



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Roberto Clemente School**

**Community Intermediate School 166**

**250 East 164 Street**

**Bronx**

**NY 10456**

**Principal: Ms Lauren Reiss**

**Dates of review: October 17 – 19, 2006**

**Reviewer: Martin Newell**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Roberto Clemente (CIS 166) is a large middle school made of three academic houses: Science Technology, Urban Community Leadership and the High School Preparation. It has 1221 students enrolled in grades 5 through 8, of whom 196 (16%) are special education students. Approximately 19% of students are English language learners, which is above the City average. The largest ethnic groups in school are Hispanic (69%) and Black (29%) with small numbers of other ethnic groups. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. Attendance is rising because of the school's significant and concerted efforts and is now close to the City average of 91.6%.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has, over a short period of time, established a safe and positive climate for learning.
- The administration have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and demonstrate a good capacity to effect improvement.
- In the best teaching, well-planned, challenging and interesting activities enable students to make big strides in their learning.
- Most students want to achieve well, and where instruction is stronger, students are focused, attentive learners.
- The rigorous efforts of the school have resulted in students' attendance improving so that it is now close to the City average.
- The wide array of out-of-school clubs and activities are well attended and much appreciated by students.
- Students and parents speak highly of the positive changes, including the improvements in safety and the learning culture, since the appointment of the current principal.

### What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of staff to use all forms of data to help them raise achievement and the rate at which students progress.
- Ensure teachers make good use of data to match learning activities to the next steps for different students.
- Ensure that teachers are fully informed about the current level of student performance and set challenging and realistic targets for progress.
- Share with the students and parents the targets they are working towards and the part they play in achieving them.
- Align professional development with the school's key priorities for improvement.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is an undeveloped school.**

The current principal took over the school about 15 months ago and her preliminary discussions with students, parents and staff indicated that behavior, safety and the quality of the learning culture were all significant issues. The principal, with the good support of the administration, has begun to address these issues with some success. The principal and assistant principals work together very well, and have a clear vision of what is needed to move the school forward. At the center of that vision is the improvement in achievement of all students.

The school is now safe and orderly and students talk enthusiastically about their futures at college and beyond. As one student said, "The principal has fuelled our aspirations." Parents are proud of the how the school is changing and appreciate that the school is always welcoming and ready to listen to any concerns they may have.

Nevertheless, there is still much work to be done at the school to improve student achievement. Two factors are hindering school progress: the school does not collect and use data in a proficient manner and there is too great a variation in the quality of instruction.

### **How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria**

**Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.**

#### **This area of the school's work is undeveloped.**

The school's data gathering systems are limited. Although the school is starting to collect data from different sources, hitherto this has not been the case. The analysis of student performance and progress and the setting of targets for improvement have not been rigorous. The principal has identified this issue as a key focus for school improvement. The data that is collected is currently analyzed by the school's administration. However, procedures for sharing information with teachers are at an early stage of development. The principal is set to introduce 'class at a glance' records which are intended to provide teachers with a better insight into the levels at which different students are working.

Some good practice is evident. For example, in English language arts and mathematics, lead teachers and assistant principals use data well to guide their instruction. They identify groups of students who with sharper targeting could accelerate their learning. However, this good practice is not widespread.

A major barrier to student progress is teachers' limited understanding of how data is used to inform long-term curriculum and instructional planning. Too little has been done to assess students on entry to the school, set targets and track progress as they move through the grades. As a result, the school's administration is not well placed to check and take appropriate action where students are not making sufficient progress.

**Quality Statement 2: 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.**

Evidence of close collaboration in planning and teaching is limited. Too few staff are aware of the targets in the English language arts and mathematics for grade 8 students and have too few opportunities to work together with other teachers to discuss and appropriate targets. The school is beginning to use a more rigorous model where targets are to be set by gradelevel, classroom and academic subject. This is further helped by the setting of specific targets and the careful tracking of student progress. Too little evidence is available to ensure that those students with the greatest need receive an appropriate level of support. The current arrangements to identify and support these students are not targeted sufficiently at those who have the greatest need.

Students' behavior throughout the school has improved substantially and most students have positive attitudes to learning. The challenge ahead is for the school to introduce regular and on-going assessment to inform students what they need to do to improve their work.

The parents speak highly of the school, although not all parents are fully involved in supporting their children's education. There is currently little dialogue between teachers and parents about their children's learning and achievement. The parent coordinator has a significant role in improving the opportunities for parents and staff to work together in the interest of the student.

**Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school's work is undeveloped.**

The school follows the mandatory curriculum but teaching does not always make learning tasks sufficiently varied and challenging. Where instruction is at its best, classes present activities that are relevant and meaningful and are well matched to the needs of individual students. These classes motivate and enthuse the students. However, there are occasions where students, despite differences in achievement, are given the same work to complete or else the text provided is too low-level. As a result, students lose interest and motivation.

The school has recently introduced the workshop model of teaching. This is proving successful where it is followed well. Students make good progress where they understand fully what is expected of them. Informative prompts displayed around the room provide instant references and additional support for students and prevent an over-reliance on the teacher. There are some good examples where the promotion of literacy and mathematical skills across different subjects and for example, business initiatives, are proving successful because students see a relevance and meaning to what they are learning.

The lack of systematic and rigorous use of data to guide and inform instruction is a barrier to improving student achievement. One of the reasons for this is that teachers do not have full access yet to good quality data that they might use to guide instruction and better meet

the academic needs of the students. Although there are some good examples of teachers using data to help students make rapid progress, this is not widespread enough to accelerate student's learning significantly. Too many teachers lack sufficient awareness of how data may be used as part of their instruction planning to help the progress of students with a wide diversity of need, including special education, English language learners and the higher-achieving students.

The marked improvement in students' behavior, the culture of the school and the close attention given to issues of safety are areas where the school has been particularly successful. Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. The school's robust procedures for promoting good attendance have been successful and attendance compares favorably with similar schools.

**Quality Statement 4: 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 runs smoothly and effectively on a daily basis because staff and students are aware of the structures and procedures to which they are expected to adhere. The principal, assistant principals and other key leaders in the school are determined to move the school forward at a fast pace. They agree that raising the achievement of students is the top priority. In her short time in post, the principal has gained high levels of respect from students, parents and many of the staff and her capacity to effect change is strong. She is well supported by senior staff and together they are raising the school's expectations for student performance.

Staff in senior positions are selected carefully. Good account is taken of their expertise and how their skill can be put to best use in tackling the school's identified areas for improvement. The principal and other senior staff carry out regular learning walks as well as numerous formal and informal lesson observations which provide regular feedback to teachers. The information derived from these sources is being used currently to evaluate where improvements are being made, the effectiveness of teachers' use of data and how student performance may be compared. However, some staff remain to be convinced that this is the right approach.

Although professional development has been identified as a means of improving student performance, it is not yet rooted in the culture of the school. At present, professional development opportunities are not aligned with the school's objectives. For example, too few staff have a secure awareness of how data at all levels can be used and analyzed to drive up achievement.

**Quality Statement 5: 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.**

As yet, the procedures to assess, track and monitor the progress of individuals or groups of students lack rigor. While the administration is clear in its vision for moving the school forward, much remains to be done to encourage staff to make regular use of data as a first step in raising students' achievements.

The school has identified the urgent need to put in place structures for evaluating students' progress through the year. What is lacking currently is an action plan that will drive forward such an initiative. A detailed plan identifying specific objectives, suitable timescales and explicit success criteria is not in place.

The school acknowledges that there is much work to be done, at whole-school, faculty and classroom level, in making better use of data to accelerate students' learning. From a whole-school perspective, there needs to be a greater staff awareness of what the school targets are and a recognition that teachers, across all grades, have a role to play in meeting the targets set for students of all performance levels and ethnicity. At the classroom level, there is insufficient rigor in the way teachers use data. Consequently work set is often common to all students rather than pitched at a level more in line with their performance. It is no coincidence that where work aligns with students' needs, progress is swifter and performance higher. Learning is also accelerated when feedback on students' work clearly outlines what is needed to improve and then shared with students so that they too are accountable for how well they perform.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Roberto Clemente School ( CIS 166 )</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>	<b>X</b>		

<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>	<b>X</b>		

\* 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>	<b>X</b>		

<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>	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	
<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>	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	
<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>	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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>	X		