



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 993

85 – 15 258 Street

Queens

NY 11001

Principal: Jackie Zaretsky

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Reviewer: Corinne Brown

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Information about the school

Public School 993 Queens is a District 75 multi-sited school with 400 students. The school is located in eight different sites within general education schools in the borough of Queens. Five sites are comprised of elementary grade level students, one site is designated as a middle school and two sites are located in community based high schools. The eight sites service students in grades kindergarten through grade 12 with various disabilities, ranging from school phobia, attention deficit disorder, cognitive challenge, learning disabilities and post traumatic stress syndrome. Students range in age from 4 to 21 years old.

The school services 50 English language learners with special needs. All students have individual education plans. The school population transitions with P993Q elementary, middle and high school sites. Students who are decertified are transitioned out of District 75 into general education settings. The student population is 35% Black, 24% Hispanic, 24% White, 16% Asian and 1% Native American.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal effectively leads with clear vision, high expectations and care for each student.
- Dedicated teachers and paraprofessionals support student development in the widest sense.
- The principal is well supported by her assistant principals and administration who provide consistency across all sites.
- The school has developed strong outreach services, through guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists and family workers, as well as a pro-active and vigorous parent coordinator.
- The school pays excellent attention to attendance issues with appropriate protocols strategies, including successful work with school phobic students.
- The school works collaboratively with co-located schools to support student progress and achievement.
- The school has a robust focus on student transition from stage to stage, including sensitive preparation for life and vocational training.
- Within a reflective school, great emphasis is placed on professional development to improve student outcomes.
- The principles and practice of the positive behavioral intervention and strategies program have been successfully introduced across all eight sites.
- The school makes creative use of spaces and resources in responding to students' needs.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue the integration of technology in all curriculum areas, including the use of electronic whiteboards.
- Strengthen the use, by teachers within the classroom, of technology to retrieve data from various sources to create class profiles and instructional groupings.
- Continue efforts to ensure consistency of practice across all sites.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

This school determinedly meets the challenge of unifying principles and practice across eight different locations in serving students from culturally diverse backgrounds. It sensitively addresses the educational, social and emotional needs of students, who participate in alternate assessment and standardized testing. The school offers a warm welcoming and supportive hand to parents as partners in the education of the whole student. It treats all students with dignity and respect within a structured and consistent environment that provides many opportunities for success through a positive support program. All students are carefully assisted through transition phases by thorough preparation and development of independence skills appropriate to the individual, including vocational training. Many students arrive in high school grades with very few credits.

Insufficient space within the general education co-located schools presents difficulties at times, particularly where some of the student population requires regular access to large pieces of physical equipment. The travel required between each site is another significant consideration. Assistant principals regularly monitor sites and assess instruction, together with other duties which ensure consistency across all the school sites. The school has been identified as a Teachers College collaborative school as well as a model District 75 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 well developed.

The school has established extensive and consistent data collection procedures across all eight sites, which is ensured through the very effective use of a checklist. Comprehensive data folders are kept at the main site for reference. The principal and administration are highly skilled at data collection and effective analysis, and disseminate their findings to staff. All data relevant to individual students is regularly collected, such as individual education plans, historical reports and subject profiles along with standardized or alternate assessment data. Objective assessments, such as the Brigance skills inventories, early childhood literacy assessment system and New York State assessments establish performance levels in specific skill areas. This means that analysis of data is used to identify appropriate placement for students, including decertification or inclusion classes. Information held is regularly updated in binders which also contain anecdotal data, including parental liaison information. This enables the school to have an holistic picture of the child and monitor progress in several areas from multiply sourced evidence, based on hard and soft data.

Within the classrooms, teachers rigorously maintain portfolios of individual education plans, programs, student work and other evidence of skill development that are used to

establish benchmarks and so aid detailed assessment of progress. Digital photography is one example of an extremely effective medium used to show progress in skill acquisition and mastery.

Each site compares its own data for set time periods and groups, and also returns all data to the main site. One example of effective data comparison is that for attendance at PS993Q at Cardozo, which serves students with school phobia. This shows significant increase for the site, but also, therefore, success for individual students.

Analysis of data from school wide information systems has also been instrumental in the introduction of the positive behavioral interventions and supports program across all eight sites, which has had a marked impact and reduced behavioral incidents considerably.

Groups of student such as English language learners are tracked for progress. The school works very much at the individual student level, with groupings determined largely by need as identified on the individual education plan. Consequently, data is not currently analyzed to determine performance of groups based on ethnicity, although it does use such information to assist with use of translation services or to identify cultural considerations. Similarly, with eight sites catering to differing special education students, the school does not compare itself to other schools. The main focus is to see growth and progress within each of its component sites and to do the same for each student.

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.

Data analysis is conducted by the principal, assistant principals, coaches for additional intervention services and positive behavioral interventions and supports program, as well as classroom teachers, on a regular basis to ensure consistency and to improve instruction. This analysis also shows growths and trends across all sites or individual sites and enables effective planning. It also informs the Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal performance review, which are completely aligned.

Across all sites, a team of administrators, parent coordinator, technology coordinator, related service providers, coaches and instructional staff systematically identifies strengths and weaknesses to provide feedback to establish realistic goals that meet the individual needs of the students. The school works collaboratively with co-located schools to support student progress and achievement through identification of students who are ready for inclusion or transition. The school has a robust focus on student transition from stage to stage, including sensitive preparation for life and vocational training. Individualized programs are carefully detailed and include adaptations, modifications, service learning at agencies such as the Goodwill Industries or worksite opportunities like those with the parks department. The individualization, which involves students in goal-setting if appropriate, is an integral part of this school’s philosophy and is one of its very well-developed features. It means that students have the best chance to progress and experience success in ways that are appropriate for them.

The school has developed strong outreach services, through guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists and family workers, as well as a pro-active and vigorous

parent coordinator. This means that all parents are given the best opportunities to support their child's learning both at home and in school, although not all parents are able to be so committed for personal reasons. This also enables anecdotal data, including informed parental advice, to form a crucial part of the individual student picture. Effective and ongoing liaison between all interested parties is another good example of the school's excellent practice.

The school is working to strengthen the use, by teachers within the classroom, of technology to retrieve data from various sources to create class profiles and instructional groupings. This will further facilitate the writing of meaningful individual education plans alongside creation of class profiles and instructional groupings.

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.

In servicing the diverse needs of its student population, the school aligns its curriculum with the State standards. It modifies in line with data gathered on the individual profile and record of each student. The school has recently become a Teachers College collaborative school where the units of study are aligned. Students at different sites follow programs of study linked to the co-located school curriculum. This requires considerable flexibility, liaison and teamwork from all staff. The teachers and paraprofessionals are very dedicated and support student development in the widest sense, showing care and respect for the individual. They plan and differentiate according to data on students, with the curriculum adapted to the appropriate age and cognitive development for each student.

On all sites, the school makes creative use of spaces and resources in responding to students' differing needs. Alignment and assessment are efficiently dovetailed using research-based programs such as Everyday Mathematics and Lexia reading software. The administration monitors and applies current curriculum strategies and methodologies that are appropriate to the student population and enhance best practices and principles of learning. The use of the Wilson Foundations and Mayer Johnson symbols are good examples of how the school plans multi-stimuli instruction based on student need which is revealed by data. The integration of technology in all curriculum areas, including the use of electronic smart boards, is ongoing and used to motivate and engage students, enhance instruction and provide different ways of experiencing success.

The budget is closely linked to the needs of students as are staffing decisions. It is wisely used to support professional development and purchase of required resources. The operation of a school based on eight sites does have impact on staff assignments and use of budget. Some staff, including the English language learner teacher, travel in order to service all sites.

The school pays excellent attention to attendance issues with appropriate protocols and strategies used rigorously yet sensitively by all staff, including the attendance officer, which is evidenced in the successful work with school phobic students at PS993Q at the Cardozo site. Students and parents trust the staff at the school. Parents have confidence in the nurturing atmosphere which is matched by high expectations for achievement.

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 principal has made some strategic staffing hires, given the constraints, to enhance consistency across all sites, such as the assistant principal for organization, the additional intervention strategies coach and technology coordinator. Flexible staff are carefully selected who are willing to learn, work in teams and are highly adaptable, which means that students' needs can be met.

Within this reflective school, great emphasis is placed on professional development to improve student outcomes, so extensive high quality relevant opportunities for professional development are provided to all staff throughout the year. All professional development is carefully organized and documented to ensure opportunities are generalized across all sites. The effective impact of this is reflected in student progress as evidenced through both hard and soft data. Contemporary educational methodologies and strategies are then effectively shared with colleagues during class and site meetings. Ongoing visitations and collaborative working practices also allow communication and exchange of ideas. This includes collaborative work with teachers in the shared general admissions schools. All professional development strategies and initiatives are comprehensively linked to identified student needs and are reviewed at leadership meetings, as well as through feedback and data from staff. The school has many teachers who are highly skilled with creative ideas that enhance student outcomes, and which they readily share with colleagues.

Given the geographical constraints, the principal knows the teachers well and observes classroom teaching as frequently as possible. She is well supported by her assistant principals and administration who provide consistency across all sites, including the professional support of teachers. This is also maintained through assistant principals and coaches observing classes. The principal is well respected by adults and students. Under her careful and caring overall leadership, each site runs smoothly on an everyday basis.

The school is creative and successful in forging partnerships with the New York community to support the student short and long term needs, including holiday gift-giving for all students, as well as more educationally focused links that have enduring benefits.

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.

Since her appointment three years ago the principal has striven tirelessly, with the assistance of the administration, to establish and maintain a unified and cohesive school based on a shared vision over eight sites. Collaborative team work prepares all students for the world they face as contributing members of society. The integration of an additional site two years ago was handled with the same purposeful, structured approach that continues to facilitate progress throughout the school.

The school is constantly evaluating its own performance in meeting the needs of the wide ranging student population. All staff are committed to achieving the best for their individual students and guide them carefully towards independence. The Comprehensive Education Plan and principal performance review provide excellent evidence of comprehensive and over-arching planning which addresses the needs of students, staff and sites at the same time. The geographical location of the eight sites presents challenges in team planning, but all staff are consulted and surveyed about the Comprehensive Education Plan. This is reviewed on a continuous basis, as is the principal performance review, and used as a working document which drives improvement in instruction and student outcomes.

The school is a large welcoming organization that serves a broad spectrum of special need students and works in partnership with parents and support staff to achieve the best outcomes. High expectations are set by quality personnel in a school with a 'heart' that provides a structured, positive and nurturing program for each student.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 993 Queens	∅	✓	+
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