



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public School 771

Elementary - High School 771

**1075 Oceanview Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Sharon Meyers - Izzo

Dates of review: January 24 - 25, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Young

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 771 is an elementary-high school with 374 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 47% Black, 13.2% Hispanic, 33.6% White, and 6.2% Asian students. The student body includes 27% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 85% of the students and girls account for 15%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 48.5% eligibility.

The school is a special education school situated on six sites in Brooklyn and serves students with a variety of disabilities, including emotional difficulties, mental retardation, autism, multiple handicaps and deafness.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides strong leadership for a team of highly professional and committed staff.
- Staff collect and use data routinely as the basis of programming and instruction across the school.
- The curriculum and approaches to it have been carefully chosen to fit the needs of students.
- There is an emphasis on support and guidance which is well integrated into all aspects of the school's work.
- The school is very well organized, especially as it operates on a number of sites and with a wide range of student needs, capabilities, conditions and ages.
- There are high levels of collaboration across the school which assists in furthering knowledge of each student and the dissemination of good practice.
- Effective procedures for attendance and punctuality have helped to raise achievement.
- Students are well behaved and show high levels of respect and enthusiasm for learning.
- The administration, staff, parents and students have very high expectations of themselves and of each other.
- There is an atmosphere of positivity and optimism which pervades the school and boosts students' self-esteem.

What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data by ethnicity to identify possible trends and explore different cultural attitudes which may contribute to possible problems.
- Extend differentiation into all classes with more emphasis on the way students learn.
- Make sure all plans for teacher outcomes include timeframes and measurable benchmarks and strategies for measuring impact.

Part 3: Main Findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Public School 771 serves a diverse population of students on several sites. The principal and her administration provide strong leadership for a team of highly professional and committed staff. The school runs smoothly and students show high levels of success, both academically and behaviorally. The school is practiced at collecting and using data to drive instruction and programs are carefully selected to fit around students' needs, as well as to prepare them for moving to community schools. However, because it treats all students on an individual basis it does not break down its data by ethnicity, in order to provide evidence of trends or cultural attitudes which affect relationships. Throughout the school there is an atmosphere of optimism. Students feel positive about themselves and their learning. This is helped by the abundance of counselors, therapists and other interventionists who work alongside teachers in the classroom and are able to react immediately to emotional or behavioral crisis. Social and communication skills are emphasized, leading to high levels of mutual respect, regard and trust between students and staff. The Power of Choice behavior-management program has created a structured environment that has helped students realize they have choices and can make decisions. This in turn has led to high expectations of and by the students.

Staff are competent at differentiating in classrooms. Generally, students work in groups with paraprofessionals and teachers on graduated tasks according to ability and aptitude, although there is still some whole-group teaching which does not suit all students. Staff are well managed with abundant lesson observation by the administration and by peers, and there are very good systems for professional development and induction for new teachers. However, the school does not yet use benchmarks in plans for teacher outcomes to aid monitoring and evaluation of performance. There are very good relationships with most parents and the school communicates with them very well. The inquiry team meets each Monday afternoon and is focusing on a group of students from grades 6, 7 and 8 who have remained at Level 1 for the past two years. Good progress has been made on last year's recommendations in the Quality Review. All teachers are now engaged in using data routinely and the administration and teachers have extended the ways in which they analyze data. Agreed procedures are now uniform across the school and all school goals are now benchmarked

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 the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The school collects a wide and varied range of data which is carefully recorded in individual student folios and teacher binders and is used as the basis for academic intervention, classroom placement and student programming across the school. All students are designated special education, so their data is disaggregated by the type of disability rather than the fact that they are special education, although students are all classified according to their individual needs. Data is used to identify all students with language difficulties, but the students are lacking all language skills rather than having second language deficiencies. The English as a second language teacher works with speech therapists to support these students. The school has found little discernible difference in ethnicities so does not break down data into ethnic groupings. The school does look at gender, however. There is a huge imbalance of males to females and the school has tried to address this by providing special girls' activities and clubs such as cheerleading and dance. Cohorts are tracked year on year to the extent that those students who leave high school and go on to college are also tracked in college. The school compares itself to cohort schools and to other local schools in the District. There are good systems in place for collecting, storing and breaking down data. As well as the data folios and binders, paraprofessionals keep daily logs, and points sheets for behavior are used across the school. There is abundant ongoing professional development, both internally and externally, and data is a feature of all grade meetings and unit coordination meetings. The school is starting to computerize its records to fit in with ARIS.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student's learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Staff at the school work well in collaboration, including the administration, teachers, guidance counselors, therapists and psychologists, across all six sites. There are weekly common preparation periods across grades and therapists work with teachers in classrooms. In November, all students undergo an annual review which brings together all staff working with individual students and in-depth case-studies are produced. Long-term goals are updated then, and in the spring and at the year-end. Short-term goals, which are always time framed, are updated every two months. Although all students are deemed in need of improvement, there is a particular emphasis on Level 1 students in the standardized curriculum and those who cannot function at a basic level in the alternative assessment classes. The school has very high expectations of all its students and strives to see each one's potential. The aim is to get as many students as possible out of District 75 and into a general education school.

Public School 771 tries very hard to work in partnership with parents. They are invited to all individual education plan meetings and the school informs parents constantly of strategies being used with their children and how to follow them up at home. The school regards its parents as clients, so teaches them how to work with their children. The school communicates well with parents via projects, mathematics journals and a monthly class newsletter which shows parents what the student has been doing in class. The parent co-ordinator calls up a random ten parents per day, just to say hello and keep in touch. Students in alternative assessment classes bring home a useful communication notebook each evening, so the school and parents can exchange information. Most parents see the school as an advocate and a support, although a significant minority is reluctant of authority, so play little part in their children's education.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The core curriculum programs have been carefully selected for their ability to produce data and to address the needs of students. They include Everyday and Impact Mathematics, Ramp-up Literacy and the Teachers College Workshop Model for literacy. These programs are used in all standardized assessment classes and are also used in the alternative assessment classes, albeit with some adaptations. Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication of Handicapped Children (TEACCH) programs are also used in classes for autistic students. There is a wide variety of additional curricula, including physical education (which has just added rugby to softball and basketball), dance and music, which are all assessed as part of data folios. Those students who reach the top level for behavior points are entitled to go to a wide range of clubs on a Friday afternoon, which includes computer, dance, art, gym, music, chorus and drama. Those who have not earned sufficient points attend classes for social skills and academic or behavior intervention.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling are designed around students' needs, and so students have as few transitions during the day as possible. For example, instead of appointing a third assistant principal, the principal used that funding to provide for after-school collaborative meetings. The budget has also been used to provide smart boards at each site, as this multi-sensory approach inspires the students and has been found to improve their behavior and concentration. Differentiated instruction is well established in many classrooms, both by task and by achievement level. However, this is not consistent and a minority of teachers is still teaching whole groups didactically, and there is insufficient variety in the type of tasks on which some students work. There are effective procedures for attendance and lateness; parents are called every day of absence and the specialist attendance teacher regularly visits students who are absent. There are strict procedures for lateness. Raised attendance and punctuality levels have been found to correlate with increased achievement in students. There are high levels of mutual respect and trust between staff and students and students demonstrate great enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to 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, unit coordinators and assistant principals visit classes throughout the day. Feedback is regarded as very important and is always given. Differentiation and good planning are the main criteria for successful observations. Staff often visit other classes or other sites, again feeding back to teachers they have observed. What happens in the classrooms is the driving force for professional development, along with data about student performance. Professional development is always according to individualized staff needs, and utilizes external training from Teachers College and the District, as well as that which is provided in-house. The principal plots all staff development on graphs to help to assess need and keep records. The school has effective induction for new teachers, including a weekly meeting with an assistant principal, and a buddy who is an experienced teacher, counselor or therapist. There is also additional professional development available. Guidance counseling and self-development is totally integrated into students' programs. Counselors and therapists work in class alongside teachers, as well as meeting students one-to-one or in small groups, and they meet with teachers weekly. This has given staff a multi-faceted view of each student and has been enormously helpful with fulfilling social and communication needs. Considering the school works on many sites, it is very well organized. Staff and parent handbooks make clear the policies and procedures, understood and followed consistently by all, and there is a clear organizational chart. The school has excellent links with a number of outside organizations, including arts agencies such as the Rotunda Gallery and Theatre Moves, Citi Lore for social studies, Learning for Life and the Mill Basin Lion Club.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

All school plans for student outcomes have interim measurable goals. The school is practiced at working with individual education plans and this system has been carried into internal documentation. The school has just started to write performance plans for teacher outcomes with benchmarks and rubrics, but it is too soon to see any impact. A number of diagnostic tools and periodic assessments are used routinely to measure the effectiveness of plans, including Scantron, Acuity and Early childhood literacy assessment system. The school is very good at revising its plans and teachers meet regularly with their paraprofessionals to review lessons and revise them if necessary. An example of this is a group of students who were having difficulty mastering independence. The team analyzed the program to pinpoint the difficulties and rewrote it to make it simpler. The philosophy of the school is, "We can change the program or the person working with it, never the child". The staff are also adept at reacting quickly. As soon as speech therapists and teachers discover what is for lunch, if it is something new that they have no symbol or picture for, they immediately design the appropriate picture so the non-verbal students can make choices in the dining room. The vision for the school is clear, which is for students to know what it takes to be successful and internalize behaviors so they can move on and fulfill their potential.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 771	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?				X	
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?			X		
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?			X		
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?				X	
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?				X	
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?				X	
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?				X	
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?				X	
3.4 ensure that teachers use school, class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?			X		
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?				X	
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance and tardiness?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher’s instruction?				X	
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?				X	
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other’s classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another’s instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school’s plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?			X		
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?				X	
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?				X	
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan’s interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped