



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ridgewood Junior High School

Middle School 93

**66 - 56 Forest Avenue
Queens
NY 11385**

Principal: Edward Santos

Dates of review: May 15 - 16 & 19, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ridgewood is middle school with 1339 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 3% Black, 71% Hispanic, 20% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 7% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 - 2007 was 92.9%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 71% eligibility.

The school is an empowerment school. It is an America's Choice National Model School and a member of the New York Collaborative Community of Practice. It is also an iTeach iLearn pilot school and a demonstration site for Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL).

It draws from two elementary schools, also America's Choice schools, and is made up of four academies that are headed by assistant principals. Each of the five assistant principals is a head of a subject department.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- All staff demonstrate a very deep interest in individual students and set the highest expectations in both academic and personal terms.
- The school's collection and analysis of data is exemplary.
- All students are fully involved in the evaluation of their work and in setting their own targets.
- There is the highest degree of collaboration at all levels of planning and goal-setting within the school.
- The highly talented administration seeks the widest range of advice to identify strategic goals.
- Very advanced technology underpins all aspects of the school's procedures.
- Assessments are discussed with students and parents and acted upon very promptly.
- Teachers link assessments very closely to the curriculum within all core subjects.
- School resources are aligned extremely effectively to implement new initiatives.
- There is a very strong professional development program that has assisted in the excellent differentiation of instruction within classrooms.

What the school needs to improve

- Refine systems for monitoring the progress of students with personal intervention plans.
- Complete the development of predictive assessments in social studies and science.
- Ensure that the progress of all subgroups within the school is fully analyzed.

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.

Ridgewood describes itself as a “technology-integrated school”. With five hundred computers, another thousand awaiting delivery and fifty-five SMARTboards in sixty classrooms, this is justified. The school has developed a data collection and analysis process that is exemplary. Students take regular assessments and receive their detailed results in a few days. These results are then used as the basis of classroom conferencing, with all students using the data online. This prompt data analysis has also become the basis of departmental discussions, which adapt teaching strategies and classroom groupings. Students analyze their own data and set targets for themselves in conference with their subject teacher and assist in the design of assignments that will ensure further progress. At a strategic level, the school has sophisticated ways of using data, opinions and perceptions to devise a Comprehensive Education Plan. This begins nine months before the start of the new academic year, allowing plenty of time to align capacity to achieve the goals identified.

Staff work in a highly collaborative atmosphere and are very clear about what it means to plan strategically, review goals and adapt targets on the basis of data. They have excellent professional development on this, together with high quality advice and modeling of differentiation for planning and teaching. Areas for improvement from the previous Quality Review have been addressed well. Classroom practice has moved on, as the result of skilled advice on differentiation. Work on data collection and analysis has underpinned the wholehearted way in which staff have built their assessment files and scrutinize results regularly for curricular and classroom modifications. Assessment is built upon a recent initiative, the ‘Design Your Own’ program (DYO). The inquiry team is implementing sets of high quality initiatives as the result of careful research and observation of students. Its work has seen considerable progress made by some of the lowest achieving students; together with imaginative scheduling and resourcing that will be in place to address similar challenges next year. The school has a strong procedure for predicting student progress but identifies that there is more work to do in social studies and science and in tracking the progress of subgroups.

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.

Ridgewood is exemplary in its collection and analysis of data at several levels. Each unit of study within English language arts and math, and many within social studies and science, generates a detailed picture of each student's performance. It is always up to date because assessment papers are scanned within two days of completion and a diagnostic report returned to each student online within a week. This data is further enriched with the immediate inclusion of State assessment data. Special education students have data files with a full diagnostic update, including modifications to individual education plans. There are detailed records of all observations, interviews and conferences between teachers and students. Data relating to the progress of English language learners has been significantly improved as the team has focused on under-achievement within this subgroup.

The school is good at monitoring the progress of certain subgroups, including students who were English language learners and have tested out and high achieving Regents students who need extra challenges. It is aware that Hispanic students performed twenty percentage points below other ethnic groups and that boys under-performed fourteen to nineteen percentage points compared with girls. On that basis it has made Hispanic boys the focus of the inquiry team's work although it is too soon to see impact on performance. Comparisons of school reports within the seven other District 24 intermediate schools (the '24/7 group') provide an external check for the school. Year-on-year data shows a steady upward trend in achievement. There are excellent systems in place to ensure that this level of data analysis continues. Two aides have been employed to scan the assessment papers for students, staff have been provided with data analysis software for use with SMARTboards and a very strong program of professional development has been implemented to build on teachers' skills in using data year on year. Analysis of progress for low-income students and those in temporary accommodation would further enrich what is already a thorough process.

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.

Staff at Ridgewood collaborate exceptionally well, with all regular departmental meetings incorporating open discussion of the most recent results and changes in curriculum content and teaching styles as routine. The same collaboration is seen in cabinet meetings, during independent education plan reviews and between teachers who co-teach special education classes. All meetings make excellent use of time, keep detailed minutes and finish with clear and specific goals that have review dates.

All staff have the very highest expectations for students. The individual education plan team is always eager to replace student goals that have been achieved and teachers of Regents classes identify new ways to challenge students. The inquiry team has identified a group of low achieving students and set up before- and after-school activities alongside Saturday school sessions to develop English language arts skills. There are good personal intervention plans for key groups of underachieving students. These are monitored well by relevant groups of staff, but sometimes lack the consistency of oversight that a single identified teacher could bring.

Staff are well aware of the strategic goals of the school. These are reinforced in the principal's newsletter, by e-mails and through coaches at common planning sessions. This

has contributed to the excellent development of differentiation within classrooms and the dramatic rise in the use of data for teaching. All information is made known to parents at regular conferences with teachers. This mirrors the open sharing between students and teachers within classroom conferences. Parental involvement has increased, thanks to the excellent work of the parent coordinator. Parent membership of the school leadership team has increased and has been central to the development of simultaneous translation services that will soon be available.

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.

A rich academic curriculum is closely aligned to the DY0 assessment procedures. Thus, seven assessment points for English language learners match the seven main units of study. The same can be said for math. Social studies and science are gradually aligning their assessments in a similar fashion. The school has identified this as a key strategic goal for the coming year. A very wide range of activities, from guitar lessons to wrestling, from navy cadets to volleyball and tennis, enrich the curriculum. Visits to Washington, Philadelphia, the NBC studios and the Hall of Science are just a few of the visits that give students a broader view of their world. New initiatives include the development of career development sessions. The school responds well to data in making budgeting, staffing and scheduling. The appointment of a data specialist has been central to many of the current developments. Scheduling of common planning time and double periods has been used imaginatively to reduce numbers moving between classes as well as providing collaboration time. Supervision of staff is rigorous, with regular leadership observations, walkthroughs and discussions between assistant principals and class teachers. Teacher outcomes are measured and there is frequent and rigorous discussion about what is effective in terms of teaching and learning within each unit of study. Senior staff are trained in the use of the California professional teaching standards. These have become the basis for all classroom observations and underpin the detailed target setting for individual teachers to hold them to account. Classroom grouping is a significant development within the school. This may include identifying each day’s classroom grouping on the SMARTboard or setting out workstations with different materials. All teachers use the assessment data to identify common needs within their classes. This often leads to different groupings on a daily basis.

There are strong procedures to address attendance and promptness. The latter has improved by 50% over the past year. Reaching 95% attendance is still a challenge, but a strong partnership between counselors, the parent coordinator and the data specialist ensures that no effort is spared to monitor students with poor 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 outstanding.

The school has a rich, well-differentiated professional development program. It provides modeling and coaching in the skills needed to implement the strategic plans for data analysis and differentiation successfully. It provides new teachers with training in classroom

management and technology as part of what they attest is a strong induction program. Training needs are identified by individual teachers and leaders and this often involves work outside school, such as the training undertaken by supervisory staff in the implementation of the California professional teaching standards. Monitoring of teaching through observations and walkthroughs is rigorous and well documented through the use of electronic tablets and Access software by pairs of supervisory team observers to maintain consistency. Inter-visitiation has become a strong vehicle for sharing good practice. English language learner department teachers observe colleagues to share good practice in, for instance, the use of inference, while math colleagues may observe the same teacher to develop the cross-curricular English strand of their work. Videoing is also used extremely well to share and analyze practice.

The school is a safe and calm place in which to learn. Parents and students are very grateful for this. Entry, dismissal and movement within the school are well regulated and classroom behavior is of a consistently high standard. There are excellent links to child development agencies, particularly within the field of counseling. Many other partnerships provide enrichment for the whole school. Links to QTEL and Queen's College provide staff with a range of new educational contacts. Links with The Harwell School, Lubbock has laid the basis of an imaginative dual language program and the GLOBE Science Enrichment Club is one of many such links that make the school a richer and more enjoyable place to learn.

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 outstanding.

"The kids' success is our first motivator" and "What we measure, we improve" are two of the principal's quotes that exemplify the vision within Ridgewood. The high expectations for students are implemented through a school-wide use of data. Data governs all decisions: what to teach, how to modify goals, how to group students, where to place resources and what does and does not work. There is now a cycle of planning, implementation and review that informs every new initiative and every unit of classroom work. The administration uses data on the small number of lower achieving students and makes them the focus for all staff. Subject departments continually review DY0 assessments, modifying content and teaching styles accordingly. Teachers and their students conference together regularly to identify ways forward at an individual level after close scrutiny of the data. What works for the student, works for the school. Goals, such as increasing the amount of differentiated planning, are identified as agreed ways forward. Dates are set and resources are found early on to ensure that staff, scheduling and materials are well aligned. The academic year starts with a clear strategic plan, disseminated to everyone involved in the school. Major goals inform all departmental and academy actions. At regular intervals, new data is used to monitor and review progress. At that point a new teacher may be deployed, new SMARTboards bought or new texts introduced. The staff work well together and this ensures that commonly agreed targets are kept clearly in view throughout the year. To achieve them, there is a high level dialogue and an openness that leads to good student progress and excellent teaching. It is a powerful model implemented by a skilled cabinet and one that, by being replicated within the classroom, is contributing to very significant student progress.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ridgewood Junior High School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				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
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				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
Overall score for Quality Statement 4					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
Overall score for Quality Statement 5					X

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped