

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**The Roberto Clemente School**

**Elementary School 15**

**333 East 4 Street  
New York  
NY 10009**

**Principal: Thomas Staebell**

**Dates of review: March 10 - 11, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Timothy Behr**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Roberto Clemente School is an elementary school with 241 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 29% Black, 61% Hispanic, 3% White, 6% Asian, and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 58% of the students enrolled and girls account for 42%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 90.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 89% eligibility. The school works in partnership with Public School 94, a District 75 school for special education students, and accommodates ten classes from PS94 in the school building.

### Overall Evaluation

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

The Roberto Clemente School provides a nurturing and stable educational environment where students progress academically, socially, and emotionally. The principal has an articulated vision which parents share and which the faculty and staff have the ability to deliver. The overall objective is to educate children so that they can function in society. The school mission supports the legacy of Roberto Clemente, "The Great One", where the school devotes time to develop the whole child. A large proportion of the students are transient and live in shelters, and their families are constantly on the move. This means the school has to work hard to maintain regular attendance, but once at school, the students feel supported and happy. They have ambitions to be successful in life and the school supports their expectations.

The school takes great care to develop students who are thoughtful and considerate in an educational community. It analyzes data on student performance, but not consistently in all core subjects, and uses the information in planning, although plans are not yet sharply focused to enable the school to evaluate progress. To improve student behavior, the school began a Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program, which assists in the development of common behavior expectations and has brought about improvements in the last year.

Special education students and English language learners receive well-targeted intervention and small-group instruction. This is supported by the work of the inquiry team. The team is thorough in the development of its action research project, which aligns with the priorities of the school. Parents are becoming more involved in the education of their children and workshops support their own learning about the school's curriculum.

The school organizes the curriculum to develop the whole child. It includes the prescribed elements and focuses on identifying the needs and interests of the students. Subjects are taught through direct experience and teacher reflections and evaluations help to refine the delivery of instruction. However, goal setting and differentiation of instruction are not consistently in place across all core subjects. Professional support and enhancement for staff does not yet stem from observation of teaching and learning. New teachers appreciate the good support they receive.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school is providing effective support for special education students and English language learners to make good progress in their achievement levels.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan is a living document that is specific and relevant and supports the school's social and academic initiatives.
- The principal and faculty work together to create a calm, respectful, orderly and nurturing environment for learning to take place.
- The inquiry team works collaboratively and passionately to share ideas and best practices with colleagues to continually enhance student achievement.
- The school's youth development activities create a wide variety of opportunities for students to grow academically, socially and emotionally.
- The principal and his staff are supportive of students and families, with a strong understanding of the school's strengths, areas for continued development and a clear vision for its growth.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend student goal setting to include specific objectives for achievement in all core subjects.
- Refine lesson observation procedures to formalize individual teacher professional growth plans that maximize student achievement.
- Extend the consistency and rigor of the differentiation of instructional learning activities to provide appropriate challenges aligned to the students identified learning needs.
- Sharpen school improvement by developing short-term and long-term goals that are measurable and where progress can be measured and refined.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

**Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.**

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

The school collects, maintains and analyses a large amount of useful data relating to the performance and progress of each individual student. However, this process is not consistent in all core subject areas. As a result, teachers cannot create a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students across content areas. Teachers maintain assessment binders for students in their class and supplement them on a regular basis. Common preparation periods and meetings with the coaches enable teachers to evaluate the progress that students make during the school year and teachers are beginning to share this information with their colleagues in other grades to inform instruction.

Students in need of special assistance are receiving good support. The teachers and inquiry team collate information to identify their needs and seek specialist advice when it is necessary. The school is addressing an identified area of improvement, fluency, with new curriculum materials such as Words Their Way and Achieve 3000. The design of these programs is to ensure that students receive adequate instruction in decoding strategies that are integral to literacy success. Student class work and running record results indicate that these programs are meeting the needs of students. Special education students integrate well into school life, school events and activities. Integrating District 75 teachers (serving as co-teachers), mainstreaming District 75 students and collaborative team teaching classes further integrate special education into general school activities.

The school makes effective comparisons between the performance of boys and girls. There is no evidence to show that there are identifiable patterns in performance. Grade-specific monthly newsletters enable the administration and classroom teachers to have an open exchange of information with parents regarding academic activities, trips, attendance data and important dates. This communication tool informs families about their child's activities and the school's current academic focus and trends. The school provides additional support to parents via themed curriculum night activities designed to enable parents to learn what the school is teaching their children. In addition, the school has a monthly movie night to promote school involvement and to reward good behavior. The school sends a reading report (for students and families) that explains independent reading levels, identifies a child's reading level (accuracy, fluency, and comprehension) and the total number of books read. This report also identifies a child's reading strengths, areas for growth, goals and what the family can do to help a child progress. As a result, families are aware of goals and expectations in English language arts for their children and what they can do to support them. However, this is not consistent in all core subject areas.

Teachers receive assistance on the use of data and the school regularly updates all assessment tools. This helps to keep teachers aligned to the school curriculum, which is

evolving to meet the learning needs of the students. Professional development activities assist in the use of new initiatives to support data analysis to inform planning and instruction.

**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 leaders provide teachers with pertinent student information on a consistent basis. Teachers use this information for planning classroom instruction and at common preparation meetings to consider their next collaborative goals. The reading specialist and math consultant meet with the grade teachers to assist and to monitor informally their progress in establishing their goals. This procedure is helping to focus on the amount of academic growth for able students. However, student goal setting, including specific objectives for achievement, is not evident in all core subjects.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan was developed collaboratively with the school leadership team and teachers. The action plans of improving student behavior, increasing parental involvement and improving the literacy skills of its English language learners and special education students is reflective of the school’s results in the Progress Report and Learning Environment Survey. The monitoring of behavior, parental involvement and targeting of students informs the instigation of effective strategies, such as the implementation of family math night and monthly pacing calendars. The school constantly informs parents through regular conferences. The school shares goals with parents at meetings of the leadership team and the parent-teacher association, but mostly at parent-teacher conferences. The school is starting to make progress in involving parents with their children’s education, and the parent coordinator plays a significant role in developing this work. Parents are more aware of the importance of consistent attendance and punctuality and the correlation to improved academic performance. All teachers receive training on the use of data and state that the school updates assessment tools on a regular basis. This assists them to follow the school curriculum, which is evolving in order to meet the behavioral and learning needs of the students. The reading specialist and math consultant provide support and professional development to keep teachers up to date on new initiatives. Students talk animatedly about how well they are doing and how they know their reading levels, their present performance and what they need to do in order to do better at school.

The parent coordinator knows students and their families well and provides support and referrals to outreach programs for family learning. This extends learning beyond school hours and supports parents’ involvement with their child’s education.

**Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.**

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

The school uses Teachers’ College Units of Study for English language arts and Everyday Math. The school uses The Fitness Gram for physical education and Foss for science. It currently is developing a scope and sequence for social studies. The use of

the reading specialist and the math consultant and the principal's decision to use his budget to hire an academic intervention specialist support teachers in the delivery of these programs. They provide assistance in lesson design and delivery, utilizing assessment data. The extra-curricular activity Project Cool (creative opportunities for outstanding learners) provides another dimension to learning and students state that they thoroughly enjoy the challenge and variety of activities. Students participate in dance, music, drama, small group tutoring, and sports and recreation activities. The quality and range of the program's components has a very positive influence on students' enjoyment of school. Teachers use a range of assessment information to plan new learning that successfully meets students' individual needs. However, there remain inconsistencies in the differentiation of classroom work. The principal acknowledges that the current range of teaching styles and use of technology do not yet fully support the development of more independent, self-managed learning opportunities for students.

