



**Department of
Education**

Joel I. Klein, Chancellor

**Quality Review Report
Office of Accountability
2008-2009**

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Roosevelt Island School

Elementary-Middle School 217

**645 Main Street
New York
NY 10044**

Principal: Mandana Beckman

Dates of review: December 3 - 4, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Roosevelt Island School is an elementary-middle school with 454 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 38.3% Black, 23.8% Hispanic, 15.9% White, and 21.6% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 53.3% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46.7%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 93.7%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The principal works closely with the two assistant principals in establishing school wide goals, monitoring student performance and coordinating professional development activities to improve teaching and learning. This team sets the tone for the school and fosters a sense of community throughout the building. Everyone celebrates the ethnic diversity of the school population.

The school has worked hard to create and maintain a positive school environment. Students feel safe, nurtured and cared for by all staff. New students are assigned a buddy to help them get acclimated. Parents say that the teachers are role models for their children and that there is an open door policy for communication. All parents agree that they are made to feel welcome and have many opportunities to visit the school during publishing parties, student performances, and workshops.

Students are engaged in a wide variety of activities which enrich the curriculum, before, during and after school. As a result the students are excited about learning and enjoy school. A standards based curriculum is implemented in all core subjects and there is evidence of good quality instruction in most classrooms. A good start has been made to establish rubrics in some grades. However, teacher's effectiveness at differentiating instruction varies widely and many of the students capable of high achievements are not being challenged sufficiently. Individual student goals are not specific and next steps are not consistently identified, tracked and evaluated. The school has identified these areas in their next steps and through the school goals in the Comprehensive Educational Plan.

The school is working diligently toward school improvements to increase student performance and consistency across all grades but strategic planning in the setting of interim measurable goals to monitor progress over time is not yet in place.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty collect and analyze a wide range of data including formal and informal assessments that enables them to understand student performance.
- School leaders have developed a detailed professional development plan for all teachers noting their strengths, areas for improvement and next steps in order to improve teaching and learning.
- The inquiry team analyzes school wide data in order to implement a change strategy to improve student performance.
- The curriculum is enhanced by visual and performing arts programs, cooking classes and an after school program which provides good opportunities for all students to enrich their learning.
- The individuality and ethnic diversity of all students is recognized and valued which contributes to a positive school culture.
- Administrators are highly collaborative and work well with parents and staff leading to a harmonious learning environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Establish school wide procedures to ensure that all teachers systematically set measurable learning goals for individual students in English language arts, math, and other core subjects.
- Ensure all teachers identify next steps towards achieving long-term student goals within a specific timeframe.
- Extend professional development and modeling to support consistent differentiation of instruction throughout the school and establish clear systems to evaluate the impact of this on student achievement.
- Refine systems for strategic monitoring and assessing school wide initiatives in order to clearly evaluate progress towards them at set points during the year.

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.

School leaders and faculty collect and analyze a wide range of data to understand student performance. They use this information to make instructional and organizational decisions. Standardized test results in English language arts and math are disaggregated to identify trends and target students who are not making adequate progress. The school uses Acuity to identify specific skills and strategies commonly missed by students across grade levels. Where deficiencies are found, academic intervention services are provided for students in line with their needs. Informal assessments are collected which include running records, Qualitative Reading Inventory and unit tests. This data is maintained in individual student binders which follow the student from grade to grade. Teachers use this information to monitor progress from year to year. Data for subgroups, including that for English language learners and special education, is analyzed to inform effective planning and instruction. Students receive push-in and pull out support in line with their identified needs resulting in student progress. The focus of the school's inquiry team is a response to the good use of data. The target population was 6th grade due to a drop in test scores. This has led to a successful study of students' transition from elementary to middle school and a subsequent revamping of the curriculum. A modification in the teaching of writing has had a positive impact on the quality of student writing responses. Rubrics are beginning to be developed in some grades but not all students engage in reflective practices to assess their own progress. The school is also inconsistent in setting interim benchmarks to monitor the students' progress over time in all core subjects.

School staff monitor attendance and punctuality. Reducing lateness has been targeted as a school goal. Workshops have been held with parents to discuss the importance of coming to school on time. Upper grade students have been held accountable for excessive absences and/or lateness. The school has identified children of families who work in the United Nations and take extended vacations and have met with them to improve their attendance patterns. The results of these actions are beginning to have a positive impact on reducing lateness.

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 and faculty use data to set goals that are checked periodically in order to target instruction in English language arts and math. The principal and assistant principal use this information to ensure that students receive intervention services,

evaluate curriculum and supplement instructional programs. This has led to several useful changes including the revision of the sequence of writing units for each grade and the development of a comprehension skills matrix. Teachers use the same information to identify long-range individual student goals in reading and math but this process is not yet embedded in every core subject.

Administrators and school staff used data, including the previous Quality Review and Progress Report, to evaluate the goals of the previous Comprehensive Educational Plan. This information is used to target areas for improvement and set new school-wide goals. These goals include the development of individual “SMART” goals for all students and differentiated classroom instruction. The Comprehensive Educational Plan is discussed at the school leadership team, faculty conferences and parent meetings for additional feedback.

Students can see goals around them and are involved in setting their own goals and school-designed report cards now include a section for individual student goals. They are posted in the hallway, in classrooms, on tables, making them a central focus for faculty, students and parents. As a result, most students can articulate their goals. However, they cannot always explain what they need to do to achieve them. Students do not have a consistent understanding of how and by when the goals are to be met. Positively, one kindergarten classroom has a bulletin board of parent goals established to support their child at home. Faculty conferences with students and parents ensure that there is a clear understanding of their child’s goal and promotion of high expectations for all students. Parents agree that they are regularly informed of their child’s progress. Parents of students with special needs are particularly pleased with the services their children are receiving since these interventions have had positive results in their children’s progress.

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

A standards based curriculum is implemented in all core subject areas with a range of enrichment activities that include visual and performing arts. Project based learning has led to improved student engagement and interdisciplinary learning. Good examples of student involvement are seen in a social science project where students create protest posters from the viewpoint of colonists and in a science lesson where students research the mechanics of bird beaks to look at adaptation and evolution of a species. Reciprocal teaching has been adopted as a strategy to improve comprehension such as in guided reading. Teachers assisted by a staff developer are establishing writing standards and rubrics for each genre. Teachers work successfully with students in guided reading groups and small group strategy instruction or read independently and in book clubs based on individual reading levels.

In classes where goal setting is strong, teaching is focused and challenging. However the majority of goals are not measurable and actionable and do not identify a series of next steps to achieve these goals. Such examples of non-detailed general advice include “read more books”, “count to 100”, “get a good grade”, and “do my homework”. Teachers conference with students but there is no formal record keeping to follow up on individual goals. Differentiation of content, process and product, is not always based on

individual learning goals and is not consistent in all classes or subjects. Sometimes all students are assigned the same worksheet and task which does not challenge the higher level students as evidenced in a by two 6th grade students in an English language arts lesson who completed the assignment within the first ten minutes of the session.

School leaders, in consultation with the staff and school leadership team, utilize the budget well to support teaching and learning. The schedule is designed to ensure that teachers have common planning time and grade level meetings. An F-Status teacher has been hired to work with at-risk students and mentor new teachers. The budget supports consultants and professional development off site. Consultants model lessons, plan with teachers and examine student work to inform instruction. A Saturday Academy for grades 3 and 4 in math and 5th grade literacy is conducted each week and improves student achievement and progress. Teachers have a wide variety of resources and materials in their classrooms. Multi-cultural and high interest books have been purchased for classrooms and the library and these are effective in promoting reading for reluctant readers.

Responses in the Learning Environment Survey indicate average levels of trust and respect. However, during the review, parents, students and staff all responded that a stronger culture of mutual respect and trust among teachers, students and parents actually exists. Students said they felt supported by their teachers and principals and said they always had someone to talk to if they had a problem. Parents are very comfortable talking to teachers who make themselves easily accessible through meetings and phone conferences. They attend workshops that are facilitated by the parent coordinator and attend assemblies, "pot luck dinners", international day events and publishing parties to celebrate children's work. Students feel safe and nurtured and have good relationships with their peers. The guidance counselor conducts in-class presentations on respect and anti-bullying.

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 principal and the two assistant principals conduct formal and informal observations that are effective in monitoring teaching and learning to inform professional development needs. They have created an individual plan for each teacher which includes strengths, areas to improve and support needed. Although the observations provide valuable feedback to teachers, they are not focused on the school goal of improving differentiated instruction and the impact of professional development in differentiation. The setting of student goals is not evident across content areas and middle school grades. School coaches, specialists and consultants are assigned to provide additional assistance through modeling and planning. Their work in guided reading, writing and classroom management has been effective as noted by classroom teachers. Grade levels collaborate during common planning time and are beginning to utilize the inquiry process as they examine student work.

Learning Leaders, Project OMNIBUS, CHAMPS and other partnerships with community-based organizations are effective in supporting student's personal and academic growth. America Reads tutors are appropriately placed this year to address the needs of at risk students. The Hawk Clubs provide enrichment activities, ballroom dancing promotes self-esteem, and interactive workshops focus on respect. The guidance counselor and

school psychologist consult with teachers and meet with students to provide additional support. Middle school students engage in community service activities which further prepares them to be productive citizens. As a result of all these programs, students' social and emotional needs are met within a caring school setting.

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 principal and assistant principals monitor student progress and have created subgroup and grade level data reports to evaluate student outcomes. The administration uses progress reports and other data to review organizational structures. As a result there has been a change in staff and teacher assignments and the adoption of helpful new programs including reciprocal teaching. When school leaders identified 8th grade writing as an area in need of improvement this led to the revision of writing units across the grades and the development of writing rubrics in many classrooms. The school has developed other school-wide initiatives including the development of SMART goals.

The administration has set timeframes for meeting school-wide goals but they do not have interim checkpoints which makes it difficult to accurately evaluate progress towards meeting these goals. Teachers analyze monthly reading level assessments to inform strategy groups, guided reading groups and independent reading. Assessments of math units are administered as well as content area quizzes and tests. Although data is collected, teachers do not use it consistently in all core subjects to revise learning plans and deliver differentiated instruction evenly throughout the year.

The administrators and staff have identified plans for the future development of the school as outlined in their "next steps" document. They are committed to improving student performance and progress by continuing to use assessment data to create flexible grouping to target individual needs. They are currently training staff in the use of ARIS and are scheduling meetings across grade levels to discuss expectations and data.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Roosevelt Island School	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
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.				
<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?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
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?			X	
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?			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 student’s learning.				
<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?		X		
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

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.

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.							
<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
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			
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X				
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.							
<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X				
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.							
<i>To what extent do...</i>	△	➤	✓	+			
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				
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed