



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

South Richmond High School

Public School 25R

**6581 Hylan Boulevard
Staten Island
NY 10309**

Principal: William Bates

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Reviewer: Linda Murgatroyd

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

South Richmond High School services 497 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12. It is a specialized school, comprising a wide range of programs for students with emotional and behavioral challenges including mental health problems, and those on the autistic spectrum. There is also a general education superintendent's suspension program. The school has four main sites, and seven centers supporting students in full-time inclusion in high schools. There are also seven full-time work study classes at a range of locations across Staten Island. The collaboration with Staten Island Mental Health Society is particularly strong, with 14 classes on two sites servicing students referred through this route.

Overall, White students are 46% of the total, Black 34%, Hispanic 18%, and Asian and other students make up the remaining 2%. The school has only 5 English language learners, just over 1% and a much lower percentage than generally found in similar and City-wide schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides highly facilitative and effective leadership, very well supported by an enthusiastic and committed cabinet.
- They have built a staff group who are empowered to take initiatives, take a pride in belonging to the school and work collaboratively and tirelessly in the best interest of the students.
- High expectations and trusting relationships permeate the work of the school.
- The school has a very high graduation rate for its students, in comparison with other District 75 schools.
- The school, and in particular the work study program, is highly successful at enabling students to find work or go on to college after graduation.
- The partnership with Staten Island Mental Health Society allows the school to provide for students with a wide range of difficulties.
- The staff have effective strategies to allow students to transition seamlessly between programs in accordance with their changing circumstances and needs.
- The curriculum is effectively aligned with students' needs, and enhanced by trips and other activities to broaden social skills and raise self-esteem.
- Very positive collaboration with other schools allows for a good rate of inclusion in general education.
- Students learn very well to control their behaviour and improve their attendance.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more consistent approach to recording students' achievements, to make tracking individual progress over time simpler.
- Analyze student performance data by ethnic group, to ensure that all students are achieving as well as they can.
- Use the wealth of performance data to set interim goals for whole-school improvement, so that progress towards goals can more easily be measured.
- Further develop the professional development program, to provide more occasions when staff from the different sites can meet and share their best practices.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal, very well supported by his talented cabinet and staff, has created a school which is highly successful in improving the life chances of students who have experienced difficulties with academic, social and emotional development. Effective communication across the wide range of programs and sites mean that the school runs very well, and there is a common sense of purpose. There is an outstanding range of successful programs, and data is very well used to find the right spot for individual students to best meet their needs. The school's work is characterized by high expectations, and all concerned with the school work successfully in the best interests of students' personal and academic development. The areas for improvement identified in this report are intended to extend further the good practice which exists in the 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 collects and analyzes a broad range of data, according to the needs of students in the various programs, grade levels, and subject areas. For students in testing grades and subject to standardized assessment, test scores and levels are shared with teachers at the beginning of the year as information on which to build. Credit accumulation records are compiled and shared with students and parents, particularly in the inclusion programs, so that they know what they are aiming for. Teachers keep detailed records of students' progress appropriate to their own areas of instruction, and use these to plan the next steps in students' learning. Work samples are shared between teachers teaching the same age groups and subjects. Staff also have very good knowledge of the home factors affecting students' achievement, and are able to take these into consideration when developing interventions and treatment programs. In addition, the important information from therapy groups and observations of students' behavior is used to ascertain the most suitable program for each student, and to determine when and how any transitions from one to another might take place.

Although teachers and therapists know their students' needs and progress very well, because of the wide age range, and the variety of programs and disabilities, there is no common system of recording students' progress. Some systems on inclusion sites require double entry, as mandatory records are kept both in the host school's information system and at the main site. This reduces the time that teachers have to support students.

The needs of the different populations are carefully assessed as outlined above. In addition, the progress of the school's few English language learners is monitored, and used to identify the most appropriate forms of support to ensure that these students make good progress. There is less emphasis on analysis of the relative performance of the different ethnic groups in the school, although there have been some responses by the

school to issues connected with race from looking at individual students' data. Attendance is carefully monitored, and there is good attention paid to those students whose achievement remains at level 1.

Despite the lack of a common system for tracking individual progress, the school is very adept at looking at the relative performance of most groups represented in the school to evaluate what is or is not working well. For example, very detailed records are kept of students' behavior, and the principal and cabinet have carefully analyzed the links between suspensions and poor attendance, showing that where they can improve attendance, the rate of suspension falls. Leavers' career paths are recorded, and show a very high success rate for entry into either full-time work or college.

