



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Elementary – High School 993

District 75

**85-15 258th Street
Queens
NY 11001**

Principal: Jacqueline Zaretsky

Dates of review: November 28 – 29, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs

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 993 is an elementary-high school with 380 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 36% Black, 23% Hispanic, 25% White, and 16% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 72% of the students enrolled and girls account for 28%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 86.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This is a multi-sited school located in eight different locations within the borough of Queens. Five sites comprise elementary grade level students, another is designated as a middle school and two are located within community-based high schools. Many of the locations have fully inclusive settings in partnership with a general education school. The 380 students experience an array of disabilities that include school phobia, severe learning difficulties, emotional disturbance and autism. Three hundred and seventeen students are alternate assessment students. All have individual education plans and many are mandated for occupational, physio and speech therapy. Thirteen languages are spoken within the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- A highly skilled and experienced principal leads an excellent management team with energy and vision.
- The school provides well for students who experience complex difficulties, helping them to take control of their lives, develop social skills and make significant academic progress.
- A strong and consistent behavior policy assists students in developing self-respect and making mature contributions to society.
- Students say that they feel safe at school and recognize the high level of care and respect they receive from adults there.
- Students experiencing communication difficulties are well supported by structured classroom programs and excellent language development techniques.
- Classroom staff provide students with a rich curriculum that is well adapted to each student's needs.
- Teachers and paraprofessionals work collaboratively as excellent class teams, demonstrating a wide range of personal and academic skills.
- The school uses data very well to identify trends in progress, areas for development and individual students requiring additional support.
- Parents value the accessibility of all staff, the feeling of partnership and the outstanding work undertaken by the parent coordinator.
- An outstanding professional development program ensures that the school moves forward in a coherent way across all sites.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop further opportunities for all students to have regular contact with general education settings.
- Complete staff training in the use of technology to collect and analyze data.
- Continue to provide opportunities for staff to share practical and imaginative record-keeping practices.

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 993 is outstanding in the consistently high quality of its staff and the success in realizing the school's vision. The principal uses recruitment and imaginative scheduling to support its wide range of special education students. Her cabinet and coach share her vision to create the greatest degree of independence and the highest achievement for all its students. They implement this vision through top quality professional development, a uniform respect for the students and high levels of collaboration. Excellent classroom teams support the students, who value the school and all it offers. These consist of teachers and paraprofessionals who have a keen insight into the needs of their students. Crucially, they recognize individual potential and seek to maximize it at every opportunity.

The school has embraced the culture of data collection and analysis. Gradually, staff have come to recognize and use the wealth of information that is generated from tests and observations to match tasks to students, although staff training is not complete in this area. This is a school with a strong culture of trust. Students, who may have suffered failure elsewhere, thrive in a secure environment. Parents value the accessibility and expertise of all staff and testify to the dramatic progress their children make. Above all, the behavior policy and procedures are exemplary and have very positive benefits for all students on all sites.

An imaginative curriculum is adapted and enriched for the full range of abilities, behaviors and communication difficulties. Partnerships with outside agencies strengthen the excellent work carried out with families.

Strategic planning is based on hard evidence and targets are well reviewed to ensure that initiatives develop quickly. It is a listening school. Students are assessed as much by what they say and do as by their examination results. Their parents feel well consulted and involved in all aspects of the planning for their children.

The previous Quality Review identified three areas for improvement, all of which have been addressed well. Technology is now integrated well into most subject areas. The purchase of high quality hardware means that all students have the opportunity to access the internet and word process written work. For teachers, the retrieval of data is becoming easier and the school will soon use the new Scantron assessment system regularly at classroom as well as strategic level. The third recommendation, consistency across all sites, has been exceptionally well addressed. Procedures, units of study and assessment folders are now the same for similar students on all sites. The inquiry team is working well to identify students who are underachieving in a bid to put in place procedures for similar groups in the future.

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 is rich in data and has very good systems for its collection and analysis. All data is used to develop both students and the school itself. Administration and class teachers have very good information on students in terms of attendance, learning disabilities, and recent and long-term progress. Initiatives, such as the introduction of reading and writing workshops or the sharpening up of the wording in individual education plans, are all based on a keen analysis of evidence. The majority of staff have been trained in the use of technology to collect and analyze data.

