



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Dr. Roland N. Patterson School**

**Middle School 229**

**275 Harlem River Park Bridge  
Bronx  
NY 10453**

**Principal: Dr. Ezra Matthias**

**Dates of review: April 3 – 4, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: John Hudson**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Dr. Roland N. Patterson School is a middle school with 386 students from grade 5 through grade 8. The school population comprises 54% Black, 43% and 3% other students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.1%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 80% eligibility.

The school currently draws all its students from an elementary school which shares the same building. The number of students enrolling into grade 5 has declined by about 30% over the last three years. A higher than average proportion of students suffers from asthma. The building's open-plan design includes partitions between most classrooms that extend to within a few inches of the ceiling. There is no outdoor play area.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school uses rigorous and effective procedures to identify at an early stage those students who are not progressing well.
- The school recognizes the unique needs of its students and has created an array of social interventions and opportunities to promote their learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for students to extend their horizons and set demanding goals for themselves.
- Effective procedures ensure the school runs smoothly and students focus on learning, achievement and progress.
- Partnerships with outside organizations extend the school's boundaries, accelerate students' academic progress and promote their personal growth.
- The principal and his staff use a range of data to understand what students know, diagnose barriers to achievement and identify next learning steps.
- This is a very caring school which works hard to provide the support students need to reach their academic and personal goals.
- Teachers work proactively to develop the curriculum, set interim goals, plan their instruction, evaluate their performance and assess student progress.
- School leadership holds teachers accountable for making instruction engaging and creating an encouraging and inclusive learning environment.
- Many parents are very positive about the school and are eager to work with staff to promote their children's academic and personal progress.

### What the school needs to improve

- Use information systems to compare progress among students, groups of students and subjects, and with similar schools that perform well.
- Establish robust procedures to continuously monitor the effectiveness of all plans and procedures and make immediate revisions when required.
- Provide further professional development so all teachers make good use of assessments and data systems to track progress and plan instruction.
- Expand the use of differentiated instruction to meet the ever-changing learning needs of every student and accelerate progress.
- Devise innovative ways of involving every member of the school community in improving student progress and achievement.
- Develop effective procedures to monitor and improve the attendance and punctuality of a minority of students.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### Progress made since the last review

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

### Overall Evaluation

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

This is a friendly, welcoming and caring school where students are known by name and their individual strengths and areas for development are understood. Everyone on the school staff works hard to provide good opportunities for students to develop academically and personally. Great care and attention is given to those students with greatest need of improvement and these students are progressing well. Very good opportunities are available both within and outside the school day to extend the experience and broaden the horizons of all students. For example, all students attend a confidence-building program in Manhattan and enjoy other programs which have a significant impact on their personal development. The school has made good progress over the past year and wishes to continue this encouraging trend. The school does compare performance across subjects, classrooms and groups of students of particular interest. However, systems are not straightforward. As a result, comparisons between boys and girls, students of different ethnic groups, students who have been in the school since grade 5 and those who have not, and between students who attend regularly and others, for example, are not routinely made. The school runs very smoothly, encourages good attendance and provides a calm, safe and inclusive learning environment. Students are engaged in their learning and do well to overcome the distracting effect of sound transmitted between classrooms over partition walls. This is particularly noticeable in those classrooms that are adjacent to the lunch room.

Many students and their parents are strongly committed to the school and its plans for future development. There are others who, for a variety of reasons, are less involved and have yet to be drawn into the school community. Effective classroom practice and instruction that is differentiated to the individual needs of learners are in place. However, this good practice is not seen in all classrooms and further professional development is needed to ensure consistency throughout the school. Systems to monitor the effectiveness of plans, processes and interventions, for example, are not uniformly rigorous. Interventions for individual learners in need of improvement are tracked very carefully but timely adjustments are not routinely made to ensure all plans and procedures work effectively so goals are met.

The school has made progress since the last Quality Review in developing assessment systems and providing standards-based learning objectives for all classrooms. Students make good use of rubrics to assess their own work. However, the school still needs to track the effectiveness of plans and procedures and make timely adjustments when required. A highly motivated inquiry team has made much progress in investigating some of the causes of student retention in order to inform classroom and instructional practices in the early grades

## **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 proficient.**

Leaders and teachers use data effectively to understand what students know and can do. Students use rubrics in literacy and math and work individually with their teachers to monitor their progress. Teachers supplement this information with a range of diagnostic data in order to track student progress objectively over time. This works well to measure the progress of individuals, classrooms and other groups of interest to the school, including a significant population of Francophone African students. However, systems to compare progress between students, classrooms and groups, and across different subjects are less sophisticated. The school has not taken advantage of ARIS, which provides a very convenient tool for such analyses. As a consequence, the school does not make regular and systematic comparisons of the relative progress across all subjects of girls and boys and of students from different ethnic groups. Neither does it investigate possible areas of underachievement rigorously and systematically.

The school leadership compares the school's performance with other schools but does not routinely monitor the performance of schools whose students share similar characteristics on entry but have achieved much better outcomes. This makes it difficult for the school to identify precisely where it might look for improvements in systems and structures in order to raise achievement. Teachers are trained to use data management systems and are making good use of them. Some teachers use their growing understanding of individual student performance very effectively to refine plans to meet students' learning needs. However, training does not enable all teachers to plan their instruction consistently in order to accelerate the progress of all students.

**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.**

School leadership and faculty work collaboratively with students to set rigorous and objectively measurable goals for improvement along with suitable plans and timeframes to achieve them. Typically, interim goals are set and progress towards them is measured at the end of learning units and at the end of marking periods. Teachers work with individual students to monitor progress at these frequent checkpoints. In this way, both parties have confidence that challenging end-of-grade goals will be met. Students, teachers and parents are aware of each student's next learning steps and can work together in order to achieve them. The principal and his team take considerable care to identify those students in greatest need of improvement and have developed rigorous routines for accelerating their progress. This process is working well.

The school provides parents with information on student progress towards identified goals at regular intervals throughout the year. These reports, which are translated into other languages, focus mainly on literacy and math. Parents, teachers and students

have good opportunities to discuss student progress and identify ways of supporting each other. The parents of many students are very much involved with their children's education and are able to support them directly. They understand what their children are learning and monitor their homework. However, the school has not developed a clear and consistent approach to involve all parents. In consequence, the school does not enjoy the overall involvement of its whole community and some students may not get the full range of support they need to improve their performance.

**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.**

Students enjoy a broad curriculum, which includes core academic subjects together with art, music and physical education. Additional opportunities within the school day, after school and at other times include Spanish, health education, student council, home economics, drama and ballroom dancing. All students attend a four-week etiquette training course in Manhattan to help improve their self-confidence. School leaders and teachers have developed curriculum plans in English language arts and math, which are aligned to State standards and include assessment events so that students' progress may be monitored against established interim goals. The school is currently developing a similar approach in social studies and science.

Teachers are accountable for the learning, achievement and progress of students in their charge. Most instructional activities are engaging and the school has taken care to ensure students are suitably grouped to support their learning. However, not all teachers differentiate their instruction to meet the learning needs of every individual. Sound travels easily through classrooms and the lunch room in this open plan building but teachers ensure student attention is focused on their learning. The learning environment is positive, encouraging and inclusive.

The leadership makes good use of the resources available to the school to ensure numbers of students in classrooms are kept low and staffing and scheduling meets the identified academic needs of learners. The school works hard and with much success to ensure good relationships between all members of the school community that support student academic and personal development. The school has established routines to encourage good attendance and punctuality, which are celebrated in a variety of ways. However, attendance rates have remained at approximately 90 percent for the past four years. While the good attendance of many greatly enhances their chance of success, other students attend poorly and their continuing progress is an area of concern.

**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.**

Administrators observe classrooms frequently and use a range of strategies to develop teachers' capacity to accelerate student learning and achieve demanding academic and

personal goals. Professional development activities include specific training on the effective use of data to track progress, inter-visitations to observe best instructional practices and reflective peer evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses. However, the overall strategy to ensure every member of the staff has good mastery of the skills they need to enable students to progress is not fully developed.

The school makes very effective use of programs to support student needs, extend opportunities and accelerate their progress. For example, the student support team identifies students who have issues in classrooms and explores how these students can be helped to achieve their goals. They have access to school-based counselors and a social worker and other services from community-based organizations. Once identified by this team, all avenues are explored to ensure a student is successful. The school is also successful in providing very good opportunities for students to excel. Chess is a popular activity throughout the school and a team from the school's nationally ranked chess program is currently competing in Dallas, Texas. The school also hosts a resident artist and provides a college awareness program, an instructional music program, and other activities that have a strong impact on student motivation and learning.

**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.**

School leadership and faculty have established effective routines for setting goals for both student and teacher improvement. For example, there is a detailed plan to enable students to meet demanding interim goals in math at specified times throughout the year. In this way, students are strongly supported to achieve their end of grade goals.

Subject teachers collaborate to plan lessons, which enable students to meet end of unit goals. Individual teachers refine these plans to address the needs of individual learners. In some cases, leadership and faculty monitor the effectiveness of plans. Plans and interventions to raise the achievement of students in particular need of improvement are continuously reviewed and, when necessary, revised or changed immediately. These students have good support to achieve their goals. However, the school has not developed a systematic strategy to ensure all school plans, procedure and interventions are reviewed continuously to ensure they are working effectively and goals are met. Accordingly, plans are not necessarily revised immediately and therefore student progress cannot be assured.

The principal, staff, students, and parents recognize that performance in academic subjects must improve and have developed suitable goals, plans, and time frames to achieve this. For example, the school has developed plans to increase the proportion of students at level 3 and 4 in English language arts and math and has developed appropriately demanding goals and procedures. Plans to improve student self-confidence are working well. Grade 8 students feel prepared for high school and speak positively and with confidence about their future.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Dr. Roland N. Patterson School</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .</b>	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		
<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.**

<b>To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .</b>	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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			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.**

<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<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, 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X		

<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 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X		

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>