



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 811**

**61-25 Marathon Parkway  
Queens  
NY 11362**

**Principal: Joan Washington**

**Dates of review: April 30 - May 2, 2007**

**Reviewer: Ronnie Solow**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 811, a handicap accessible District 75 school, located in the Little Neck section of Queens, serves 367 students in grades kindergarten through 12, diagnosed with autism, multiple physical and cognitive disabilities and emotional challenges. The student body is 37% Black, 26% Hispanic, 20% White, and 17% Asian and others. English language learners comprise 23% of the student body.

The school is represented by 10 sites distributed throughout the borough of Queens. The greatest percentage of students, 90%, is classified as having alternate assessment. The other 10% has standardized assessment procedures with the appropriate modifications outlined on their individual education plans. Approximately 25% of the students are in inclusion education programs at various sites.

Students are mandated for a 12 month school program and receive related and support services as mandated by their individual education plans. The students are served in classes of 6:1:1, 8:1:1, 12:1:4, and 12:1:1 students to teacher to paraprofessional ratios. Currently, the school is transitioning to a middle school and high school program from an elementary and middle school model. Appropriate programs and activities are being developed and instituted to serve this older population.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal and administrative team is highly visible and well respected by parents and staff.
- Uniformity of instruction, differentiated learning and behavioral expectations are promoted in the classrooms.
- Professional development activities contribute to the growth and development of the staff.
- Youth development activities support the classroom curriculum.
- Classrooms and halls are decorated with current student work samples.
- Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions are driven by student needs.
- The curriculum is based on research-driven, best practices for profoundly disabled students.
- The administrative team works collaboratively and collegially.
- The students are well known to administration and staff across classes and cohorts.
- Parents respect and admire the principal's skills, accessibility, and educational knowledge.

### What the school needs to improve

- Organize available data from all sources onto a spreadsheet to give "class at a glance" information.
- Include all individual student data in the student data portfolio.
- Create an end of year, student skills checklist to allow immediate, accurate instructional activities to begin in September.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a well-developed school.**

At Public School 811 the team approach to educating the students is evident at all sites across the school. The principal and the four assistant principals work with the staff to plan and institute programs that improve the educational, communication, behavioral and functional outcomes for all the students. The principal and her cabinet have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

The use of data drives the educational program. In September, students are assessed and the academic plan for the year is established. Classes are staffed in the 6:1:1, 12:1:1 and 12:1:4 ratios as well as 8:1:1 for the inclusion classes. Many students have crisis, health or management paraprofessionals assigned to assist them on an individual basis. Related service providers deliver assistance in occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing, speech and language development, vision and hearing therapy. Many students have augmentative communication devices to enable increased communication ability.

### 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 well developed.**

The school uses data to determine the educational needs and programs of the students. The data assists the principal and her staff in planning for individual students, classes and cohorts, curriculum implementation and behavioral expectations. All teachers and support personnel gather data daily and use it to inform the learning of the students. Most students are classified as having the State alternate assessment category. Teachers employ a variety of techniques, including Applied Behavioral Analysis and Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children methodologies to capture data on each child, class and cohort. All students are assessed using the Brigance Inventories to determine functional levels, skill mastery and to create the individual education plan for the 12-month academic year. The principal and assistant principals examine data for all classes and the inclusion programs. English language learners are served in bilingual classes with appropriately licensed staff. Some students have individual paraprofessionals that speak their home language, for example Urdu.

Students classified as having State standardized assessment category are tested using the approved State examinations for their age group. In class, the teachers utilize the Princeton Review interim assessments, and an informal reading inventory called WRAP, as well as teacher made formative and summative tests. High school students take the State Regents exams required to earn a diploma. The school utilizes the Home Language Survey and a teacher made assessment along with a checklist and anecdotal records based on the autism core indicators to assess progress in English language development

and growth in language proficiency. A great deal of attention is paid to the data collected on gains made by students using augmentative communication devices.

Comparisons with other schools are made concerning transition data for students in the last years of school as they age out of the school system at 21 years of age. The principal participates in many collegial reviews with peers in her network, and with other principals of similar schools in order to brainstorm, share successes and provide mutually supportive learning opportunities. The assistant principals attend the District 75 Institute for Learning for similar learning experiences and measure the school's progress against past years.

**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.**

Goal setting arises from the individual assessment that emanates from the individual education plan. The assistant principals meet weekly with grade teams and the coach to review the progress of the students. At these meetings assessment, student data portfolios, student growth and development, functional behavior and other class information is discussed. Communication data including home language information and classroom language assessments for developing communication skills are stressed. Lesson plans and informal classroom observations note the use of this information and the efficacy of implementation. Related service providers and classroom teachers meet weekly to plan their work together in an integrated service delivery model designed to increase real life skills.

Students who are not progressing as expected or exhibiting behaviors that require additional interventions are referred to the appropriate team. Students in the standard assessment program receive academic intervention services. A tutoring plan is developed by the teacher, guidance counselor and social worker, who then evaluate it on a weekly basis. Behavioral interventions for all students include the Power of Choice behavior program, individual behavior modification plans or social skills contracts depending on the student's capacity. All have built in rewards for appropriate behavior.

Parents receive information about their child regularly through the communication sheet that goes home in the notebook daily. Informal conversations, parent orientation meetings and workshops are designed to include parents in the education process for their child. Formal notification is done via report card conferences and individual education plan review meetings. Parent participation is high at meetings, school activities, parent conferences, open school week, school leadership team and workshops developed by the parent coordinator. These and other meetings serve as venues for conveying high expectations for students. Student progress drives the activity in the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed monthly for progress by the school leadership team. Classroom methodologies and curriculum are tied to assessment and success is measured through student movement to least restrictive environment, language attainment, and vocational and behavioral skills progress.

**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.**

Students in the State standardized testing program receive instruction in the approved City curriculum designs. Other instructional areas follow the State guidelines. Academic intervention services and special education teacher support services provide additional academic supports for these students. The Brigance Inventories for alternate assessment students supports the curriculum through the Applied Behavioral Analysis or Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication Handicapped Children structures along with verbal and visual teaching clues. The structured environment is tailored to the individual student needs through differentiated teaching and learning. All students have personal schedules reflecting their daily activities. This schedule may include actual objects, photographs, Mayer Johnson symbols or other icons, and sight vocabulary words, depending on the student's functional ability. Technology is infused into many aspects of the program through the use of computers and augmentative communication devices.

Students are actively engaged in their learning. Teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers work with the students to attain increased communication, independence and other areas of specific need. The halls and classrooms are richly decorated with current student work samples. Age appropriate activities are incorporated into the functional life skills areas of the curriculum. One classroom is designed as a simulated home where activities of daily living can be learned and put into practice, such as sweeping the floor, washing ,drying and putting away dishes or making beds. Teachers are accountable for improving student outcomes through differentiated learning activities and the use of differentiated materials.

Budget, scheduling and staffing decisions support the needs of the students. Many related service providers and 168 paraprofessionals provide additional direct services for the students. Students trust and rely upon many adults who serve them and are responsible for their well being. Attendance is a high priority. The attendance committee meets monthly to review student attendance data. Absence requires an immediate action. Incentives are utilized to reward good and improved attendance. Issues relating to busing, medical fragility and broken wheelchairs often impact on school 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 well developed.**

Staff is selected based on high expectations and skill in working with the particular population. Professional development opportunities are extensive. In addition to the District 75 menu of workshops and classes, staff is encouraged to attend conferences of personal interest that contribute to their professional growth and development. Attendance at professional development activities always includes a team of teacher, paraprofessional, and related service provider or multiples of these teams. Turnkey training for their colleagues is then provided at the school. The parent coordinator has created an extensive series of workshops for parents.

The principal and assistant principals have specific responsibilities for the formal observation process. Pre-observation and post-observation conferences and the written reports provide feedback in a timely fashion. Walkthroughs, using specific checklists, include the assistant principals and coach and focus on a specific area and provide

immediate feedback to the teacher. Areas of interest might include the use of the individual daily schedule or differentiated instruction and materials. All teams meet on a regular schedule. Data is reviewed and discussed at grade, cohort and faculty meetings. Other regularly scheduled meetings include the technology team, the interdisciplinary services teams, attendance team, school safety team, school leadership team, behavior team, inclusion teams and child abuse prevention team. All use pertinent data to drive decision making and planning activities. Teachers meet formally at their regularly scheduled weekly meetings to discuss students, share materials and strategize about meeting student needs. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. Parent and staff handbooks outline all rules, regulation and routines that are known and followed. The principal is respected for her administrative and interpersonal skills, accessibility, willingness to listen and special education knowledge.

The school has developed links with organizations that encourage the growth and development of the students. The oldest students are involved in work-study programs around the borough. Other students participate in community-based instruction designed to further functional life skills and incorporate activities of daily living. Students attend Broadway shows, play golf and basketball, go swimming and bowling on a regular basis. Travel training is provided to older students considered to be viable candidates based on independence.

**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 well developed.**

The principal and her staff have ongoing conversations about how to improve outcomes for the students. The data, captured daily, is used to determine the next step in the classroom program for every student. Teachers and the administrative team review the individual education plans, behavior plans, classroom work samples and assessments in order to determine whether revisions are necessary. Data from the related service providers is incorporated into any modification to a student's program.

One outgrowth of the school's ability to monitor and revise was the realization and creation of an action plan to better serve the 12:1:4 cohort of students. A three pronged plan, based on the recommendations of the school leadership team and the Title IIA committee, was implemented and included the hiring of nationally known consultants to train all involved staff in the use, adaptation and creation of appropriate technology including teacher made materials and computer programs. A revision to the busing procedure was revealed through the number of incidents that occurred at dismissal times. A highly structured program with delineated roles for all out-of-classroom staff has resulted in a smooth, dismissal procedure. The ability to set goals, monitor and revise them is evident throughout the school. The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives are the guide for the goal setting process. The Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed and discussed at monthly school leadership team meetings. Parents and staff monitor the plan and make revisions and post the new information on the bulletin board reserved for the plan. The active parents' association and school leadership team work to make the plan a living document used for continuous school improvement.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School 811</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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>			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>

\* 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.

<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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
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.			<b>X</b>
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>

<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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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>	Ø	✓	+
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