



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Roy Campanella Occupational Training Center**

**High School 721**

**64 Avenue X  
Brooklyn  
NY 11223**

**Principal: Wendy Weiss**

**Dates of review: May 7 - 8, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Roy Campanella Occupational Training Center is a high school with 477 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 50% Black, 20% Hispanic, 21% White, 1% Native American, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 75% of the students enrolled and girls account for 25%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 85.3%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Students at the school have a variety of developmental disabilities and/or autism and are arranged in small classes with varied ratios. A small number of students are fully included in classes at John Dewey High School. 63% of students over the age of 18 study at 27 vocational work sites across the City.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has a thorough understanding of the progress, performance and potential of all individual students, classes and groups.
- School staff use this knowledge to set appropriate goals and to implement targeted interventions for individual students.
- The administration, staff, students and parents have extremely high expectations of themselves and of each other.
- The broad and motivational curriculum includes the arts, sports and creative pursuits and provides sound and transferable vocational skills.
- There is an excellent program of work placements to prepare students for life after school.
- The large team of related service providers works closely with the administration and teachers to enhance students' well-being and personal development.
- The school benefits from inspirational leadership from the principal, ably assisted by the hard-working administrative team.
- There are very high levels of trust, respect and regard between staff and students and the school exudes an atmosphere of happiness and positivity.
- Students across the school show great enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning.
- Parents are regarded as partners in their children's education and communications between school and home are excellent.

### What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data by ethnicity and gender to identify possible trends, bearing in mind potential differences in cultural attitudes to disability and/or gender.
- Clarify the vision of the school so it is understood and articulated by the whole school community and becomes a driving force for progress.

## 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.**

The Roy Campanella Occupational Training Center is a happy school, which exudes optimism and positivity. It benefits from an inspirational leader who has brought together a strong team of committed and hard-working staff, supported by an effective and talented administration. Students show great enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning.

It is relentless in its mission to enable its adolescent students with disabilities to “realize their talents, strengths, and capabilities in order to live and work in the community as independently as possible”. It emphasizes effective transition and continuity in all it does. Strong links with many outside bodies and agencies assist students both during and after their time at school, and staff are well supported, being organized into collegial curriculum teams to share instructional strategies and develop systems of data collection. All staff work collaboratively to support and help students to learn and all understand the direction of the school, although not all members of the school community share details of the vision.

The school divides the curriculum into three-monthly themes, which give relevance and continuity for students, as well as allowing staff to work collaboratively and across the curriculum. Individualized planning according to student need is paramount. Effective systems have been developed which allow staff to collect, analyze and use data regularly and continuously. This results in students being grouped appropriately so they are able to work at the correct level and in the best way. Long and short-term goal setting, based on individual education plans, is routine, and parents are involved in the setting and monitoring of goals whenever possible. Data collection and disaggregation is rigorous, although it is not presently broken down into ethnic or gender groups.

The inquiry team works enthusiastically. It is presently working with a group of younger students and examining how lack of communication skills affects engagement in literacy classes.

The school has made good progress since the last review. Professional development activities in the collection and use of data have increased and form part of all collaborative team meetings. Each student now has an individual portfolio, as recommended in the last review.

### **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.**

Every member of the school staff has a complete and very detailed understanding of the performance, progress and potential of every one of its individual students at any given time, and therefore of each class and grade. It collects formal data continuously in a variety of ways. Teachers, related service staff, and paraprofessionals fill in informal goal achievement and progress sheets throughout lessons. Each teacher has a comprehensive data binder with up-to-date detailed records, and there are individual portfolios kept on each student, which follow them throughout their time in the school. The school does not yet break down its data by ethnicity or gender. It has plans to do so to identify possible trends, in case cultural attitudes to disability and to gender affect the school's partnership with parents.

The school tracks students throughout their time in the school and after leaving, where information is available. This informs planning at the school and forges deep relationships with those outside agencies with whom the students are affiliated when leaving. Staff benefit from well thought out systems and structures for data collection and use. The data manager and administration monitor data sheets and files regularly. The coach supports staff in the classroom on data collection and use, and there is ongoing professional development in the form of workshops by the data manager. The school is continuously adapting and amending its systems to fit in with student and curriculum requirements and staff feel totally confident with collecting and using data.

**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.**

There is a very high degree of collaboration between teachers, administrators and the related services staff. As one staff member put it “everyone works together to make sure every student gets what they need”. Students’ learning programs and goals are based on their individual education plans, which are then co-ordinated by a named teacher. This ensures continuity. The school works closely with parents whenever possible so short-term, long-term, behavioral, and academic goals can be achieved and monitored at school and at home.

The school uses a system of “backwards design” when setting student goals. The whole school uses a thematic approach to learning; the theme changes every three months and provides the vehicle for cross-curricular and subject-based learning. Using the proposed finished outcome, staff then work backwards to identify learning components on which they assess students diagnostically at the beginning of the themed module. This dictates what and how students need to learn. Staff also assess students during and after the module to ascertain progress and next learning steps. This approach ensures teaching and learning is totally student centered and provides continuity. All students are considered to be “in greatest need of improvement” in some way and this constant assessment makes sure needs are routinely analyzed and fulfilled.

Administrators, staff, students, and parents have extremely high expectations of each other. At age 18, students who are able to do so go to community work sites where they work for five full days per week in real settings. This has led to paid employment for several students. This year the school took part in the New York City Shakespeare Festival, the only special needs group participating, successfully presenting extracts from “Romeo and Juliet”.

Parents and the school work as partners wherever possible. One said, “The school is part of our extended family”. Communications between school and home and vice-versa are frequent and via a number of media including notebooks, emails, phone calls and visits. The school has regular workshops for parents and assists them to become guardians when students reach the age of majority.

**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.**

The curriculum is broad and carefully chosen to reflect the interests of students and to provide skills and knowledge that will help them to live as independently as possible. As well as the core curriculum, which the school has selected or adapted to suit students’ needs, there is a variety of vocational options on offer. These include plastics and wood shop, print shop, merchandising and food preparation and service. The arts are provided during and after the school day in the form of art club, chorus, band, theater, and piano. In addition, students can participate in various sports and cheerleading. Independent living skills, such as travel training, are available for appropriate students. Specific vocational training is provided for higher functioning older students at a number of work-sites across the City. This introduces them to the world of work and prepares them for life after school. There are excellent relationships between staff and students at the school. Staff take great care to differentiate work in class so each student is working in his or her optimum way and at the correct level. The thematic approach is extremely helpful, as it allows greater continuity in the classroom, whilst retaining flexibility; for example, each class produces a culminating project at the end of each themed module, which is designed for that particular class level and ability range. Students are enthusiastic to learn and show real enjoyment in class. One parent said, “My child is really only happy when he is at school”.

The school prioritizes attendance and has rigorous measures to ensure students attend regularly. These have resulted in a 2% increase in attendance to over 87% this year. There are also incentives, such as pizza and ice cream parties for 100% attendance.

**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.**

Staff at the school are observed regularly, by the administration and by their peers. They also intervisit with other schools, which helps to spread good practice. The school considers this so important that money is set aside in the budget to allow for substitute teachers. Observation and intervisitation is a basis for professional development, which is well focused and co-ordinated by the cabinet. All staff have individual professional development plans, according to need ascertained by themselves or during observation. This has allowed some teachers to become advanced practioners in their areas of expertise. Professional development is particularly strong for new teachers who also benefit from mentoring by senior staff and the school coach, as well as a mentor from the District. One new staff member said, “The level of support I had and still have in this school took me aback”.

Related service providers work closely with teachers and parents using push-in and pullout strategies. There is a well-established transition team consisting of guidance counselors, job developer, the administration, and the transition co-ordinator. The team works very effectively on a student-by-student basis to ensure the best fit for every student in school or at work. Staff work extremely hard to ensure students' experiences are as free from stress as possible. This is achieved by pre-empting problems and maintaining continuity in goal setting and achievement. Students are also free to return to school after they have left, for help, support and guidance, and many do. This emphasis on continuity and consistency is obvious throughout the school, with clear policies and procedures and well-defined roles and responsibilities. These help to ensure the school runs smoothly and effectively.

**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 well developed.**

Because the culture of goal setting based on data is so well established and integrated into every day practice at the school, all plans are measurable and time-framed. All goals to improve the performance of both staff and students are incrementalized and thoroughly monitored. The whole staff is practiced in revising plans quickly and effectively if necessary. The administration regularly tracks data across the school and, in conjunction with the cabinet and school leadership team, works strategically to change practice, for example, introducing the concept of "backwards design".

All members of the school community are aware of the general direction of the school, but they do not share a common, clear vision for the school. This leads to some confusion regarding priorities in a minority of cases and has been seen to impede progress for some stakeholders.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Roy Campanella Occupational Training Center</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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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.**

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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	

**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.**

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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

**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.**

To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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>