



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Rocco Laurie School**

**Middle School 072**

**33 Ferndale Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10314**

**Principal: Peter Macellari**

**Dates of review: November 14 - 16, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Peter Williman**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Rocco Laurie is a middle school with 1854 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 17% Black, 21% Hispanic, 43% White, and 19% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 91.6%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 42% eligibility.

This very large middle school is divided into four independent academies, each with an assistant principal responsible to the principal for the day-to-day operation.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a determined and charismatic leader committed to achieving the highest standards of pastoral and academic care for his students.
- The principal has a good overview of whole school performance and progress and he uses that knowledge well to guide school planning.
- Teachers maintain systematic records of student and class data to inform the next steps in their instruction.
- English language learners and special education students make effective progress as a result of the school's specific support to meet their needs.
- The instructional and inquiry teams have begun to use data effectively to identify strategies to improve student achievement.
- Teachers present stimulating lessons and use technology well to engage students.
- Teachers new to the school and to the profession are very well supported to develop their knowledge and skills.
- The school's expectation of positive behavior and respect ensures good discipline and learning occurs in all classrooms.
- The school offers an outstanding curriculum within and outside the school day which is very well matched to students' interests and needs.

### What the school needs to improve

- Identify sharper, achievable, objectively measurable goals and criteria in school plans to raise achievement in subjects and of ethnic and gender groupings.
- Identify time frames and schedules to monitor and evaluate the progress of school goals and plans including professional development.
- Consolidate teachers' use of student progress data to differentiate instruction.
- Review the school's student progress information to parents to enrich quality and develop consistency further.
- Identify other schools and sources of data to measure and further evaluate the school's own performance.

## 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 Rocco Laurie Intermediate School is one of the largest middle schools in New York City. It is very well led by a charismatic principal. He manages the four academies, which comprise the school, with the support of a very skilled leadership and instructional team. As a result, students respond well to the high expectations placed upon them. The school is a disciplined environment. High achieving students attain outstanding Regents results, including in foreign languages. Students, generally, are well prepared for high school. The curriculum offers all students excellent opportunities to flourish within and beyond the school day. The attendance rate of 91.6% is well above the average rate for the City.

The school has implemented the improvement points of the previous Quality Review well. The principal tracks students' achievement and progress very effectively. He knows his students well. He has identified the fact that student progress, overall in math and literacy, stalled in the last year and has strategies to deal with the issue. Teachers use essential student data generally well to track students' progress and inform instruction. Special education students and English language learners are specifically identified and their progress monitored closely. Insufficient attention is paid to factors of ethnicity and gender to monitor differences in performance. Teachers group students by achievement more extensively. Differentiation of instruction has significantly improved as the result of well-directed professional development. This is a work in progress with very good further developments occurring in English language arts. The greatly increased availability of smart board technology, combined with some high quality traditional instruction, ensures that students are very motivated in stimulating lessons. Teachers and students share achievements and next learning steps very well through the more extended use of rubrics.

The inquiry team is taking the use of school data to new levels in the school. Their very good work contrasts with the essential weaknesses in the processes of school planning. The school sets specific goals but they are not sufficiently based upon a rigorous analysis of school data. Targets within goals are incremental upon previous performance. They do not proactively challenge the school sufficiently to reach objectively measurable outcomes to raise achievement in subjects and groups even further.

### 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 monitors the achievement and progress of students, classrooms and grades regularly and frequently through data from state, commercial and school generated assessments. Day-to-day school assessment is particularly well managed. The math department's very good assessments assist teachers to match assessment to the state standards systematically. Rubrics enable teachers and students to identify achievement and next steps in learning. Teachers have been well-trained in the assessment process. English language arts teachers work with rubrics similarly. Extension of this work is planned for science and social studies. All teachers maintain class binders of student data with standardized contents. Consequently, teachers are fully aware of the English language learners and special education students in their classes. This promotes their better achievement and the monitoring of their progress. The school does not effectively share data and encourage analysis of the significant differences in performance by ethnic groups and by gender. Although the administration is aware of the issues, the progress of these groups is insufficiently monitored in classrooms. Teachers, responsible for special education students, systematically maintain and apply high quality individual education plans.

The principal has a very good knowledge of student progress. The departmental structure, which crosses the boundaries of the four academies, assists in better monitoring of progress in subjects. The principal uses the analysis of comparative state assessment data well to overview student progress by class and grade over time and to measure differences. Higher achieving students do well. However, analysis has identified a stalling of overall progress in math and English language arts in the past year. The principal is currently beginning to deal with this issue. There are few similar schools because of the size and demography of the Rocco Laurie. However, comparisons to schools with similarities in some populations have, as yet, been insufficiently researched.

**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.**

The school's overarching goal, to enable each student to realize their potential, is shared by the school community. The principal's leadership, the academy organization and daily communication by teachers, together with parents' support, confirms this purpose in order to share high expectations with students. Within the limitations of the size of the school, the collaborative planning processes for the short and medium term are well structured. Grade teams meet regularly within academies and coordinate instructional plans and next learning steps for students. Departmental meetings link across the academy teams very effectively to ensure uniformity of subject planning. The instructional team correlates the principal's planning within the academies. The school has effectively planned expansion to address special education students' needs. English language learners are targeted in classrooms and make good progress. Teams plan very good structured close support for those students at risk of not making progress. Teachers use their formal and informal assessments well to plan next steps for students. The needs of higher achieving students are met in homogeneously arranged classrooms to accelerate learning.

The Comprehensive Education Plan prescribes the school goals, identifies measurable targets and action plans. However, targets are often incremental to previous performance. Times frames are arbitrary to the school year. The school plans are not, therefore, sufficiently based on a sound analysis of previous data to identify realistic but challenging, objectively measurable goals. Consequently, expectations of achievement in subjects,

grades, classes and groups are compromised. The work of the inquiry team sets a very good model for development of planning. The team has identified the curriculum strand in literacy to be the focus for improvement from effective item analysis of deficit areas. Analysis has highlighted the targeted student group. Strategies for developing the research and schedules for evaluation are effectively in place.

The school systematically shares information with parents through the regular and frequent report cards and student progress reports. Parents have a legitimate concern that reports are too generic. Academic information on the two reports is not sufficiently aligned.

**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 principal, as an experienced leader, uses the budget very wisely to support school improvement. The increased number of smart boards has given new perspectives to instruction for many teachers in math and literacy. The technology complements some very good traditional instruction students receive. Smart board based lessons are used well. They capture students’ imaginations and interests. The method is offering a wider and more effective response to students’ learning styles. Teachers’ explanations are more compelling through the visual illustrations. As a result relationships are stronger and discipline is improved.

A successful hiring policy and substantial investment in professional development has improved differentiated instruction significantly. Teachers have a raised awareness of techniques to analyze individual student and group needs. Group activities engage students very well in their learning. Teachers make good choices regarding homogeneous or heterogeneous groupings. However, differentiation is not fully refined in all classes. In some better practice in literacy, variations in tasks, levels of challenge, and expectations of pace of working in independent learning match students’ achievement more closely and learning is accelerated.

It is hardly surprising that attendance in this school is so good. Students are offered outstanding opportunities though the curricula, within and beyond the school day. The curriculum and assessment is very closely matched to state standards. There is very broad provision for the arts. High achieving students realize their potential through homogeneous high achiever classrooms. For example 97% of the 205 students taking Regents ‘A’ math were successful in 2007. Students are well prepared for specialist high schools. The leadership cadet corps offers students at risk in particular a channel to achieve self-esteem and self-discipline. Additional instruction is provided by the Saturday and after school academies to students of all levels of achievement. Sport, technology, art, guitar tuition and dance clubs are attended enthusiastically. The school approach to competition is finely balanced. Inter-academy competition is restricted. This encourages students’ loyalty to the school. Externally, students are highly competitive. The Stock Market Team beat all-comers in New York for the third year in 2007. The cheerleaders are successful nationally. The Lego Robotics Team will represent New York State.

**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 has prioritized professional development very well to underpin the achievement of school goals. As a result the school has dealt effectively with the issues of the previous Quality Review. Teachers generate and use more data to inform their instruction. They align instruction more closely to students' achievement. New technology is used very effectively in classrooms. New leaders and teachers demonstrate their very good induction to the school through the high quality of day-to-day work. Special education students are better served through their teachers' management of individual education plans. The management structure of the academies provides for closer observation of instruction, better individual support for teachers' development and good opportunities for teachers to meet in relevant groups to plan and to share their instructional practices.

The principal is a 'hands-on' leader. All who work in the school have no doubts as to his high expectations. Consequently the school runs smoothly, is very orderly and very responsive to students' personal and academic needs. Well-managed support services and carefully chosen partnerships play an important role in these respects. Very successful partnerships with banks, high schools and with community leaders are major features of the ability of the school to deliver the breadth and depth of its curriculum.

**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.**

Achievement of the school's overarching goals is not structured to include interim goals as such. However, school plans do contain a very well considered series of action plans to reach their desired ends. As yet these plans do not each have sharp criteria to indicate the expected outcomes of, for example, the impact on students learning. Schedules for implementation are generally not included to identify time frames and points at which monitoring and evaluation will take place. Some planning for professional development is sequentially staged, for example, in training to improve teachers' skills to complete individual education plans. The school instructional team meets regularly to review the work and progress of the school. This process is ongoing, sometimes informal, but highly reflective and analytical.

Teachers individually and in their subject and grade teams consistently use periodic assessments and other available data as a benchmark of the success of their instruction. As a result, plans are adjusted to provide remedial teaching where there are deficits. Where appropriate, revisions are made to curriculum calendars to re-order items or adjust the pace of instruction. Teams make good use of each other's experience in these revisions.

The principal has a very good understanding of the issues to be addressed in planning for the school's further development. He weighs alternatives very carefully to make pragmatic choices. As a result, he develops clear strategic plans which he judiciously shares with the school community to ensure confidence, commitment and understanding.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Rocco Laurie School</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>	