



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Ronald McNair School**

**Elementary-Middle School 147**

**218-01 116 Avenue  
Queens  
NY 11411**

**Principal: Anne Cohen**

**Dates of review: October 18 – 19 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: John Collings**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Ronald McNair is an elementary-middle school with 921 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 92% Black, 4% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9% 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 93.7%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 64% eligibility.

This is the first year the school has had all grades from pre-kindergarten through grade 8.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school has good quality data which it uses well to assess students' performance and progress.
- Well structured professional development supports teachers in the use of data to differentiate student learning.
- Overall students make good progress in the school and students in the greatest need of improvement make very good progress.
- There are good support procedures for teachers new to the profession or new to the school.
- There are good opportunities for teachers to visit each others' classes and share effective practices in a mutually supportive climate.
- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of students in their classrooms.
- The principal is a strong leader of an improving school.
- There is a very good climate for learning in the school where students feel, safe, supported and challenged in their learning.
- Staff collaborate very well in the best interests of the students.
- The principal is instrumental in facilitating good leadership opportunities for staff across the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure teaching is differentiated wherever possible to enable students to learn as effectively as possible.
- Improve the challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- Further develop cross curricular planning to enable students to apply and consolidate skills learnt in one subject in another.
- Make greater use of opportunities to use technology across the curriculum.
- Develop systems to articulate more clearly school goals and the monitoring of progress towards them.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Progress made since the last review

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

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The principal is an effective leader. She has been very successful in the way in which she has managed the growth of the school to create a continually improving school with a full complement of grades. She has also been active in facilitating leadership opportunities for staff across the school. Consequently, there is a very good climate for learning where students feel, safe, supported, challenged and “learn a lot”. The school goals are known but they are not clearly articulated across the school population.

The school has good data systems through which it monitors students’ performance and progress. The data is used to differentiate teaching to meet the identified learning needs of students thus the students make good overall progress. However, although the school has been very successful in improving the progress of the vast majority of students, differentiation could be extended to ensure higher achieving students are challenged fully.

There is good professional development to support teachers in the use of data to differentiate student learning, although this is not yet consistent throughout the school. There is also increasingly good use of common planning time to identify opportunities for students to apply and consolidate knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one area of the curriculum in another. Staff collaborate well; they are always focused on the best interests of the students. They are mutually supportive and are held accountable for the progress of students in their classrooms. Teachers are making use of technology in their classroom but are not yet making full use of the opportunities available.

The school has created an inquiry team, which has identified the group of students it wishes to monitor but has not yet identified the mode of intervention or the methodologies it wishes to adopt. The school has made good progress since the last review. Staff have reviewed the curriculum so that it now more precisely meets the needs of the students. They also make better use of data to differentiate instruction, although this is not yet applied fully in all classrooms.

### 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.**

Student progress is good overall. There are good data systems in the school, which combine both State and ongoing assessments to obtain a comprehensive view of student achievement. The school has recently adopted new ongoing assessments to give continuity from pre-kindergarten through grade 8, to monitor the development of students’ knowledge, understanding and skills systematically.

The school uses a wide range of assessments to monitor the progress of special education students, which has enabled very good, targeted support for these students. The vast majority of English language learners are proficient. However, the school monitors through academic intervention services, students who although proficient are not fluent confident users of English. This is to ensure they are supported as necessary to enable them to perform well and make good progress. The small numbers of students who are an ethnic minority in the school are monitored by tracking their individual progress. The school is very aware of any differences in the performance and progress of boys and girls. It has some single gender classes to address differences in their learning styles; the effects of which it is still evaluating.

Good use of data shows the school has made very good progress in improving its performance over that of previous years, and in comparison with similar schools. The school identifies very systematically which students, classrooms and grades make the best and least progress. The school has implemented good professional development to support teachers in using data as effectively as possible to inform their teaching.

**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 proficient.**

The school has had significant success in improving the progress of lower achieving students. In the last year, their progress was outstanding. It is now reviewing its goals to encompass challenge and improve the growth of higher-attaining pupils more systematically. Consequently, the school has introduced the use of more effective ongoing-records. It is beginning use these to make predictions of students’ future performance based more clearly on their prior achievements. This is to ensure teachers have sufficiently high expectations for the growth of all students.

Students’ goals and expectations are well monitored through staff identifying, what went well, and what is needed to improve. However, longer-term expectations are not so well articulated. Clear individual targets are being developed to allow students to make suitable progress by the next marking period, semester or grade level tests. The school is introducing professional development to support teachers in developing ways of exemplifying expectations to students that are appropriate to grade and instructional level.

Overall, expectations of students are high, resulting in students making good progress. High expectations are conveyed to parents through, for example, parent workshops but despite the school’s best efforts, parental participation, and therefore expectation of their children, is generally disappointing. Information is regularly provided for parents largely through notes and calendars home. These are followed up through automated phone calls, but response is still low. The school is reviewing whether more information could be available to parents through its web site.

**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.**

There is a very good climate for learning in the school where students feel, safe, supported, challenged, and learn a lot. They enjoy the collegiality of school and feel

supported by other students as they in turn support them. One student remarked, "We are one school and we want all of us to do as well as we possibly can". As a result, students want to attend school and attendance is high.

The school is changing a number of curricular approaches, for example reading, to allow more meaningful assessments to be made. Data is being used systematically to identify where instruction needs to be modified to meet the needs of the students. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and the school is in the process of expanding the number of activities available to students at the end of the school day. The budget is used well to ensure students in need of support, are given the help they need through special education teachers, academic intervention services, additional classes and individual support. This strategy is, in significant part, the reason why special education students make good progress.

Teachers are held accountable for student performance and progress in their classrooms. Good use of data has identified appropriate professional development to support teaching and awareness that student progress is a more representative means of measuring student success than simply their performance. Staff collaborate well to create lessons that increasingly use differentiation to improve student involvement and learning. The resulting effect is improving the performance overall but particularly of lower-attaining students. However, more use of differentiated group work with different expectations based on individual's prior achievement, could ensure that all students, including higher achieving, are fully challenged and learn effectively.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

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

The principal frequently visits classes both formally and informally. She is very aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in different classes and grades. As a result, of well-planned professional development identified from lesson observations the amount of small group work and differentiated instruction has increased and is becoming more established.

As a result, of good data analysis the school is focusing on developing students' reading and writing strategies. There is good curriculum planning to apply and consolidate these skills across the curriculum through, for example, English language arts and social studies and science. The increasing use of technology is being promoted in more subjects, for example, presentations for social studies and science, but is insufficiently established to show significant impact on student learning.

Teachers appreciate the good professional development the school offers, which is differentiated to meet individual teacher needs. There has been a strong emphasis on the use of data to inform teaching and in differentiating expectations to ensure students are challenged. The principal is instrumental in facilitating leadership opportunities for staff across the school, to enable particular strengths or interests to be used for promoting student achievement. There are good procedures such as mentors, 'buddies', and coaches for supporting the induction of teachers new to teaching or to the school.

Teachers have many opportunities to visit each other's classes and other schools to observe "best practice". Teachers use common planning time constructively to review planning and students' progress through the grades but also in subject groups to review issues of common concern. Grade meetings are increasingly used to identify opportunities where the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one subject can be applied and

consolidated in another. One of the school goals is to further develop and refine this approach. Teachers are largely reflective of their own practice and that of others, and are mutually supportive in adopting methodologies to improve student performance and progress.

There are a number of services to support students' academic and personal development. In addition to mandated support, the school provides conflict resolution, additional non-mandated time of a counselor and support from SAPIS counselors. There is also the support from academic intervention services and academic support in after school classes and additional classes on Saturday morning.

The school runs well. Students feel safe, want to come to school and feel very secure in bringing any concerns to a member of staff. Although there is a range of effective partnerships supporting the academic and personal growth of students, these are not extensive.

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

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

The principal is an effective leader of a consistently improving school and her vision has been instrumental in implanting successful policies to create a successful school with a full complement of grades.

Successful strategies have been implemented to improve student performance, for example improving the monitoring of reading and writing, introducing greater use of technology and dramatically improving the progress of lower-achieving students. The school has now reached a point of reviewing longer-term goals and strategies with clear time frames for the review of the progress towards these goals.

There is a clear vision for the school and in order to improve still further it has identified the need to motivate, engage and challenge students more. The strategies by which it intends to do this include increased differentiation in lessons, greater use of cross-curricular planning, and consideration of students' differing learning styles. Success is measured through increased participation, completion of tasks set, improved performance and progress throughout the school. However, interim goals and time frames to evaluate them are less clear, and although the cabinet and teachers share overall goals they are not as well articulated with students, parents, and other members of the school community.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Ronald McNair (PS 147)</b>	△	▶	✓	+	◇
<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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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		

<b>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>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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>					<b>X</b>

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

<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>▶</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?			X		
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?			X		
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					<b>X</b>