



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Lillian L. Rashkis High School**

**Public School 371**

**355 37th Street**

**Brooklyn**

**NY 11232**

**Principal: Mary Ann Andrews**

**Dates of review: April 30 – May 1, 2007**

**Reviewer: Ronnie Young**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Lillian L. Rashkis School is a special education school in Brooklyn serving grades 9 through 12 with some 18+ students. The school consists of two main buildings, two off-sites and seven work sites. The main building contains 15 classes of 12:1:1 ratio for students with severe emotional difficulties who take standardized City and State tests. Adjoining this is an annex with 3 classes of 12:1:1 for students with learning difficulties and/or mild cognitive disabilities and emotional disabilities who take alternate assessment and do not take standardized City and State tests. At Telecommunications High School, there is an inclusion/mainstream program for students identified as being school phobic. At East New York Family Academy High School, Lillian L. Rashkis has an inclusion program which services standardized assessment students

Several work-sites around Brooklyn including Maimonides Hospital, Victory Memorial Hospital, Coney Island Hospital, Stop and Shop, CHIPS soup kitchen, Sunset Park, Augusta Lutheran Home and Fort Hamilton Army Base Commissary provide opportunities for alternate assessment students to be given classes on-site while working in real jobs.

There are currently 334 students enrolled of whom 60% are Black; 26% are Hispanic; 11% are White; 1.5% are Asian and 1.5% are other. Seventy-eight percent of the students are male. Twenty-six percent of the students follow the alternate assessment curriculum.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is very well perceived and has the capacity to effect change, well assisted by the administration.
- There is a very strong emphasis on creating an appropriate and strong learning environment, facilitated by the introduction of an effective behavior management policy.
- A realistic alternative assessment program leads to work placements and employment preparation and opportunities.
- The curriculum is completely personalized for grades 11 and 12 and for literacy and mathematics in grades 9 and 10.
- The coherent attendance policy is rigorously applied and enthusiastically accepted by students, leading to over-achievement of attendance targets.
- The extremely supportive staff treats all of the students as individuals, and emphasizes the importance of raising self-esteem and building confidence.
- There is an above-average rate of students transferring to a less restricted environment education.

### What the school needs to improve

- Break down data into ethnicity and gender to identify trends and any significant differences which could affect students' progress.
- Investigate the incidence of specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia and/or dyspraxia which may affect basic skills scores.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

**This is a proficient school with well-developed features.**

The current principal has put into place effective systems whereby data can be collected, analyzed and used for the benefit of students and staff across the school. In the four months she has been the school's leader, she has initiated a successful behavior management and attendance program, both of which are data driven. The common preparation periods for staff and the introduction of weekly grade meetings which the current principal has introduced have led to better communication and formal opportunities to discuss students' progress. She has also initiated a system of ongoing assessment, based on the individual education plans of the students.

While these systems are showing some signs of effective progress, they are still too new for any significant impact to be measured over time. However, the staff and administration show an extremely high degree of commitment and dedication to all students on an individual and group basis, which is returned by the students towards the staff. The changes have been embraced enthusiastically by the whole school.

### 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 student progress over time.**

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

Data is collected from a variety of sources, such as Regent's individualized education plans, Princeton Review, New York State testing and accountability reporting tool and Grow reports for grade 8 and above. Other sources include Read 180 for grade 9, Ramp-up to reading and writing, School Wide Information System (for behavior), Individual Reading Inventory, Multiple Intelligences/Learning Styles Survey, and Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement mathematics inventory for all students. New York State alternate assessment and Brigance testing is administered for alternative assessment students. Informal data collection is that for the Power of Choice behavior management program, attendance and general progress data discussed at grade meetings, which have recently been introduced into common preparation periods. Although data is organized to provide an understanding of the progress and performance of each student, class and grade level, it is not broken down into other groupings by, for example, ethnicity or gender.

The principal is currently developing performance indicators using target achievement strategies set by the previous incumbent. However, she has plans for further informal data to be gathered, in the form of individualized profiles which will give a cohesive picture of each student's strengths and areas for more concentrated support, and which can deliver data reports broken down into categories of interest to the school and the New York City Department of Education. The school's performance is regularly compared to that of similar schools and the administration regularly meets their peers from other schools both formally, at District 75 meetings, and informally. Year to year data is closely scrutinized by all staff on an ongoing basis.

**Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed**

There are common preparation periods and weekly grade meetings where staff can work collaboratively to set demanding and achievable goals for improvement and can develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals. Through these meetings students are placed in groups according to data. Timeframes are facilitated by pacing calendars, or schemes of work, in all the mandatory curriculum areas which have been developed by the assistant principals. These are used across all grades, and individual goals are transmitted to all staff who work with each student. Parents are involved wherever possible but not all parents play a great part in these arrangements.

Standardized assessment students in grades 11 and 12 follow completely individualized programs based on each student’s achievement and whatever else is required to fulfill statutory requirements. The literacy and mathematics curricula in grades 9 and 10 are also personalized and differentiated for each student. These programs are designed by individual teachers in collaboration with the assistant principals. There is a full academic intervention program for those students in need of extra instruction, which takes place after school, during school, on Saturdays and during the summer. Behavior and attendance goals and plans are also discussed at these meetings and the Power of Choice behavior management program and attendance targets which has been introduced by the new principal, along with incentives and rewards for achievement, have been enthusiastically embraced by the student body. Students who do not have mandated academic intervention services are allowed to choose which class to attend during the first period of each day. This can be used to catch up with work, to receive further instruction or to learn a new skill. Although the choice is the student’s, it may be suggested by a staff member, but it is always on a personalized and differentiated basis.

Staff and students have high expectations of themselves and each other. Attendance and behavior information and data are displayed throughout the school showing achievement across the school and at a class and grade level. This visible evidence of progress is believed by the school community to be instrumental in improving behavior and attendance across the school. Continuous improvement of each student in all aspects of school life is the driving force of all aspects of the school and its staff.

**Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.**

**This area of the school’s work is well developed**

Although the core syllabus is mandatory, the school has selected additional units of study based on their appropriateness to the student body. The literacy curriculum includes Wilson, Read 180, Ramp-up and Achieve 3000 and all students follow mathematics A. The writing curriculum is based on the Ramp-up system, which is then individualized for students based on their initial diagnostic assessments. These programs were chosen in part for their ability to assess students diagnostically, thus facilitating individualization and differentiation. Pacing calendars are in place for global studies and science and teachers base their instruction around these, adapting instruction as necessary to their classes and

students. The arbitrary system of grouping which was carried out by the previous principal is in the process of being replaced by groups based on ability level and individual need.

Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by the student data. Staffing levels are high and if a student's individual education plan recommends extra support from a paraprofessional, this is put into place. All related services from paraprofessionals and/or ancillary services such as counseling or therapy are available for any student who needs it, and staff are carefully selected based on their appropriateness to fulfill student need. There is full funding for after school, Saturday and summer programs and tutoring. Funding has also been provided for student incentives around behavior and attendance, such as a monthly lottery for a bicycle (three per month) or Knicks basketball tickets, for all students with 100% attendance that month. Behavior incentives have also been funded, such as special trips, stationery, gift cards and t-shirts. There is a high level of personal regard and trust between staff and students. Students speak highly of the staff and some regard them as surrogate parents. In turn, staff show a very high degree of concern and caring towards students, offering them a safe and secure environment where students can discuss problems and be given unconditional respect. The administration has an open-door policy so students are able to talk to someone immediately if there is a problem.

Student attendance is given very high priority. The fulltime attendance aide contacts the student's home each day they are absent, and this will be followed by a visit from the attendance officer if absence persists. Incentives for attendance have improved attendance to above target levels, and this has helped students to see the importance of attendance. The statistics are skewed by some students who have circumstances that make coming to school very difficult. Every effort is made to encourage their attendance but this is not always possible. In class, students show high levels of engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

**Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.**

**This area of the school's work is well developed.**

The main criteria for the selection of staff are high expectations, appropriacy for working with the students of this school and their individual needs, and their level of interest, caring and support. Professional development decisions are based on perceived need from teaching staff individually, general issues revealed by data and by new initiatives from District 75 or from the curriculum. Staff are encouraged to join professional development sessions run by outside bodies and District 75, and, if necessary, outside trainers are brought in to run whole-school development sessions. The principal has recently put on two formal training sessions for staff based on data management: one by a data analyst from the District on analyzing data, and one run by the technology teacher on producing statistical information via information technology. Informal professional development takes place during inter-class visitations, grade meetings and common preparation times. The assistant principals act as coaches to train and mentor staff in all the mandatory subjects.

The principal and assistant principals observe classes regularly on both a formal and informal basis. Each teacher has one or two formal observations per year, and can expect informal visits throughout the day, either from the administration or from fellow teachers. Feedback is formal or informal, depending on the nature of the observation. The common preparation periods and grade meetings have led to staff working in teams across grades, classes and subject areas, and are now observing classes so themes can be used across

several subjects. This has facilitated greater understanding by students and closer collaboration across the school, as well as improving data collection and greater diagnostic opportunity. Teachers in grades 11 and 12 switch students frequently, to learn more about students and to give students the experience of being taught via a variety of methods.

Although the principal is new, she is greatly respected by staff, students and parents. She has already put in major initiatives, such as common grade meeting slots and preparation times and the behavior management and attendance systems. She is well supported by the three assistant principals who work tirelessly to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the school. The administration works extremely well together and is universally respected by staff, students and parents.

The school has partnerships with a number of outside bodies to assist students to reach academic and other goals, such as the Rush Arts Foundation, the Japan Society and Columbia University's Teachers College Teachers and Writers Collaborative, all of which assist the students to express themselves through art and writing.

**Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.**

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

The school carries out formal progress meetings for every student six times per year, when report cards are issued. These assess mainly the mastering of goals and are based on each student's individualized education plan. Student progress is discussed on an ongoing basis informally, especially during grade meetings and common preparation meetings. The school recognizes that more formal procedures for recording all individual student academic needs and achievement of interim targets have yet to be put into place, and there are plans to devise a formal system whereby conference notes, unit test results, observations from walk-throughs and minutes of meetings can form a more coherent picture of student progress.

Attendance and behavior are rigorously monitored and recorded each day, as it is believed by the school community that these are priorities for students before learning can even take place. All student monitoring is carried out solely on an individual basis at present and information is available only on that basis. Formal monitoring of academic areas includes the twice-yearly Reading Inventory and Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement mathematics system and those few students in grade 8+ are monitored five times per year via the Princeton Review. Portfolio monitoring is carried out on an ongoing basis, using writing samples and the Ramp-up checklists. These are moderated and standardized at grade meetings.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is monitored regularly and revised as necessary. This plan is written by the administration in collaboration with the school leadership team and any changes are ratified by that team. Budgeting and professional development are monitored on an ongoing basis by the principal and assistant principals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

|                                                        |   |   |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>SCHOOL NAME: Lillian L. Rashkis School (PS 371)</b> | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| <b>Quality Score</b>                                   |   | X |   |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>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 student progress over time.</b>                                                                           | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>                                 |   |   | X |
| 1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students*</li> </ul> | X |   |   |
| 1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>                       |   | X |   |
| 1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.                  |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   | X |   |

\* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.</b> | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.                                                                                          |   | X |   |
| 2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |   |   | X |
| 2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.      |   |   | X |
| 2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partnerships                                                                                                                                      |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |   |   | X |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |   | X |
| 3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |   | X |
| 3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   |   | X |
| 3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |   | X |   |
| 3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |   |   | X |
| 3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   | X |   |
| 3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   | X |
| 3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |   |   | X |
| <b>Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.                                                                                                                                                                         |   | X |   |
| 4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap. |   |   | X |
| 4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |   |   | X |
| 4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |   |   | X |
| 4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   | X |
| 4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   |   | X |
| 4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |   |   | X |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |   |   | X |
| <b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | ∅ | ✓ | + |
| 5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   | X |   |
| 5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   | X |   |
| 5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |   | X |   |
| 5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |   | X |   |
| <b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |   | X |   |