



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Roberto Clemente School**

**Elementary School 13**

**557 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Barbara Ashby**

**Dates of review: April 10 - 11, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Nick Butt**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Roberto Clemente School is an elementary school with 616 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 64% Black, 34% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 89.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 81% eligibility.

The school shares its building with a charter school and some district offices.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal gives teachers ownership of data and encourages collaboration between staff to help students improve.
- Teachers know their students very well and keep detailed records of their performance and progress.
- Leaders use data particularly well at classroom and grade level to make comparisons with past performance.
- Students most in need of improvement make accelerated progress because teachers set challenging goals for them to meet.
- There are very high expectations of students, who work hard and are eager to succeed.
- Curriculum approaches suit the needs and interests of students especially well to engage them in their learning.
- Consistency of differentiated instruction across classrooms helps students to make rapid progress in their learning.
- Very positive relationships between students and staff create an exciting and purposeful learning environment.
- High quality support for teachers' professional development enables them to implement new programs effectively.
- Close partnerships with outside organizations promote students' personal and academic development very well.

### What the school needs to improve

- Explore in more depth how the school's performance compares with similar schools to try out new ideas.
- Set goals that take fully into account the differences in starting points of groups and individual students.
- Engage parents further in their children's learning.
- Further develop strategies to monitor and improve attendance.
- Regularly check the progress of teachers toward reaching their professional development goals.
- Ensure whole school plans set measurable interim goals with timeframes to help monitor progress in reaching them.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is well developed.**

At the Roberto Clemente School, students immerse themselves in a rich learning environment with hundreds of good quality books in every classroom. Progress in English language arts has improved because of the school's emphasis on teaching basic skills and building students' vocabulary. The principal says, "I'm a teacher first", and gives a strong instructional lead, ably supported by the assistant principals and coaches. Teachers take ownership of data, so that they gather, record and interpret information to form an extremely accurate view of how each student is progressing. The administration keeps a close eye on patterns and trends over time, and produces easily accessible charts to show the data clearly. They do not currently explore in any depth how other successful schools use data to improve their performance, in order to learn new approaches from them.

Since the last review, the school has begun analyzing data from its subgroups well, and has seen its Black population make annual yearly progress. It has also invested in resources that will appeal to boys, and introduced more project work to narrow the achievement gap between boys and girls. The science and social studies curricula are much more engaging as a result of new programs, and there is more linking of English language arts in particular across all content areas. The inquiry team has made a satisfactory start in following the progress of a group of students whose writing needs improving. The school's goals are challenging, but do not take sufficient account of the differences in performance of groups of students and individuals from where they started. Students most in need of improvement do very well because they are identified clearly and monitored intensively. The school expects much of all its students, reflected in the classroom goals teachers set them at the start of the year. Parents receive plenty of information about how their children are doing, but the school realizes it still needs to engage more of them in their children's learning. Attendance is below average, and the school is working hard to ensure that students come to school more regularly.

A student said, "The teachers make my learning fun." Teachers share an understanding of how children learn, and the school's consistent approach to instruction ensures all students benefit from work that matches their levels of achievement. The curriculum is vibrant and practical, with trips to places of interest and a good range of clubs to enrich it. There is very effective professional development for teachers, especially in implementing the new programs. Teachers have goals for their development, but administrators do not systematically monitor their progress towards them during the year. Whole school goals have measurable targets, but do not currently have timeframes showing how interim goals will be used to check how well the school is doing in meeting them.

## **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 the student's progress over time.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

Teachers have an extensive understanding of how well their students are doing as a result of their confidence in handling data, and of analyzing it at depth. Each teacher has their own assessment binder that clearly shows which students require intensive support. They use technology well to gather and access the information. Staff monitor the progress of special education students and English language learners particularly closely to ensure that they meet their goals.

The school is much more aware of how its subgroups are performing than it was at the time of the last review. It has made changes to the curriculum and instruction to encourage boys and Black students in particular to accelerate in their understanding of English language arts. Leaders use data effectively to look for trends in performance and to hold teachers to account for the progress of their classes. They see how much better students perform when they stay longer at the school compared with the transient population who remain only a short time. The school does not do enough currently to compare its performance with similar schools that are achieving better, so that it can discover new ways of improving students' achievement.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

Students most in need of improvement have personal intervention plans that ensure the support that is provided meets their needs. Teachers follow their progress very closely and set challenging goals for them. They know what skills students need to practice and devise plans and programs that will help them to succeed. The school sets ambitious goals in English language arts and math for all its sub-groups, but these do not take account of their different starting points. Boys need to make more rapid progress to catch up girls, but both groups have the same target. Similarly, individual students vary in the amount of ground they need to cover to make grade level, but goals do not always reflect this.

