



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Col. Jeromus Remsen

Elementary School 144

**93- 02 69th Avenue
Queens
NY 11375**

Principal: Reva Gluck-Schneider

Dates of review: November 19 - 20, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Glynis Bradley-Peat

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Col. Jeromus Remsen is an elementary school with 700 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 8% Black, 16% Hispanic, 38% White, and 38% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 94%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school gathers and analyses a wide range of data to set goals which ensures that all students make good progress.
- The principal is passionate about her school and works exceptionally well with the whole community to maximize the quality of learning.
- The school's excellent partnership links have resulted in the development of a highly creative curriculum which enriches the learning of every child.
- The school has developed exemplary approaches to cross curricular instruction which enlivening learning and making it more meaningful.
- Teachers are reflective practitioners who support and learn from each other, the highly effective induction procedures ensure that new staff settle in quickly.
- Classroom observations by the principal and administration are effectively linked with professional development for teachers.
- The day-to-day assessment procedures used in classrooms are excellent and ensure that students make regular progress towards their goals.
- Parents are enthusiastic and keen to be involved in their children's education and value the excellent lines of communication between home and school.
- The day to day running of the school is smooth because there are good systems in place to ensure this.
- There are clear procedures to ensure good behavior and to keep students safe and secure.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to investigate efficient ways to store data so that it is easily accessible for everyone to use.
- Continue to use and analyze all available data so that resources are deployed most effectively to ensure that all groups of students make maximum progress.
- Improve differentiation in math by providing teachers with appropriate programs of professional development.

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 principal has a real passion for education and the students are at the heart of everything she does. This very successful school, which sets high expectations, makes sure that students thoroughly enjoy their education. This is because teaching and learning is organized so that students are not only engaged at higher cognitive levels but are also encouraged to be inventive and imaginative. Artistic opportunities to enhance learning are embedded in the curriculum. Beautiful displays of students' work, spectacular murals and sculpture adorn the school. This brings learning alive for students and motivates them towards their goals. Parents are highly supportive of the school and praise the way it communicates with them and keeps them fully informed about their children's progress. The school helps parents to understand the academic goals set for their children, and appreciate the school's high expectations for the children to grow up to be good citizens.

The school has made good progress since the last review in all the areas. It has increased the variety of data it collects and analyzes. This has given it a much clearer picture of the progress of individuals and the work of teachers. A new whole-school plan for improvement is in place, which contains measurable interim and long-term goals. This involves staff and parents in monitoring and evaluating progress towards these. As a result there is a much more cohesive approach to school improvement. Professional development aligns with these goals and this has improved teachers use of differentiation.

The vast majority of students make grade level. This is because instruction is interesting, fun and highly effective. Students play games in math, use computers to help with learning and are asked to independently evaluate their work and present their findings. One reason instruction is so good is because teachers are reflective practitioners who are not afraid to take risks in their classrooms. They share their ideas with each other and praise the way the principal observes their instruction, gives helpful feedback and organizes professional development for them. This enables them to reach their own personal goals. Teachers avidly track students' progress and accurately assess whether they need to adjust goals or modify their instruction to enable students to do even better.

The wealth of data that the school gathers is used very effectively to identify where extra support and help is most required. However, it is not always easily accessed by staff because it is fragmented and stored in different areas. This has an effect on the deployment of resources, which at times, limits the progress of students. The data shows where professional development is needed. For example, there is soon to be a focus on differentiated instruction in math and a program of training is currently being organized.

The effective inquiry team is looking at the progress of students between grades 5 and 6 because they have identified a dip in the performance in math. Goals are in the process of being set but have not yet 'gone live'.

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 and utilizes a very wide range of data and has evaluated its usefulness. This has resulted in a database which is very well focused on monitoring students' progress over time. The school is currently developing ways of making sure that everyone who needs to, can access this easily and that all data is available in one place. This will result in staff being able identify trends in the data more effectively. The school is highly effective in keeping its database up to date with ongoing assessments and state test results. In addition to this the school uses a more anecdotal approach using conferring notes from team meetings, which help to shape goal setting.

English language learners and special education students benefit from the expertise with which teachers use data to plan precisely for their needs. Goals are reviewed frequently to ensure that the intervention programs put in place for these students are effective in helping them make good progress. 'Push- in' support is particularly beneficial to those students in the most need of help. Individual education plans are constructed well and contain 'short step goals' which are reviewed regularly to ensure students make good progress. Excellent examples of assessment-for-learning were seen in the school and students were set clear goals to improve their writing. Students said that these really work because it makes them think specifically about the 'things, which make writing better'. The school also pays attention to the needs of high achieving students and plans enrichment activities for them. Specific goals are set to ensure that these students conduct their own independent research and plan projects, which ensures they make very good progress.

The school rigorously examines its progress against its peer horizon in order to create meaningful comparisons and shape best and shared practices. Less attention is paid to using available data to check the comparative progress of different ethnic groups.

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.

Grade meetings provide a discussion forum for teachers to review student work and best practices. This has facilitated participation in moderation of student work as a group and an ability to focus in on individuals, subject areas and grades. For example, teachers have recently focused their attention on leveling writing, which has resulted in the careful checking of student progress against interim goals. This in turn has resulted in new goals being set so that progress can be gauged at the next meeting. Those students in greatest need of improvement are carefully targeted for extra intervention. The school has made particular efforts to ensure that learning takes place, for these students, in 'small steps' and is strictly time bound. This has meant that progress has been very good.

The school makes sure that the lines of communication to parents and the home are always open. This results in highly useful information being exchanged. Parents spoke of the many different ways there are of contacting the school and how they 'never feel alone'. They have high expectations of the school, as does the teachers of the children. Parents

expect their children to achieve high academic goals and talk positively about how the school is effective in enabling students to reach their potential. One delighted parent spoke about how the highly creative curriculum gets the best out of her child, "My child had a picture in the Guggenheim!" Students also said that teachers help them to reach their goals by encouraging them to evaluate and assess their own learning.

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 school's curriculum is highly creative, which results in highly motivated students who are bursting with excitement about their learning. The school has most certainly achieved its own goal of "fostering joy in all curricular areas". The teachers have developed excellent relationships with a number of high profile arts institutions and the students benefit greatly from visiting artists and musicians. Their work enriches the curriculum and develops students' self-esteem giving them confidence to achieve their goals. Artwork displayed around the school is stunning. Subjects are linked together innovatively and instruction is interesting and compelling. Students study 'topics' such as 'The Road Trip' that brings together computing, math, geography and literacy. This results in learning being 'brought to life' through investigation and research. The students identify links with their learning to 'real life', consequently, they make rapid progress towards their goals. Students get the opportunity to work with many different art mediums. In an interesting discussion about the clay they were using, students were guided towards making hypotheses about evaporation, linking art to science. This way of working develops students' thinking skills and encourages inquisitive young people to pose questions to the teacher. All these features ensure that students make very good progress.

Differentiation in reading is well structured because teachers gather data regularly to keep a constantly updated record of each student's progress. Teachers' assessments are extremely thorough and identify every little step towards the next learning goal in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Examples of students' work accompany each assessment and are clearly linked to differentiation for the next set of instruction. Teachers constantly review their instruction to meet the needs of the students and this is why students' progress in these subjects is consistently good. The school has rightly identified that it should share this good practice to improve differentiation in math and has already begun to organize professional development to reach this goal.

Students say that they enjoy school because their teachers make learning 'fun'. They appreciate the principal's humor and do better in their tests because, 'she plays music over the loudspeaker so we are not stressed before tests.' Students have a genuine desire to reach their goals and do so because there is mutual trust and respect between them and their teachers. They feel safe and secure because clear procedures are in place to ensure this, which results in good behavior and good 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.

Exemplary induction procedures are in place for new teachers and other staff who are new to the school. Teachers receive at least two hours per week of professional development,

which is aligned to whole school goals. In addition, they have a personal mentor who supports them in reaching their own personal goals. Specialized workshops are attended by new staff twice a month, providing them with a support network where they can share ideas and ways of working. There is also a facility at the workshops to develop individual skills and set goals for future training based on an assessment of needs.

The principal and her administration observe lessons both formally and informally and personalized goals are set to help teachers improve their instruction. These goals are supported by a well-designed program of professional development. Teachers say, 'idea sharing is key'. They give each other useful hints and tips for better instruction, visit each other's classrooms, plan together and reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement. This results in the best practice being rapidly shared, which has a good impact on how well students learn in the classroom.

The personal development of the students is of high importance and skilled professionals are available to help students towards their personal goals. Behavior is good because of effective school-wide systems. These systems are consistently applied by all staff and students are aware of the consequences of their actions. There are excellent partnership links with a range of museums and galleries; these enhance the learning environment for the students.

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, administration and cabinet have a clear vision for the future of the school. They are passionate about giving every child every opportunity to learn and reach their potential. In turn, teachers are committed to the vision. They work together collaboratively to improve their practice and are happy to work together on new initiatives. Teachers carefully track the progress that students make and tweak goals as necessary to make sure they all achieve as well as possible.

There is a constant 'conversation' amongst the cabinet and principal about where the school is now and where it needs to go so it can help every individual child make as much progress as possible. All year round the school is diligent in evaluating progress through teacher feedback, looking at instruction, looking at student work, hard and soft data, questionnaires and cabinet meetings. It is never complacent. Highly focused whole school goals are consistently reviewed and adjusted as necessary as issues emerge or goals are reached. For example, the school has moved its focus from literacy to math after revisiting its goals, aimed at improving differentiated instruction. In turn, teachers have aligned their own goals to those of the school ensuring that everyone is focused on constantly raising the bar.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Col. Jeromus Remsen	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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
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?				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?				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 make 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	