



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Robert E. Peary School

Public School 075

**1666 Hancock Street
Queens
NY 11385**

Principal: Brenda Gallashaw

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Reviewer: Louise Kapner

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Robert E. Peary School, Public School 75 is a multi-sited special education school for 367 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Students are identified as emotionally disturbed, cognitively delayed, autistic and/or visually impaired. PS 75's main site is located in the Ridgewood section of Queens. There are off sites at PS 239, PS 254, PS 88, Holliswood Hospital and Elmhurst Hospital. PS 75 at Holliswood Hospital is a residential setting and PS 75 at Elmhurst Hospital is both a day treatment and residential setting. Both hospital sites serve general and special education students.

Forty percent of the students are Hispanic, 36% are Black, 14% are White and 10% are Asian. The majority, 73%, of students are male and 15% are English language learners. Sixty-six percent of students are Title 1 eligible. Student attendance is 85%.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides excellent leadership and is well supported by her assistant principals in creating a positive school climate with a focus on instruction.
- The school places a high priority on reducing incidences and is using data to address this issue.
- The administrative team works collaboratively to support the school's goals.
- Staff members are extremely supportive and respectful of each other and demonstrate a dedicated approach to working with the students.
- Students are respected and engaged in learning.
- Data is used to ensure that instructional programs are appropriate to the needs of each student.
- Parents are welcomed and appreciative of the commitment of school staff.
- Good use is made of technology to support instruction.
- Budgeting and scheduling decisions are centred on improving student outcomes.
- Procedures are clearly communicated to staff on all sites.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all classrooms communicate high expectations to students.
- Provide additional opportunities for teachers to access, understand and use data to differentiate instruction.
- Continue to strengthen the academic skills of all students.
- Disaggregate data to monitor the performance and progress of student sub-groups.
- Continue to develop programs that support English language arts instruction and improve student outcomes in literacy.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The principal, assistant principals and staff at PS 75 show a true commitment to creating a safe environment where all students can learn and be respected. They work in tandem, each bringing their own expertise to the team ensuring that the school's goals are met. Significant is the school history of the administrators, each of who were staff members prior to their appointments. As one assistant principal shared, we are all 'home grown'. Their longevity reflects the sense of family.

The principal and her cabinet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result of a review of data the school recognized the need to address school incidences and students' results on standardized tests. The 'Choice is Yours', a behavior management program, is helping make significant strides in reducing reportable occurrences. A large area in the first floor hall prominently displays names of students attaining a high level of points. Not all classrooms communicate high expectations to students through the use of rubrics, for example.

There is a concerted effort on preparing students for standardized tests. Teachers are engaging students in differentiated instructional programs to meet individual needs. Staff do not yet fully access and analyze data to differentiate instruction or assess the performance and progress of sub-groups of students. The autistic students are well attended to by skilled staff dedicated to building successes into their daily routine.

The school has a transient population, 607 admissions and 802 discharges since September. It has been successful in ensuring that the number of students who have been decertified or transitioned to less restrictive environments has steadily increased over the past four years.

PS 75 is a school organization that effectively manages to address the needs of a diverse population through the commitment of the principal, her administrative team, site coordinators and staff and the positive relationship with each of the host schools.

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.

The school uses a satisfactory range of available and school generated data to monitor student progress and performance in academic work and behavior. Results from standardized tests including scaled scores, interim assessments and 'automate the school' reports are regularly reviewed and used to monitor student performance and progress and differentiate instruction. Soft data, including authentic student work, is reviewed in relation to the individual education plans for promotional decisions. Teachers in the autistic program use data from the Brigance, Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills

and the Applied Behavioral Analysis to define the needs of students. One teacher, in conjunction with her graduate program, is recording student and group time-on-task behavior to help inform instruction. Group on-task behavior has increased from 40% to 90%. Data from the online occurrence reporting system and school-wide information system provides school and student specific information as to the time, place and nature of incidences. These reports are well used in supporting the school's efforts to reduce reportable student occurrences. Data reviewed in conjunction with individual education plans allows the school to ascertain time and place of referrals for students on medication.

While the school does review the data for all sites, it does not disaggregate the information by gender or ethnicity despite the high proportion of minority and male students. One teacher shared that using data 'now helps me know how to focus.' However, not all teachers are familiar with the available data such as the reports for Read 180. The school has recognized the need for teachers to participate in additional opportunities to increase their ability to access and use data to differentiate instruction.

The principal constantly reviews test results and occurrence data as a measure against the school's past performance and progress and compares it to other schools in the district. Reports generated from instructional programs and information gathered from learning walks is used to analyze where support is needed. Administration recognizes the importance of data as a tool in moving the school forward.

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 proficient.

The principal and her administrative team set goals to decrease reportable student occurrences and strengthen English language arts and mathematics skills. The focus is on supporting each student to do their personal best through a collaborative process. The school feels there is a strong correlation between student behavior and academic performance. Using data from the school-wide information system and online occurrence reports the school was able to identify lunch and transitions as times of greater incidences. Through the school-based option teachers now monitor their class during lunch and additional personnel and school safety have been assigned in hallways during transitions. On-line reports have decreased by 50% and in-house referrals by 70%. Data from the gains report enables individual student performance and progress on standardized tests to be monitored. Both intra and inter-level achievement is noted and helps identify specific areas of need to inform instruction.

Teachers in the autistic program maintain highly detailed tracking logs of student behavior and achievement and use this to plan the next steps with paraprofessionals and service providers. Academic intervention services are provided as push-in and pull-out programs during the school day for those students who are most in need of improvement. Detailed personal intervention plans monitor the delivery of appropriate instructional support. There is an overall decrease from last year in the number of students identified as promotion in doubt.

A limited number of classrooms display prompts for writing and mathematics. There is little display of instructional rubrics or criteria for grading. Currently verbal prompts and for non-verbal students, picture symbols, convey messages to students for a job well done.

However, specific information about what is expected for standard bearing work, for example, is not consistently shared with students. A student did recognize the efforts of his teachers for their help with his work and behavior and said, 'I changed my ways'. Report cards and individual education plans convey expectations to parents. Although parent participation is limited, the school maintains on-going communication to share its goals and plans through translated flyers and newsletters.

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 proficient.

The school implements the mandated curriculum and follows the units of study proposed by the district. Supplemental programs are selected that support the differentiation of instruction. Orchard enables students to receive standard-based remedial English language arts and mathematics instruction, through a computer inter-active program. The school has an extensive writing program that incorporates Columbia University's writing process and the services of a resident writer from the Teachers and Writers Initiative Program. Students look forward to publishing their works. However, the school does not have a uniform approach to teaching reading to support the improvement of student outcomes in literacy. Teachers in the autistic program have successfully adapted best practices from programs that support assessment, curriculum development, and tracking of skill mastery. The picture exchange communication system is effectively used for non-verbal communication. Students are making progress, staying on task longer, and working independently. This active engagement supports the transition of students into less restrictive environments.

Teachers are accountable for improving instruction. They are able to monitor the performance and progress of their students and plan appropriate differentiated activities. However, staff are not yet fully able to access and use data to differentiate instruction in the most effective way.

Budget and scheduling decisions are strongly based upon what is needed to improve student outcomes as identified through the use of data. Funds are effectively allocated for materials and programs to support teaching and learning. Staffing decisions have been made in order to strengthen content area instruction.

Students proudly share their work. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of their students and engage them through a variety of approaches. Computer-based activities are very effective in engaging students and supporting instruction. Students respond very positively to the nurturing climate in the school and the opportunity to talk about their problems with counselors and other adults. The school's attendance teacher works diligently to follow up on absentees and often visits three to five homes a day. Incentive awards further encourage student attendance.

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 proficient.

Many teachers and administrators have developed their careers within the school. The principal recognizes potential and supports staff in moving into appropriate positions as they become available. Staffing is given a high priority. Prospective candidates undergo a rigorous interview process and when hired receive mentoring through the new teacher induction program. Increasing emphasis is being placed on the commitment and capacity of teachers to use data.

Staff members are afforded many opportunities to participate on and off-site in professional development. Many school activities are scheduled after school and on Saturdays to ensure maximum participation. District personnel meet with teachers on a regular basis and teachers' turn-key information on staff development days. Staff from off-sites participate in staff development when possible.

Learning walks enable the administration to monitor daily instruction. Informal conversations keep teachers focused on meeting needs of their students. Inter-visitations, both on site and between sites, take place on a limited basis. Observations are a shared responsibility of the principal and assistant principals. Teachers welcome the feedback and support. They are extremely supportive of each other and encourage the sharing of ideas and best practices. Teachers who need additional help are targeted for support.

A weekly cabinet meeting, monthly faculty conferences, weekly and monthly committees for positive behavior, academic intervention and pupil personnel involve staff on a regular basis. They evaluate progress in achieving school goals and in planning the next steps. Common meeting time for teachers is instructionally based and working lunches are another venue for teams to focus on the needs of students.

The principal and administrators are highly visible, well respected and demonstrate the capacity to bring about improvement in a constantly changing student population. Procedures are clearly communicated and the calendar of monthly meetings enables staff from all sites to be kept in the loop.

Service providers are part of the team approach. The school welcomes outside partnerships as evidenced by Empowering Instructing Habilitating Assisting Bettering Human Services initiating a recreational program for autistic children.

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 development of the school's Comprehensive Education Plan involves parents and staff and reflects the school's strengths and areas for improvement in each of the sites. The administration reviews the plans on a monthly basis to assess progress towards meeting the goals using interim assessments and other qualitative data. Yearly comparisons of data focus on the performance and progress of the whole school, grades

and individual students. This process enables the school and teachers to revise plans as necessary to address identified needs. Behavior data culled from the online reporting system and the school-wide information system enables comparisons of reportable incidences. Weekly test preparation activities were incorporated into the program for standardized assessment students as a result of analyzing test results. A newly installed computer lab and software have been set up to enable the delivery and monitoring of intervention services and also to be available for parent use and to support the school's long term goals and plans.

The school recognizes the need to continue with the progress that has been made in reducing reportable incidences and strengthening the academic skills of all students. Goals and plans are well focused on this and the commitment of administrators and staff is evident.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Robert E. Peary School (PS 75)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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"> each student, classroom, grade level, 		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"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 	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"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		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.

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.	∅	✓	+
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 partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
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.	∅	✓	+
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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	