



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Raymond York School**

**Elementary School 065**

**103-22 99 Street  
Queens  
NY 11417**

**Principal: Beth Longo**

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

**Lead Reviewer: Clive Parsons**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Raymond York is an elementary school with 573 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 9% Black, 42% Hispanic, 8% White, and 41% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 93.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 67% eligibility.

The school has been granted a waiver to utilize the Success for All acceleration model in reading and mathematics. This work is supported through a substantial grant funded by a private benefactor.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has established a climate of trust and respect, enabling teachers to try new things, while holding themselves accountable for the performance and progress of their students.
- Resources are directed very well to support the school's improvement plans and goals and the administration is careful to match teacher expertise to the identified needs of the students.
- There is a strong sense of collaborative working across the school, with students as well as teachers working together effectively.
- Parents feel that the school welcomes them as true partners and appreciate the wide-ranging workshops and other activities designed to enable them to support their child's learning at home.
- Students appreciate the individual support that they receive from teachers, for both their academic progress and their personal development.
- Teachers value the access to support and professional development that the school provides through a wide range of activities and opportunities.
- Classroom routines and expectations are clearly defined and consistently implemented so that students feel safe and secure in their learning and adjust readily to new groupings and classes.
- The school is making a good transition to using data to identify those students at risk of not making adequate progress, as well as those who require greatest improvement in performance.
- The school has created its own database to track student progress over time and is now drilling down into the data to identify trends, patterns and connections.
- Students can articulate their academic goals in several curriculum areas, which they have drafted in consultation with their teacher, often following self or peer evaluation.

### What the school needs to improve

- Continue to work with teachers to strengthen the impact of their questions on student understanding and the use of data to differentiate their instruction, especially to raise the progress of higher performing students.
- Continue to support teachers in developing their skills in accessing and using the new data systems that provide more specific and diagnostic evaluation of students' learning strengths and deficiencies.
- Formalize the school's longer-term goals, with specific measurable interim goals to act as milestones on route to their achievement.
- Continue to raise levels of attendance to meet the principal's challenging goal.
- Continue to look for strategies and mechanisms to expand the opportunities for enrichment and the arts, through classroom activities as well after school programs.

## 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 numerous strengths identified in the previous Quality Review report have been maintained, while the areas for improvement have been tackled successfully. The school has a student council this year. Its first newsletter proudly declared the council's purpose as working with the principal to make PS 65 truly great. The principal has drilled further down into the data to examine the performance and progress of students, such as those with limited prior schooling. The school's inquiry team is working well to understand the specific learning needs of a group of English language learners. The school has very effective systems in place to gather academic data, and the whole school community understands the need to focus on the growth of every student. Data systems have been supplemented well with further standardized and diagnostic assessments, with continuing professional development being used to support teachers in maximizing the power of these new tools. The principal is focusing on developing teachers questioning skills and their use of data to differentiate their instruction. Ensuring the progress of higher performing students is a particular focus.

There is a strong vision for the continued improvement of the school, and data is used very well to set school-wide goals, as well as individual student goals. While students talk confidently about the goals that they have crafted with their teachers in several curriculum areas, longer-term school-wide goals are not consistently formalized. The Success for All programs have data collection at their heart. The school has worked hard to modify and adapt the programs as data has identified the need. For example, a writing continuum to encourage greater individuality and creativity is being implemented. Students appreciate the broader experiences offered, for example through after-school enrichment and Project Arts, although they would welcome even more such opportunities. Parents explain that they feel true partners with the school. The principal's pursuit of excellence is exemplified by the challenging goals set to improve student attendance.

### **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.**

The school collects a wide range of on-going data on the performance of each student that provides a clear picture of their progress between set points and benchmarks. Collaborative activity, including looking at student work, helps to provide consistent interpretation of teacher generated data. Standardized assessments further promote reliability and validity to the data collected. Aggregation of the data ensures that the performance and progress of each class and grade is regularly evaluated. In this way, the progress of special education students and English language learners is monitored

carefully. The school is also careful to monitor the progress of other student groups, such as male and female students and the various ethnic groups present. In addition, the school is drilling down into the data to look for other patterns and connections, such as those students who have been in the school for less than three years, or those that arrive with inconsistent prior education.

The school has made a good transition in using data to identify those students at risk of not making adequate progress, irrespective of their performance level, as well as those who require greatest improvement in performance. The principal uses the school's own past performance well to evaluate the improvement in student outcomes and the effectiveness of programs across the school. She is acutely aware of her peer group schools, their demographics and performance, and this too is driving school improvement. The school has created its own database to track student progress over time and has embraced the new systems made available by the City. Teachers have improved access to data, with the purchase of dedicated laptops and printers, which has also improved communication between literacy and homeroom teachers. Teachers have received effective professional development in using the school's data systems, and the principal has identified the need for this to continue if teachers are to utilize fully the power of the systems now available.

**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.**

Collaborative review and evaluation of past and current performance data is used well to establish specific school-wide and individual student goals. These goals are very well communicated to the whole school community and drive its work effectively. They reflect the school's high expectations for the student personal and academic progress. In addition to grade, class and individual student goals for the year ahead, the principal has specific and measurable longer-term goals, which describe where student outcomes should be in two or three years time. However, these goals are not always formalized and rigorously communicated to all staff. Students engage in much self and peer review and can articulate their academic goals in several curriculum areas. These goals have been drafted in consultation with their teachers and provide clear next steps for learning. Parents too are kept very well informed about students' learning goals, as well their performance and progress.

Analysis of data is used very effectively to group and regroup students, as well as to identify any specific support and intervention required. A variety of support materials are used for those students identified as at risk of not making adequate progress during extended day, after school and Saturday morning programs. Programs such as Wilson reading, for special needs students, and Achieve It, for holdovers, are used in addition to the Success for All prescribed programs. Parents feel that the school welcomes them as true partners and many of them volunteer and work throughout the school. Parents greatly appreciate the wide-ranging workshops and other activities that enable them to support their child's learning at home.

**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 Success for All programs are predicated on the use of data to drive instruction. Every staff member provides instruction in the literacy block. Literacy groups are regularly reformulated based on the data produced, and include students from across the grades. Literacy groups may also include English language learners, special education students, as well as general education students. Expectations, structures and systems are implemented very consistently throughout the grades so that students adapt and adjust to groupings with remarkable ease. This is supported very well by the close-knit sense of community and the trust and respect demonstrated throughout. Students respond well to the broader range of opportunities offered. For example, kindergarten students use computers to draw and paint pictures of insects with skill and determination. Artwork, together with other student work, is used well to celebrate and demonstrate student success. Students appreciate the after-school enrichment activities, although they would welcome even more such experiences.

Teachers hold themselves accountable for the progress of their students. They work collaboratively to improve the quality of their work and the curriculum and to develop new strategies to improve student learning. Much attention has been paid to supporting teachers in developing and refining their questioning skills to challenge students more rigorously. There has been a similar focus on the use of data to differentiate instruction. While these aspects are generally effective across the school, the principal has identified the need to continue to strengthen them in order to take student progress to the next level. This is especially the case for higher performing students. Resources are directed very well to support the school's improvement plans and goals. The principal is careful to maximize the impact of the grant provided by the school's benefactor. The administration is especially careful to match teacher expertise to the identified needs of students. Attendance is above the City average and rising. However, the principal has set a challenging goal of improving this further still, targeting a figure above the average for the school's peer group. To enable this to be achieved, a new position has been added. Attendance and lateness are monitored daily by the student support specialist and a school aide.

**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 administration has a very good understanding of the strengths and development needs of each teacher. This understanding is reached through data analysis as well as direct observation. Wide-ranging professional development opportunities are provided to meet the needs identified for the staff as a whole, as well as for individuals. Teachers appreciate the range of tailored opportunities offered, including inter-visitations, in-class co-teaching and demonstration lessons, as well as the collaborative working with peers, facilitators and consultants. The well-structured learning routines, together with the high level of effective support and guidance, ensure that new teachers are able to develop their skills and expertise quickly. The mentoring program carefully matches new teachers with others that have the specific knowledge and skills that are of benefit to them. The school runs extremely effectively on a day-to-day basis, with everyone knowing the expectations and enacting them consistently. For example, students move to and from literacy sessions in an exceptionally well-orchestrated maneuver, which is a joy to observe.

Students appreciate the individual support that they receive from teachers and other school personnel. This encompasses both their academic progress and their personal development. Students are clear that there is someone on the staff to whom they would

turn, should the need arise. The addition of another specialist is further enhancing the already high level and quality of student support, and the formation of a student council is proving another avenue for student responsibility and involvement in the life of the school. Students, staff and parents support a range of charitable organizations, further developing the social awareness of students. Successful relationships with external partners provide additional skills and resources that support student learning and progress very well.

**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.**

The principal has a clear vision for the future development of the school. Her vision is securely based on an analysis of the available data, as well as direct observation of the school in action. This evaluation provides a clear understanding of the effectiveness of the school's programs, as well as school-wide, individual staff and student strengths and development needs. Effective action is taken to address the areas identified by the data, again for the school as a whole, as well as for individuals. For example, a review of student writing showed that it lacked individuality, voice and creativity. A process has been introduced, with external support, to change the current model starting in grades 1 and 2, and with the students who are the focus of the inquiry team. Writing is carefully analyzed, and moved along a developmental continuum, reflecting the factors identified. Similarly, there is a school-wide drive to improve teachers' questioning skills to promote higher order responses from students. The school is also close to introducing a new mathematics curriculum that is more appropriate for students. Periodic and diagnostic assessments are effectively used to monitor student progress and to provide or modify support or intervention where necessary.

The principal's vision is understood by the school community and is supported well by the plans and goals developed in order to achieve it. Goals are specific and measurable, referring for example to the proportion of students making at least one years progress in each grade. However, the school's longer-term goals are not yet formalized, with specific measurable interim goals to act as milestones to achievement that would drive the development.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Raymond York 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 demanding, 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?				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?					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>