The principal makes creative use of budgetary, staffing and scheduling opportunities to support the curricular approach. The close partnership with PS 94 enables the school to use its teachers effectively in collaborative team teaching classes. Funding outside consultants enables staff members to participate in professional development activities to improve lesson design and the delivery of instruction. The implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program has dramatically improved student behavior and the tone of the school. A teacher commented on the improvement over the last year. Since the implementation of the Positive Behavior program, the hallways are quiet and children respect adults and each other.

Behavior intervention strategies have provided a system-wide approach to address behavior with a reinforcement process for students. A school store has been set-up for students to redeem most valuable player (MVP) cards for prizes. Students receive these cards as a reward for good behavior in and out of class. Teachers enjoy acknowledging good behavior and the students are excited to exchange their MVP cards for items at the school store.

**Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.**

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

The small size of the school and the dedication of faculty and staff results in a cohesive school with mostly consistent practice. However, its small size also has an impact on the number of school administrators. There is no assistant principal but the principal budgets for a reading specialist, academic intervention specialist and a math consultant. The principal works diligently to ensure that all elements of the school are working well and that the school maintains high standards and good student behavior. The specialists and consultant work alongside teachers to improve and guide practice, but the principal has not yet developed a formal system for monitoring teaching. Although he is aware of what happens in classes, this informal monitoring does not result in the development of professional practice where the needs of educators and the whole school priorities for development can be addressed over a planned timeframe. Teachers work collaboratively to share good practices. At common preparation meetings, they work together to develop teaching strategies and pool their resources to improve instruction. Network mentors, the math consultant and the reading specialist, as well as colleagues in their grade, all support new teachers. In addition, new teachers visit other classrooms to observe good practice.

The focus of the inquiry team has been to develop short-term goals and to identify the length of cycles to review mastery. The target group is English language learners and special education students who are not making exemplary gains. Colleagues meet with the inquiry team to share best practices. As a result teachers are utilizing hard and soft data to inform instruction to meet student needs.

The basis for professional development for teachers is an analysis of student progress and the need for teachers to understand particular curriculum development. Currently, the focus is on developing a deeper understanding of Teachers' College Readers and Writers' Workshop, collaborative team teaching and co-teaching models of instruction, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. The principal attends the training so that he has an in-depth understanding of what aspect the teachers are working on and what they are aiming to achieve. This knowledge enables him to provide the right level of support. As a result, teachers are better equipped to recognize and address specific skill deficiencies among their students.

Partnerships with community organizations supplement the school's program. In addition, the resources of cultural institutions such as Rosie's Broadway Kids, American Ballroom Dancing and the Mark De Garmo Dance Theatre contribute to the richness and depth of the school's curriculum which supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of its students.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 school has a skillful understanding of its strengths and areas for development, which comes as the product of self-evaluation linked to a review of all relevant data. The entire school community is involved in identifying goals and contributing to the school's plans to support improvement. However, these plans do not always include objective interim checkpoints. This makes differentiation of instruction and the revision of student learning plans difficult. It also makes it hard to determine progress towards the achievement of identified goals. In addition, students are sometimes unaware of the steps they need to take to reach their larger goals. Periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools, such as those linked to reading levels and "Just Right" books, are regularly used to measure progress towards meeting goals for improving the achievement of all the students. The assessments are used to revise these goals and adjust the curriculum and instruction.

The entire school community shares the vision of an inclusive learning environment where general education and District 75 students can work and learn alongside each other. The principal works hard to make sure that this is not merely an ambition, but a living reality everyday at the school. An example of this seamless approach is the science teacher and physical education teacher co-teaching with their PS 94 colleagues. This model provides for good collaboration between both schools, and engages effectively in the sharing of best practices to improve student learning.

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: The Roberto Clemente School</b>	△	➤	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				<b>X</b>
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?		<b>X</b>		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				<b>X</b>
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			<b>X</b>	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

<b>Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.</b>							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?			X				
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?		X					
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X				
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?		X					
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X			
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X				
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+			
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?		X					
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X				
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X				
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
Δ	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed