. Over the last two years the school has moved towards greater inclusion of its special education and English language learner students into these academies. Approximately 19% of the school population are special education students and 13% are English language learners. The predominant second language is Spanish. Hispanic students represent 74% of the population, 25% are Black and 1% is White. The school is Title I eligible with the proportion of qualifying students exceeding that of the City. Attendance at the school averages 92%, above that of the City.

As an Empowerment School, Intermediate School 162 has more flexibility to make decisions, control resources, develop or purchase professional development and it benefits from reduced paperwork and reporting requirements.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has high expectations for the improvement of instruction, especially in English language arts and mathematics.
- The schedule supports common planning time for grade levels and content areas.
- The school provides consultants and lead teachers to support staff in developing instructional skills in, especially, English language arts and mathematics.
- Teachers new to the profession are provided with extensive mentoring through co-teaching and support from retired professionals.
- The school provides an array of programs for special education students, English language learners and the highest achieving students.

What the school needs to improve

- Engage all constituencies in a collaborative planning process which results in a strategic plan for improvement of all aspects of the school.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the current structure of extended-day and after-school programs.
- Continue to support the development of a standards-based curriculum in all content areas.
- Ensure that periodic assessments are developed which give teachers clear and useful diagnostic data regarding students' discrete learning needs.
- Develop teachers' confidence and ability in applying techniques of differentiating instruction.
- Increase the involvement of parents in the life of the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.

The school has experienced significant changes in personnel in recent years including all of the administrative staff and nearly half of the teachers. Retention of teachers has been difficult and the school relies on agencies such as Teach for America and New York Teaching Fellows for recruits. The school, necessarily, has focused on instructional techniques as it endeavors to improve student achievement. Time and support for the development of the curriculum and the refinement of instructional skills is provided to teachers. Data are being used more frequently and effectively as a source of information about student learning. For instance, the action research project undertaken by administrators shed light on student placement in some special education classes. The school recognizes the need to engage in more routine collaborative planning to enlist the energies of the school community at large in creating a roadmap for the school's future.

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 proficient.

The school routinely uses State test data, attendance and incident reports and teachers' assessments to understand the progress of students, classrooms and grade levels. Additionally, teachers are gathering information about students' reading and writing skills as they implement practices related to the school's balanced literacy initiative. To further understand students' progress in writing, the principal collects and reviews samples of all students' written work four times each year. The school administers the Princeton Review periodically but does not find the results to be as informative as hoped.

The school has struggled to make progress in recent years as its student body has shifted with the advent of small schools that have attracted some students, and the simultaneous growth of its special education and English language learner population. The placement and progress of these students is monitored regularly through assessments embedded in their mandated instruction and by their specialist teachers. Currently, administrators are monitoring the progress of special education students instructed in collaborative team teaching settings.

The school is aware of the relative progress of its ethnic groups but has not interrogated this data sufficiently. With respect to other categories of interest, the progress of students who are overage for their grade is monitored by the administration to identify the effectiveness of interventions. The school is aware of the higher proportion of males in special education settings. High achieving students are grouped in 'gifted' classes and their progress in maintaining or increasing their achievement is monitored effectively by the principal and their teachers.

The principal analyzes the progress of grade cohorts and tracks the school's progress relative to its neighbors and its identified peers. Comparisons among academic subject areas and grade levels are not yet routine.

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 undeveloped.

The school has not had a school leadership team for at least the past three years nor has there been a functional Comprehensive Education Plan. The draft plan that was written by a few members of the administration and staff in 2004 contains annual growth targets for the academic subjects but has not been updated, revised or disseminated. The principal's performance review of December 2006 identifies literacy, mathematics and professional development as areas for improvement and lists actions which are underway in the school. The plan has not been yet communicated to the staff, however. Similarly, the school's restructuring plan, which identifies greater inclusion of special education and English language learners in the school's three academies, has influenced administrative decisions but is not widely understood by staff. Special education classes have been moved into each academy. Some progress in the academic performance of this group was noted on the school's Empowerment Zone Progress Report. English language learners remain housed in a separate section of the school.

To support the principal's focus on literacy, the school set the expectation that teachers administer diagnostic assessments and engage in regular conferencing with students to gain deeper understanding of their learning needs. These practices, however, have not been universally embraced. To support the progress of students who are over age for grade, the school provides supplemental instruction with programs such as Read 180 and Wilson reading, with some success. Students identified for academic intervention services receive push-in assistance. The pupil personnel team meets weekly to plan and monitor the progress of students with guidance counselors and reading specialists and lead teachers. The school offers extended day tutoring as mandated. However, attendance is very poor which negates the effectiveness of the current program.

