



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future
Technologies**

**Middle School 162
600 St. Ann's Avenue
Bronx
NY 10455**

Principal: Maryann Manzolillo

Dates of review: May 19 - 20, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies is an intermediate school with 953 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 24% Black, 75% Hispanic, 0% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 18% English language learners and 21.4% special education students. Boys account for 45% of the students enrolled and girls account for 55%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 100% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has detailed knowledge of the progress and performance of individual students, classes and grades through effective data management.
- The school is practiced at tracking students throughout their time in school which helps to raise achievement.
- Clear procedures are in place to identify students and groups in need of improvement and to effect appropriate intervention strategies.
- The staff, students and parents have high expectations of themselves and of each other.
- Art, music and sport are well-featured during and after the school day in a broad curriculum, which also includes some vocational education.
- Intervisitation of classes by teachers is well established and routine and helps to spread good practice.
- Very effective procedures and support are in place for the induction of new teachers.
- School leaders often revise strategies quickly when necessary to make changes timely.
- The principal provides dynamic leadership and determinedly instigates change.

What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data by ethnicity to identify trends and patterns in achievement and to facilitate comparison with similar schools.
- Ensure that classroom activity is differentiated in line with individual need as identified by the data.
- Develop greater mutual trust and respect between all staff and students through implementing a clear behavior management policy.
- Ensure greater consistency in the implementation of policies and procedures.
- Make sure student goals are incrementalized, measurable and time limited and set with students to increase their ownership of them.
- Clarify the vision so it becomes the driving force for change across the whole school community.

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 has tried very hard since the last quality review to push through the changes necessary. She provides dynamic leadership to a hardworking and committed staff and is determined to improve all aspects of the school's performance.

All staff collect, analyze and use data routinely; a data manager has been appointed and all teachers have their own binders. The school is very effective in its identification of students needing academic intervention or other services, and those remedial services are successful in raising achievement. Staff, students and parents now have very high expectations of themselves and each other. The curriculum is broad and gives students opportunities for arts and sports both during and after the school day, and provides paid vocational education for special education students. There is also good support for staff. Intervisitation of classes is routine and well established, and new teachers benefit from high levels of mentoring, professional development and in-school support.

The school still has some work to do, however. Although ethnicity data is disaggregated, there is a marked difference between the performances of students. This is because data is not yet used consistently in classrooms to differentiate work to fulfill individual need. There is some mistrust of staff by some students, exacerbated in part by inconsistencies in the implementation of policies and procedures. Finally, although goals are set for students, they are not all incrementalized, measurable or time limited, and because they are usually set by teachers, students are able to remain passive and take no ownership of them, giving little incentive to achieve them. The principal is certain of the direction in which she is taking the school, but how she will do it is not clear to the whole school community.

The inquiry team works well and is currently following a group of grade 7 students whose grades dropped when they entered middle school in grade 6. Good progress has been made on last year's recommendations: common preparation periods facilitate collaborative planning and reorganization of the extended day program enables academic intervention to take place during advisory periods. The school has developed a fully standards-based curriculum in all core areas. Acuity and Scantron give clear and useful data regarding students' individual learning needs, and parents have become more involved in school life through the newly introduced parent teacher association and school leadership team.

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 has established methodical structures and systems to facilitate the collection, analysis and use of data. The new data manager is responsible for circulating frequent data reports and for training and supporting staff in the use of data. Each teacher now has a binder with class and individual student information, and binders for individual students are currently being introduced. In this way, teachers have very good knowledge of the progress and performance of each of their students, based on both formalized tests such as Acuity and Scantron, and informal assessments from quizzes and classroom performance. Professional development on data management is ongoing, both as formalized sessions and at grade and department meetings. Staff say they now feel much more confident with using it and their expertise has grown considerably.

Tracking the progress of individuals, classes, grades, special education students and English language learners is good. The school starts with each student's achievement and skills profile from elementary school and builds on those. Careful tracking is also continued, when possible, after the student has left the school. This enables the principal to evaluate progress made by students in the school and how the school has prepared students for high school. The school also compares its own year-on-year performance to ascertain overall progress.

The school does not track all its sub-groups efficiently, however. Although the vast majority of students are Hispanic, and staff have noticed marked differences in the performance of students from certain countries, it has not used this information to raise achievement for all.

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 effective procedures for focusing on certain individuals or groups. They have two common preparation periods to plan work and set student goals. The school is robust in its focus on certain groups of students. Students in the greatest need of improvements make rapid progress. Their needs are swiftly identified and met through a combination of valuable intervention and advisory support. As a result fewer students are mandated for academic intervention.

One of the school's goals is to improve study skills teaching. Advisories are used to achieve this goal. Staff now look for areas in assignments where study skills may be an issue and make sure advisors cover these items with students. This has improved students' time management and their ability to structure work effectively. Not all goals are measureable nor time sensitive. Additionally, students do not set their own goals, leading to a lack of "buy-in" and incentive in achieving those goals.

Staff, student and parents have high expectations of themselves and of each other, which has led to stronger parent and school relationships and higher engagement levels in the classroom. The introduction of the parent teacher association and school leadership team

has improved both relationships and communications between parents and the school and this has led to greater sharing of information to improve student progress.

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 proficient.

A very wide program of activities during and after school provides every student with opportunities to study art, music and sport. For example, there is a choice of several bands for students which practice during school hours. In addition, special education students learn vocational skills in a fully equipped plastics workshop, run like a proper business. They work on commissions from outside organizations, such as the New York Mets, and manufacture items such as key rings and are paid for this work by the organizations. The breadth of curriculum has led to careful and clever uses of both the budget and schedules so as many activities as possible fit students’ interests and aspirations.

Although the principal has introduced training, differentiation in classes is very patchy. Although teachers feel very accountable for their students’ progress, much instruction is through whole classes learning the same thing, at the same time, at the same level, so it does not always meet the individual needs of students. This means there is insufficient challenge for brighter students and weaker students often have to rely on intervention and remediation for help, rather than receive it in the classroom. All core curriculum activities are able to produce data but it is not consistently used to set student goals.

A major weakness in the school is the perceived low level of trust and respect between teachers and students. A minority of students are convinced some staff neither respect nor trust them and complain of being shouted at or being treated inconsistently. Lack of a coherent behavior policy exacerbates this. The principal acknowledges this problem. Rigorously applied strategies ensure high attendance at the school. An assistant principal oversees attendance and has initiated a number of successful procedures such as a family worker who gives out alarm clocks, home visits with follow-up and incentives for perfect 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 proficient.

The principal makes frequent observations of teachers and helps to meet students’ improvement goals by linking data with professional development. Although not all professional development is differentiated to address all teachers’ needs. Good practice is facilitated by intervisitation between classrooms which is routine and well established for teachers. The school tries, where possible, to pair teachers for the visits so they can debrief each other after the lesson. This intervisitation is a major ingredient in the close collaboration between teachers, and helps with the planning of cross-curricular themes.

The school has efficient induction and support systems for new teachers. Every new teacher observes established teachers before they start at the school, and works closely with a staff mentor, in the same subject area, if possible. In addition, the school provides

specialist professional development after school. New teachers enthuse about the amount of support they receive and how quickly their confidence grows as a result.

Although the school runs quite smoothly, not all procedures and policies are implemented consistently. An example of this is the uniform policy, which is flouted throughout the school. The principal is aware of this and is thinking of changing the uniform colors to blue and white, to allow students to wear jeans. The school has effective partnerships with a variety of organizations and business entities, including Girl's Quest, New York Cares and Goldman Sachs.

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.

Although some school goals are measurable and time limited, this is not consistent across the school. Most goals for students are not incrementalized into small, achievable steps. Some students are unaware of their goals; they have been set by staff and not communicated clearly to them. These means students are not taking responsibility for their learning. They know what they have to achieve, but have no idea how to achieve it.

The school has put in structures for evaluating students' progress and this is helping to adapt its plans and practices. The principal is quick to revise strategies when necessary to meet the school goals. An example of this is her close focus on English language arts during the last three years. By close monitoring of scripts, she identified weaknesses in teaching and learning and oversaw changes in the way English language arts were taught. Not only have the English language arts results improved, but student writing across the school, for example in social studies, has also become better.

The principal is utterly determined to change the culture of the school into one which is fully data driven and which works with each individual student's needs to improve their progress. However, although her vision is clear it is not clear to all members of the school community which impedes the principal's desired rate of change.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Lola Rodriguez de Tio Academy of Future Technologies	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