



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Port Richmond High School**

**High School 445**

**85 St. Joseph's Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10302**

**Principal: Timothy M. Gannon**

**Dates of review: January 8 - 10, 2007**

**Reviewer: Joan L. Johnston**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Port Richmond High School opened in 1927, with additional building added in 1968 and 1993. It is located on Staten Island and has 2545 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. Thirty four percent of the students are White, 32% are Hispanic, 27% are Black and 7% are Asian or other ethnicities. With a rising Mexican population in the community, the English language learner enrollment now stands at just over 5% of students. This figure is below the proportion of English language learners in schools across the City. The proportion of special education students is nearly 15%, a higher figure than in other schools.

Effective with this school year, the school receives Title I funding. The proportion of eligible students is lower than that in similar schools or the City-wide average. Student stability, at 93%, is close to that of similar schools and the City-wide average. The same is true for student attendance, which stood at 85% in 2005.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is an instructional leader who is dedicated to moving the school forward and improving outcomes for students.
- The members of this high school community, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students, work well together and follow through on improvement initiatives.
- Decision-making is collaborative and takes the whole student into consideration.
- Parents are supportive of the school, involved in school planning committees and participate in programs designed to respond to parental needs and interests.
- The comprehensive instructional program features a number of specialized academies that attract students to the school and respond to a broad range of interests and abilities.
- Student support services address the concerns and issues of a diverse student population.

### What the school needs to improve

- Implement and provide access to a reporting system that tracks individual student performance over time.
- Provide targeted professional development that enhances the instructional strategies, content knowledge, and assessment skills of classroom teachers.
- Assess the effectiveness of the wide array of academic intervention services offered by reviewing the success rate of targeted students, including English language learners, on Regents examinations.
- Provide more comprehensive training, utilizing technology, in the use of student data to monitor, adjust and evaluate student progress.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This is a proficient school.**

Port Richmond High School is home to a number of specialized programs and houses that attract students from across Staten Island. Houses include a Collegiate Academy, Gateway Program and College Discovery. Specialized programs include culinary arts, virtual enterprise, a law institute and communications, amongst others.

Grade 9 students, many of whom are unprepared for a rigorous high school experience, are transitioning into small learning communities that are responsive to their academic and social needs. There is a growing population of English language learners and effective programs are being implemented to better address their learning needs. Many students need academic intervention services to meet the more demanding requirements for a Regents diploma. Administrators and faculty are exploring approaches that are better targeted to meeting individual needs.

### 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 has made recent strides in developing the use of data to track the achievement of individual students and grade level cohorts. Staff now have an understanding of the importance of using data and of generating their own reports to monitor the progress of special populations such as English language learners and special education students. Assistant principals for English language arts and mathematics use the internet portal provided by the Department of Education to track individual student performance based on both graduating cohort as well as the No Child Left Behind sub-groups. The grading policy for class averages has been reviewed. A school wide template enables students and parents to be aware of the grading policy on the first day of each term. The shared understanding of class work by teachers and the grading policy are directly related to the available data...

The school utilizes an online reporting system to record daily incidents in the building and their locations in the school. Suspension statistics are also tracked and reports pinpoint the times of the year when behavior problems escalate. This system has allowed groups, such as the school safety committee, to identify strategies to effectively deal with student management issues in a timely and appropriate manner. The school staff is becoming aware of the importance of measuring academic progress with similar schools and benchmarking against past performance. After each round of Regents exams there is a comparative study of results over the last three years that is used in data analysis. Trends are examined and the data shared with departments. Administrators cite the late arrival of data reports and the lack of professional development that would enable a greater understanding of both the importance and meaning of the data in improving achievement and fostering accountability. At this point, school-based academic data is entered into

reporting systems and reports are generated. These reports are not yet used to individualize student academic interventions services or to pinpoint weaknesses in the curricular or instructional delivery systems.

**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 school has recently established effective collaborative structures to set measurable goals to improve student achievement. With the arrival of the new principal, teachers note a more positive climate and greater involvement in decision-making. The school leadership team has worked diligently to develop plans that address areas in need of improvement. Parents indicate that they are active partners in this process. No longer is there “just talk, now there is action”.

For the past two years, the review of report card data and scholarship reports has taken on greater importance. Assistant principals for each academic area review the reports and discuss areas in need of improvement with teachers in their department. While this review is not yet consistent across all departments, teachers have gained a better understanding of the data and are making greater use of the results to develop mini lessons that provide specific support or enrichment for students. However, the use of rubrics for grading is still developing and so the setting and monitoring of classroom goals are weak. Academic intervention services provide additional support for those students who struggle. Often, these services are not sufficiently tailored to meet individual needs and their impact is not sufficiently evaluated. By using the data on entering students, grade 9 are now scheduled for double blocks of mathematics and English instruction daily. A part time guidance counselor supports this population with academic and related student services.

Parents are supportive of the school. They are involved in school planning committees and participate in programs designed to respond to parental needs and interests. High expectations are conveyed to parents, although the implications of the raised State requirement for all students to graduate with a Regents diploma are still being internalized and addressed.

**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 has developed houses, academies and programs that attract special populations to the school and actively engage students. These are a point of pride with the faculty and staff and allow instruction to be tailored to the future career goals and interests of students. The expectation is that students who have selected a specialized program will be motivated enough to rise to the occasion of meeting the increased standards. The school has introduced a number of effective programs that respond to student needs. A center at the school caters well for pregnant and parenting girls who can bring their babies for day care while they stay in school. A focused learning center offers small group instruction to at risk grade 9 students with multiple problems. An attendance

coordinator is implementing strategies to improve daily attendance. An after school club supports students with diversity issues. Taken together, these strategies are proving effective.

The instructional support services staff and literacy coach effectively support teachers, as well as students. Teachers acknowledge the positive impact these services have. These include a greater understanding of student performance data and an increased focus on meeting individual students' needs. Teachers are increasingly held to account for the quality of their instruction and the impact on student outcomes. They are learning to differentiate instruction in their classrooms. However, many still use the more traditional whole class lecture model and are at the beginning stage of differentiating instruction. Students generally engage actively in class, but the lack of differentiated support and challenge means that this is not always supporting challenging learning.

The school recently received a Title 1 designation that is bringing additional financial resources to the school. The principal has been able to add additional guidance counselor support for bilingual and grade 9 students who enter high school below the proficiency level. He has also been able to provide an extended day twice a week to grade 9 students requiring double blocks of mathematics and English to participate in an exploratory elective in their house. The intention is to motivate and excite students enough to keep them enrolled. There are other innovative approaches to keep students focused, engaged and in school. For example, an academic adviser for freshmen and sophomore students on sports teams reviews transcripts and follows up with targeted assistance. More generally, budgeting decisions, including staffing and scheduling, are focused appropriately on meeting the school's goals.

Students are proud of their school and appreciate the wide range of programs and activities available to them. They know that most of the faculty can be counted on to respond to their needs. Student attendance is afforded an appropriately high priority. This exemplified, for example, by the additional attention being paid to improving attendance in grade 9.

**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.**

The principal selects staff members who are enthusiastic and who enjoy teaching high school students. He values those who have high academic standards and who will bring something extra to the program. Additional funding has been provided for professional development. Teachers now attend institutes that will better prepare them to teach Advanced Placement courses. Others attend national conferences and then share new practices with their colleagues. A current building-wide goal is to focus on literacy across the curriculum. A literacy coach supports this initiative. However, professional development should focus on enhancing assessment skills. There is also an identified need for additional training in data analysis for both administrators and faculty.

The academic assistant principals are responsible for evaluating teachers in their departments and the principal participates in the evaluation of non-tenured faculty. He also uses focused walkthroughs to assure implementation of a quality program. All constituent groups admire and respect the principal as an instructional leader who is highly visible and supportive. Teachers note that he builds their confidence and supports them in

risk taking when improving their practice. The principal has recognized the benefit of scheduling common planning time for the faculty. The school is a safe place and runs smoothly. Members of the school community, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students, work well together and follow through on improvement initiatives

Student support services address the concerns and issues of a diverse student population. Numerous partnerships with institutions and community based organizations enrich and support the program and extend experiences beyond the school. Each house or academy program has a partnership that is linked to its core mission. For example, the visual arts program partners with the Museum of Modern Art.

**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 principal has recognized that the assistance of advanced software programs and technology is required to effectively monitor and revise plans at the building level. However, at the department level assistant principals review scholarship reports with department members to monitor student progress. The Comprehensive Education Plan is reviewed annually by the school leadership team to assess progress in meeting identified goals from the current year. Although performance data has been limited, that available is evaluated before developing goals for the next year. The school is attuned to the needs of students in greatest need of improvement. Programs have been introduced to respond to dropouts, attendance issues, and academic concerns. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these programs, but they are positioned to improve outcomes within the next few years.

With the arrival of the new principal two years ago, the school has begun to refocus, reorganize and re-energize. The principal is well aware of mandates to improve learning outcomes, improve attendance, and decrease the dropout rate. He is creating collaborative structures and partnerships that will lead to the accomplishment of these goals. There has been notable progress, although there is still a long road ahead. The faculty is beginning to come to terms with accountability requirements, but there is not a shared understanding of how to assure the success of each student. The effectiveness of academic intervention strategies has not yet been evaluated. A focused plan for assuring that seniors are supported in meeting graduation requirements is not yet in place.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Port Richmond High School (HS 445)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

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

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

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

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