Performance by grade level and subject area is analyzed, as well as comparisons with the school's past performance. Through this analysis, the school is able to demonstrate its success. For example, the number of students graduating with high school and Regents diplomas is rising as success fuels higher expectations in staff and students. Results of external tests and alternate assessment, as well as graduation rates, are compared with other District 75 and City-wide schools. Analysis of results and work samples from the different classroom teams are used to ensure that teachers are held accountable for their students' performance and progress.

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.

Staff work well together in setting goals for individuals and groups of students. Specific goals, based on the data held by teachers and other staff, are set for the completion of credits, for the reduction of incidents of poor or challenging behavior, and for other academic achievements. Individualized education plans are effectively used to set long- and short-term goals and to plan work to meet these. Cluster teams set goals for content coverage in subject areas. Goals are also set for the various therapy groups which support students in the day treatment centers run in collaboration with Staten Island Mental Health Association. Goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan, which is the result of collaborative work between many constituents, are clear and measurable, but do not have interim milestones against which to judge progress.

The school provides very specific academic and personal support for all its students, carefully targeted at their needs. In particular, work study and inclusion programs are highly successful at improving attendance, reinforcing appropriate behavior, and in leading to positive outcomes post-school, in work or college. Students who are subject to standardized assessment are well prepared for the tests they take, with academic intervention services targeted at those students whose performance remains at levels 1 and 2. The school's few English language learners, who are distributed across the sites, are well supported, often on a pull-out model, and make good progress because of the effective support they receive.

Goals and expectations are shared with students and their families. Older students know what credits they have and what they are aiming for. Younger students are able to say what they need to do to successfully complete a piece of work. Students in the work study programs can articulate their plans and aspirations, which have been carefully discussed

with them. It is evident that these students have made exceptionally good gains in self-esteem and a sense of purpose, as they see their futures in a positive light because of the opportunities the school has given them. Parents are closely involved in decisions about their children's goals, and plans for their futures. Moves from one program to another are discussed with parents and students, sometimes at the request of the student or parent. High school enrolment meetings are held to inform parents of the range of options available. In addition, parents are kept informed by a range of formal and informal communication.

Across all sites and programs, staff work collaboratively to further the school's goals, especially the most general one of servicing every student in the least restrictive environment possible. The quality of communication between staff is high. There are formal and informal meetings within and across sites, focused on students' achievement and progress, in which teachers and other staff share ideas and review and adjust plans and goals in response to the changing picture of each student's needs.

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.

The school is particularly good at ensuring that the curriculum meets the diverse needs of its students. Over the past few years, the school has departmentalized its program from 3rd through 12th grade to ensure that staff expertise is best used and, because of this, results in standardized tests have improved. Teachers in the subject areas have jointly worked on units of study and pacing calendars, and selected and devised appropriate resources. Teachers from different grades are therefore able to be part of the discussion about the continuum of the curriculum, particularly important for this school where many students have had interrupted schooling and may be at very different levels of performance.

Students in the inclusion programs follow the standardized curriculum alongside their peers in the general education schools, with effective support where data shows that this is needed. Work study programs are thoughtfully designed to offer students an appropriate balance of work opportunities, supported by carefully tailored support on basic skills to give them the academic background they need to pursue their work options. Continuity between the curriculum in the middle and high school programs and the inclusion and work study groups facilitates transfer into those programs, and to provide a safety net if a student should need to return. Technology is effectively used in some content areas to capture students' interest.

There is a high level of accountability for what teachers do to promote high achievement. Formal meetings with senior staff, scrutiny by senior staff and colleagues of student work and analysis of results all ensure that staff hold the raising of achievement as their central goal in everything they do for students. Data, alongside the strong more informal knowledge teachers have of their students' progress, is effectively used to differentiate learning. This process has two components. Firstly, the many programs provided by the school are carefully designed to address the varied needs of students, and a great deal of care and discussion takes place to decide on placing students in the most appropriate program. Secondly, once students are placed, work is differentiated at individual level to match the performance of each student. For example, in a work study English class, all students worked on well-chosen texts of relevance to their lives and at appropriate reading

levels for each small group. Staff provided carefully scaffolded work so that students were able to succeed at their own level, supported with searching questions to help students to relate the text to their own experience and to touch on emotional content in an unthreatening way. Very closely targeted support is given in the inclusion programs, to ensure that students are able to achieve in a general education school.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions are driven by the needs of students. The budget is very carefully managed to develop priorities in the School Comprehensive Education Plan, and additional funds successfully sought to meet particular needs. Decisions about scheduling and staffing are interwoven, as a great deal of thought goes into finding “the right spot for the right student”, not only in terms of the appropriate program, but also the right staff member with whom to place a student to develop the most productive relationship. In addition, in the various programs, scheduling is complex, and skillfully managed to accommodate the specific issues in each, such as therapy groups, push-in and pull-out support and tutoring.

As a result of the breadth of the curriculum and the careful attention to students’ academic and personal development, students show a high level of engagement. This is often demonstrated in great leaps in attendance for individuals, as they realize that they can succeed and have a positive future after previous difficulties and failure. One example of the school’s success in engaging students is the dramatic fall in suspensions. The school ascribes this to improvements in the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning and the subsequent rise in student achievement, thus students can see a different future for themselves. Staff have built a culture of high expectations and mutual respect, in which students feel safe emotionally and physically. That the school gives them the help they need is recognized by students, particularly those who are older. One student said, “I wouldn’t be doing any of the good things for my life, if I didn’t come here”.

Procedures for tracking attendance are clear, and the school follows up every absence rigorously. Persistent low attendance is also addressed by looking at the whole of a student’s program, and making changes if it is thought that this might make a difference. In addition, daily calls, highly appreciated rewards for very good attendance and frequent contact with parents are improving attendance. Detailed analysis of data across the various sites and programs shows that although overall attendance remains lower than the school would like, this is depressed by persistent poor attendance of a minority. The school has drawn up a plan to further improve 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.

During the departmentalization process, the principal and his cabinet reorganized existing staff and appointed specialist staff to fill gaps, through a rigorous process of selection based on subject expertise, commitment to working with a challenging population, demonstration of self-reflection and high expectations for students with a previous history of failure. The school now has a team of skilled teachers, therapists and paraprofessionals who work collaboratively and are successfully raising achievement and improving students’ life chances across the many programs.

Professional development has also been focused on raising achievement and building teachers’ subject expertise. Inter-visitations with general education schools and between

sites have supported this priority. In addition, the school makes good use of training and support provided by District 75 to help to build teachers' understanding of the specific special needs of its students. New teachers are effectively supported by colleagues and members of the instructional leadership team, and a coach gives further support to any teacher who needs it. However, the number of sites and programs present a challenge for professional development. Although most teachers attend professional development sessions held on evenings and weekends, not all do, and so therefore miss out to some extent on developments in the school.

Teachers, therapists and paraprofessionals work collaboratively, and build up good practice in this way. Staff working on similar programs on different sites exchange ideas and strategies. Model lessons, shared planning sessions, reviews of plans and goals and the development of behavior management techniques all support this development. As well as required formal observations, there are frequent informal visits to classes and programs by members of the instructional team, who also look at student work and performance data. They have a clear view of staff performance, and are able to direct staff to the most appropriate sources of support and guidance. The impact of these systems can be seen in the calm and purposeful atmosphere in the various programs, and in recent improvements in achievement.

The principal has a facilitative leadership style, which places trust in his cabinet and staff and promotes the taking of initiative and responsibility. Frequent cabinet meetings with representatives from programs and sites and very good communication ensure that the whole school runs smoothly. The school has very productive partnerships with a range of schools and other community-based organizations, which help it to successfully run inclusion and work study programs, and to find long-term work or college opportunities for its students as they move on from the school. Trips to Washington DC, more locally to sports events and other outings reinforce the need for controlling behavior and broaden students' life experiences, helping build social skills and self-esteem.

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 school has shown its capacity to change and improve over the last few years with its improvement in achievement. Staff use data effectively to realign curriculum and instruction with the needs of students, at individual, group and whole-school level. Practices are rigorously reviewed and adjusted to further improve students' academic, social and emotional development.

The production of the Comprehensive Education Plan is highly collaborative, based on a thorough internal review of performance and other data, previous goals, and the evaluation of interventions and programs. These are discussed by cabinet members and then fed into the design process, along with any required initiatives from District 75, to set new goals as appropriate. The plan has measurable goals, but the lack of interim milestones means that progress towards the school's overall goals is not easy to measure before the year end. Whole-school goals are shared with all staff, so that they know how to play a part in meeting them. The school's work is kept under constant review despite the lack of formal interim goals, and changes made as soon as data shows that advantage might be gained.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: South Richmond High School (P25R)	∅	✓	+
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