The principal communicates expectations for student performance during orientation for new and returning students. Teachers communicate student progress through parent teacher conferences and report cards. Parents are not routinely engaged in providing information about their children and planning for their improvement except as related to behavioral issues. The school does not have widespread or active parent participation.

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 proficient.

The school is implementing the components of balanced literacy, Impact Math and the State science framework with the assistance of consultants and lead teachers. Written curriculum is a goal for the school in all academic areas except science. Common assessments within the content areas are not a feature in the school.

Teachers are expected to use the data available to them, as well as their own information about students, to plan and differentiate their instruction. Differentiation by program and activity are common in the school and instruction is generally engaging. Differentiation based on students' achievement levels is less common although the distribution of students among gifted, special education, English language learner classes and leveled classes in general education somewhat narrows the range of learning needs in each classroom. Students report that teaching is interesting, for the most part. They feel challenged to learn and feel that there are adults at school in whom they could confide. They understand the importance of attendance and what is expected if they are late or absent. Most had received phone calls from the school when they were home sick. The school's attendance for 2006-2007 is currently 92%, slightly above the City average.

The principal bases budget, staffing and scheduling decisions on student achievement data, especially as related to increasing achievement in English and mathematics. Positions for consultants and lead teachers were funded to support the improvement of curriculum and instruction in these areas as well as science. To support the needs of teachers new to the profession, retired teachers are funded to provide mentoring. The schedules of some experienced teachers were adjusted so that they could coach new teachers in the classroom for as many as ten class periods per week. Expenditures for leveled books support the literacy initiative while the identification of appropriately leveled books for special education classes helps teachers to better meet their needs.

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 proficient.

The school has experienced a pattern of replacing approximately 15% of its teachers annually for the last three years and, while it is a difficult to find highly qualified candidates for all of its vacancies, the school makes every attempt to employ intelligent, enthusiastic, data-aware staff. Teach for America and New York Teaching Fellows represent a large proportion of staff hired by the current principal. Many leave the school once their contractual obligation has been met.

The professional development needs of an increasingly inexperienced staff are supported by mathematics consultant, two literacy consultants and two lead teachers who deliver instruction during common planning time, after school and on professional development days. Teachers also receive support from mentors and experienced co-teachers which provide a high level of one-on-one in-class observation and coaching for improved classroom management and instructional techniques.

Grade level teams also use common planning time for collaboration regarding curriculum, instruction and students' academic, social and emotional progress. The administrative team meets regularly to address the overall operation of the school, which generally runs smoothly. Academic intervention and pupil personnel teams meet to collaboratively address and access the needs of identified students.

The principal is a strong advocate for the balanced literacy approach to instruction in English language arts and expects teachers' instruction to demonstrate these practices. Other demands limit the frequency with which she and the assistant principals are able to observe teaching. However, her practice of collecting and reviewing samples of students' work sheds light on the effectiveness of instruction and is used as an opportunity for

conversations with teachers. She is respected and seen as knowledgeable, hard-working and demanding.

The school has partnerships with several agencies that provide enrichment for students such as the South Bronx Community Corporation Sports program, The Bronx Arts Ensemble, and Battery Dance. The school provides an after-school program for its students with the goal of supporting academic achievement as well as offering high-interest activities. The academic effectiveness of this program, which attracts far more students than extended day tutoring, is unknown.

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 undeveloped.

The Comprehensive Education Plan, the restructuring plan and the principal's performance review identify long term rather than incremental goals for improvement. Actions are identified but, with the exception of submissions of student writing samples to the principal, progressive measures of success are not. The school's lack of a school leadership team limits its effectiveness in carrying out whole school planning and regular evaluation of its progress. At the same time, the lack of a formalized curriculum plan limits the school's ability to closely monitor the effectiveness of its instructional program.

Within classrooms, teachers use their own tests and quizzes to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. Some are using assessment practices embedded in their balanced literacy practice to adjust instruction. The principal monitors the progress across classes and uses this information to assess instructional effectiveness especially with respect to English and mathematics.

The information generated by the school's periodic assessment, the Princeton Review, is not widely used to revise plans. The school has administered the instrument twice. Some teachers do not have confidence in the assessment's results, while others have not utilized the activities attached to the product.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies (IS 162)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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		