



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Public School 23**

**Elementary-High School 023**

**74-03 Commonwealth Boulevard  
Queens  
NY 11426**

**Principal: Phyllis Weinfeld**

**Dates of review: November 14-15, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Ronnie Solow**

# Content of the report

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well  
What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review  
Overall evaluation  
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Public School 23 is an elementary-high school with 406 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 48% Black, 25% Hispanic, 20% White, and 7% Asian and other students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 65% of the students enrolled and girls account for 35%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 87%. The school does not receive Title 1 funding.

Public School 23 is a District 75 school which serves special education students from across the City at seven sites in Queens within day treatment and hospital settings. Most students attending the school are seriously emotionally challenged and require an intensive treatment program with medical supervision tied to the educational program and support mechanisms. The great majority of students are in the standard assessment category and are required to take State examinations. There are some students who have multiple disabilities and other health impairments. A small percentage of the students are in the alternate assessment category.

On the basis of the strength of their academic program and excellent interventions the school was selected as a self-management school, only one of seven in District 75.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The core curriculum, with a uniform system of data collection and recording, contributes to improved student learning outcomes.
- Parents, staff and students appreciate the principal's leadership, knowledge of special education, supervisory and administrative skills.
- Close collaboration between clinical and school staff provides support for the emotional, social and academic development of the students.
- Differentiation of instruction and materials results in improved learning outcomes in English language arts and math.
- Professional development is based on student needs and supports staff growth and development.
- Rules, regulations and procedures are well known and followed by all, enabling the school to run smoothly and deal effectively with behavioral incidents.
- Art, music, dance and physical education enhance the academic program and provide good opportunities for self-expression.
- Students are treated with dignity and respect and provided appropriate supports to reach their full potential.
- The academic program engages and challenges students to increase their academic performance.

### What the school needs to improve

- Disaggregate data based on gender and ethnicity to assess whether the school is accommodating cultural differences.
- Explore opportunities for staff to meet, observe one another and collaborate across sites.
- Ensure that assistant principals develop personal goals and objectives to enlarge distributive leadership responsibilities.

## 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 23 is a unique entity, unlike any other school in the City. Spread across Queens, it serves students through a collaborative partnership with an agency or hospital at its seven sites. Students, admitted to the school after intake by the mental health agency, may stay for a short 45-day intensive treatment program or for an extended period of time based upon needs. An intensive, individualized education program, planned and delivered most sensitively, addresses the academic, social and emotional needs of each student.

The principal, greatly admired for her leadership skills, works collaboratively with the staff and agency personnel to deliver a high quality, well-rounded instructional program that enables students to graduate with a high school diploma. Professional development contributes to staff growth based on need, skill and personal interest. As a result, standardized test scores in English language arts, math Regents and Regents Competency Tests have shown an increase for the past two years. The school does not analyze data based on ethnicity or gender in order to assess cultural sensitivity.

The school staff is very skilled in meeting the needs of their students. Each of the seven unique sites provides a high-quality core curriculum. This curriculum, along with a universal data and recording system, contributes to improved outcomes for students who move from site to site and for students who remain at their initial placement. At this time there is no common meeting time for staff to collaborate, plan and strategize with colleagues across all sites.

Two newly appointed assistant principals have extensive experience working at the school. In order to enlarge distributive leadership capacity they are developing personal goals and objectives that support the Comprehensive Education Plan. The inquiry team is focusing on a group of grade 8 students using an action research design.

Suggestions from the previous Quality Review are in place. The Bookmobile, a unique traveling library and media center, is delivering library services to the seven sites. The change in medication form is being used to notify teachers and other staff members. A new school building, available in spring 2008, will bring the school and Queens Children's Psychiatric Center together into one space.

## **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 gathers and analyzes data from a variety of standardized and non-standardized sources. State exams in English language arts, math, science and social studies, as well as Regents and Regents Competency Tests provide data about student performance outcomes. The responsible mental health agency screens each student upon intake and collaborates with the school practitioners. An individual functional data profile, prepared for each student, includes high quality reading, writing and math assessments that give valuable information about student capability and needs.

Each student has a portfolio, including the profile sheet that is closely reviewed and updated two to four times per year by the teachers and administration. The portfolio includes the modified grade level indicators, the classroom assessment data and work samples that demonstrate mastery of skills attainment. Additional data from unit tests, projects, observations, conferencing sessions, predictive assessments and the individual education plan provide valuable information about student progress across classes, grades and the school. At this time, the school does not disaggregate and analyze data for gender or ethnic groups to assess success and cultural sensitivity. However, the school has shown significant progress in the results of State exams for the past two years.

Good training and management systems in the use and application of data information are in place. The data specialist, a member of the inquiry team, travels to each site to train and assist staff in the use of high quality assessment information that computerized programs, such as Read 180 or Achieve 3000, provide. The inquiry team is currently preparing an action research project that focuses on a group of grade 8 students who have repeated earlier grades several times. District and City data training sessions are well attended, and information shared with colleagues through turnkey training sessions.

**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.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives set rigorous, measurable goals with time frame calendars that delineate the steps for goal attainment. Well-designed teams of school staff engage in collaborative processes creating school, grade and class goals that translate into individual plans for each student. Clinical teams provide excellent insights into the individual needs for each student, assisting the classroom teachers to provide for specific individual social and emotional needs. Subject area teams plan and set goals for the year that culminate in an activity demonstrating mastery.

Excellent programs are built into all classes for the support and encouragement of students and the improvement of behavior, as well as academic outcomes. All students in grades 3 through 8 receive well-designed academic intervention services, at a minimum of twice per week, in a push-in or pull-out model. The academic intervention teacher

provides high-quality instruction in math, literacy and test taking skills. Information about progress, logged onto a well-designed class data sheet, indicates the accomplishments for each day. The administrative team regularly reviews the data sheets, noting progress and redefining goals, and providing intensive feedback for improvement.

Information about goal attainment is shared in a variety of well-utilized ways. Monthly faculty conferences provide opportunities to discuss progress. Staff newsletters and calendars provide information regarding instructional and behavioral areas. Parents receive newsletters, invitations to meetings and communication in notebooks on a regular schedule. Well-designed parent conferences provide excellent opportunities where parents receive information and provide insights about their students. High expectations are conveyed throughout the school community. Parents receive a handbook that outlines rules, regulations and procedures. Weekly progress for each student is noted on the behavior point system sheet, based on agency choice, which goes home weekly. Individual education plan meetings, clinical team sessions, report card distribution and open school events keep parents well informed about student progress. The school provides many collaborative opportunities for school and clinical staff to meet with parents for strategizing and planning for the benefit of the students.

**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 aligns to State and City requirements and provides a well-rounded educational foundation for the students. The core curriculum utilizes a balanced literacy approach to English language arts using well-designed functionally grouped classes in the middle and high school. Everyday Math and Impact Math, the basis for the math program, provide good data for classroom staff. Science and social studies follow the State guidelines. Excellent additional support for the students, provided through Achieve 3000 and Read 180, Wilson phonics and Foundations, enables the skilled teaching staff to further use data-driven instructional practices while focusing on specific individual needs.

Art, music, technology, adaptive physical education and physical education classes further engage the students in the school program and provide excellent outlets for creative expression. A recently introduced pilot program, called Dialectical Behavior Therapy, is teaching a group of students to use yoga-like breathing techniques for calming themselves. A recently awarded grant is providing a mobile science lab and computer center at one of the sites. The Bookmobile, a mobile library, is providing outstanding library and media services in a state-of-the-art environment.

Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students. Well-designed monthly calendars include administrative and academic due dates. The administrative team meets regularly with the staff, reviewing outcomes and student portfolios. Very clear procedures, positive support mechanisms and regular administrative oversight enable the school to run smoothly and efficiently handle behavioral occurrences.

**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 and assistant principals observe classes on a regular schedule and provide excellent feedback on strengths and areas for improvement. Subsequent visits assess the incorporation of the earlier suggestions in order to ascertain progress. An effective model of peer intervisitation pairs teachers with teachers from a nearby elementary school. The literacy coach and District coaches provide additional, effective support for teachers.

The excellent youth support program, designed on the clinical model, provides, high-quality targeted services for each student. Additional well-integrated services in occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language, vision and hearing, psychological and/or psychiatric counseling are appropriately delivered on an individual basis. The effective after school program allows middle and high school students to participate in sports or earn additional, needed academic credits. The very effective relationships with outside agencies, such as the Queens Borough President's Office, St. Mary's, and Iris Hill provide very high quality assistance that furthers student academic, social and emotional growth.

Teaching staff, across sites, do not have sufficient time to meet, plan, observe one another and collaborate, in order to further refine effective teaching practices. Two newly appointed assistant principals bring a wealth of experience to the school. They are in the process of developing personal goals and objectives aligned with the school goals, thereby furthering the excellent distributive leadership capacity of the school.

**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.**

The Comprehensive Education Plan and the principal's goals and objectives are the foundation for the school's focused plans. Each contains measurable interim goals that are reviewed by school teams on a regular basis. The focused plan for each student, the individual education plan, is updated and reviewed by the teacher and administration every six weeks, along with indicators of progress, are logged into the student's portfolio.

Regularly scheduled, intensive reviews of student, class and school data, two to four times per year, include the principal, literacy coach, academic intervention teacher, assistant principals and the classroom teacher. Excellent analysis of classroom and standardized data provide feedback resulting in immediate revisions to each student's program. The accumulated data results in an updated profile and serves to propel the learning cycle. Constant review and ongoing critical dialogues with the clinical staff result in specific practices that improve student learning outcomes.

The principal and community have a clear vision for their school. As they prepare to move into a new building, they are already strategizing ways to raise money for a gymnasium. "We are always thinking outside the box. Of course, we always work with our partners to improve the lives of our students."

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Public School 023</b>	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				X	

\* This sub-criterion is not relevant for this school.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, 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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				X	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<b>X</b>	

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				<b>X</b>	