Teachers have a very good understanding of the school's goals and how they can help meet them. They have high expectations of students and their parents and take frequent opportunities to reinforce them. The "school affirmation" that all students recite each morning stresses the school's positive values and how they can contribute to a harmonious learning community. Students know what they need to do to improve, and have access to online data that shows them how well they are doing. Parents receive plenty of information about how well their children are performing. Not many attend the workshops that show them how they can help their children with their learning at home. The school is considering new ways to engage more of them in their children's education.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed.**

Some of the staff are alumni of the school. One said, “This is my home. I can represent hope and be a true role model for these students.” The commitment and dedication of the staff is one of the school’s great strengths. They share a love of learning that they convey with enthusiasm to their students. Much thought has gone into devising a curriculum that interests and engages students, with an inter-disciplinary approach that stresses reading and writing skills. One teacher said, “We use every single subject area to increase the learning in general.” The Reading First approach gives students a good grounding in basic literacy skills in the lower grades, and upper grade teachers build on this well. A structured program of enrichment for each grade widens students’ experiences and includes activities such as song flute, visual arts and living museum, where students re-enact historical events. Visits to places of national importance, such as the Philadelphia Liberty Bell and Ellis Island, bring history to life for the students, and particularly benefit special education students and English language learners.

Students find lessons engaging and fun. One said, “The teachers give you challenging work, so you get to learn more.” The school’s excellent resources ensure students have access to a wide range of quality texts and use technology frequently. Teachers are consistent in the way they differentiate instruction to make the most of learning, ensuring the work suits the interests and achievement of each student. The very good relationships that exist with teachers make students eager to learn. They appreciate the support they receive. A student said, “The teacher always helps you to boost up your score.”

The principal uses the budget judiciously to get the best value from it and to keep class sizes low. After-school programs and Saturday academies support students in need of extra tuition. Some male volunteers provide good role models for the boys, although the principal is conscious that the staff is predominantly female. Attendance is below average. While the school has a range of incentives in place to make coming to school attractive, it recognizes that more needs to be done to track attendance closely and to follow-up absence.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to 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 and assistant principals visit classrooms on a daily basis to form an opinion about the strengths and needs of teaching. They look for academic rigor and a consistency of approach. The school offers high quality professional development to teachers, especially around its new and existing programs, such as Reading First and science. Teachers agree goals at the start of the year based on their individual areas for development. They take advantage of frequent opportunities to visit one another’s classrooms and to share good practice. New teachers benefit from mentors and from

having a seasoned teacher as a buddy. They appreciate the extra support they receive to help them enjoy a successful first year of teaching.

The school has its own health center in partnership with SUNY Downstate, so that students receive the services of a school nurse and dentist. The inquiry team has used a track club to motivate students to write more, especially boys, and to engage them more in school life. In general, the school runs smoothly with clear policies and procedures that staff implement consistently well. Teachers manage the behavior of a few students with particular difficulties appropriately, and this is reflected in the caring approach of the SAVE team. There are many productive links with partner organizations. These range from the Institute for Community Living, which offers support to families and arranges a monthly workshop for teachers; through Legal Lives, providing interactive citizenship lessons; New York Cares, which sends volunteers to help with tutoring and other events; to Chess in the Schools, running a chess club. Students grow in their academic and personal development as a result of these endeavors.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.**

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

The principal sets clear goals for the school that everybody knows and supports. While the final outcomes are often measurable, plans do not set out in sufficient detail the steps necessary to reach them. Interim goals are not set within timeframes and are not in themselves measurable. This makes it difficult to establish how well the school is doing in achieving its goals. Teachers have their own annual goals for professional development, but administrators do not monitor these frequently enough during the year to check progress towards them.

Staff are highly effective at using data to find out how well their plans and programs are meeting students' needs. They measure the progress of those students requiring intensive support frequently, and make modifications to any interventions in the light of their findings. They adjust the groupings in their classrooms in response to the changing patterns of students' achievement, ensuring they give extra support as needs arise. They write action plans identifying specific areas to improve, such as helping students to develop their oral reading fluency.

School leaders have made important changes to courses and instruction as a result of their interpretation of data. A new vocabulary program has been introduced to widen students' understanding, and a new writing component to encourage them to write at length. Literacy is being extended across all content areas, and new programs in science and social studies are engaging students much more. The school has taken steps to involve boys more actively in learning, even to the extent of rearranging the furniture in classrooms to give them more space.

The principal is ambitious in wanting to raise scores further, and for more students to reach grade level. The school has enjoyed success in the past year, and its willingness to set challenging goals is helping it to move forward. Its aim to give students "the educational and social skills needed to successfully achieve their life's goals" is closer to becoming reality as the school unites around the principal's vision for its improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: THE ROBERTO CLEMENTE SCHOOL</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?			X		
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?			X		
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

### Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				X	

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					X

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?			X		
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					X

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>