There are many subgroups within the school, which are monitored thoroughly. For example, there is a significant minority of girls. The monitoring of their progress and attitudes is seen as important and has led to the development of activities for girls to match those for boys, such as all-girls clubs. Many students are on the autistic spectrum. Their progress in language and work habits are closely monitored and modifications to instruction are made as necessary. For the students who have been school phobic, attendance is rigorously assessed and targets discussed with students and parents. There is excellent assessment of students who are English language learners. The specialist teacher has an in-depth understanding of the many cultures and linguistic needs with the school. This means that he analyzes the performance of each ethnic subgroup and teaches and advises accordingly.

The school compares its results with those of other District 75 schools. However, it emphasizes that its high expectations make comparisons with general education much more appropriate. The close links with inclusion settings means that staff make regular comparisons of the progress of their students against their general education peers.

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 high level of collaboration around goal setting within and across the eight sites is impressive. Inclusion teachers, subject staff and those working with autistic students are able to work together. They also work closely with the rest of the staff on their site, which reinforces the consistency of behavior policy and learning environments for all students. Collaboration is also assisted by the fact that all staff meet at the start of the year and for whole-school professional development days. This allows senior staff to share the latest data and, at the beginning of the year, lay out the main areas for annual development.

The excellent classroom teams quickly identify those students who experience unexpected or sudden difficulties. The opportunity to investigate these changes is taken at one of the many staff meetings and effective remedial action is taken promptly. A change in attendance pattern or an increase in tantrums both receive the same level of attention, backed up with data relating to frequency. The richness of the data means that case conferences are well informed and provide baselines from which to progress.

High expectations are a characteristic of all staff. They convey these expectations to students very effectively through classroom conferences and day-to-day comments.

These expectations are shared with parents, who value the respect shown to them as partners in their children's learning, which they say is "phenomenal". This is strengthened by the outstanding work of the parent coordinator. He ensures that the school listens to parents and meets the needs that they and their children express.

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 outstanding.

The richness of the curriculum is a major strength of the school. All students receive their mandated entitlements. In addition, there are specialized ways of teaching that support students with autistic disorders and a well-implemented behavior policy is in place for all. Many students across the sites have problems with speech and communication. The range of language support techniques, including very good technological aids, means all students have access to the same curriculum as their peers in other schools. The strong team of therapists assists in one-on-one support and increasingly works in classrooms. This provides them with excellent opportunities to model their techniques to classroom teaching teams, improving practice.

An excellent range of activities enriches the daily curriculum. Older students experience well-designed vocational courses and work placements. Students at one site run a Rising Star Café, many alternate assessment students have access to a culinary arts curriculum and there are good opportunities for performance across all the sites.

This has largely been possible because the principal has recruited very strong members of staff. A part-time post has allowed the appointment of the coach and a large counseling department has been developed. Imaginative scheduling has maximized the use of the specialist English language learner teacher across the many sites. Strategic use of the budget has enabled a dramatic increase in technological hardware and inventive developments such as the English as a second language and Project Arts programs. This is a school where mutual support engenders trust and trust sees the development of very strong collaborative ventures.

Not all staff appreciate the importance of data in the planning lessons and modifying tasks. However, excellent work by the school coach and outside specialists have assisted staff in using results, observations and work samples to better assess what students should learn next. Perceptions and assessments of students are shared on a daily basis. This, in turn, means that staff responses to an individual student are more consistent and appropriate. Not enough work is undertaken to share good assessment practices and formats.

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 school rightly takes pride in its highly effective professional development program which includes a very wide range of developmental opportunities for staff. At the start of the year, the training program is outlined for all staff, which means that it is aligned with the strategic goals of the school. In practical terms, it means that staff are clear about their program and the school can book substitute staff for the full year. Impressively, professional development is monitored closely and the school has a succinct summary of what training has taken place in each of the many areas of school life. This reflects the

school's strategic priorities and acts as a good monitoring mechanism. The school seeks to send staff as teams, which builds capacity further.

Teachers are accountable to turnkey their training and regular classroom observations provide coaches and administration with opportunities to see that professional development leads to the expected improvements. Staff also benefit from a considerable amount of intervisitation, between classes and between sites. Teachers new to the school and new to education report that the induction process is good.

High quality training is supported by a very strong set of partnerships that enhance the services available for students and families as well as teachers. Good external coaches have assisted in the developments in English language arts, and the school is a Teachers College Partnership school. The strongest partnership of all is that with mainstream schools. Links with the host school allow elementary students to participate in a wide range of clubs and teachers work together to assess written work samples. On the middle and high school sites, staff share in and provide training, while parent coordinators work very productively between general and special education schools. However, opportunities for some students to have more regular contact in general education settings is an area for development. Many other links, such as those with housing services and mental health, provide good resources for parents and students in times of crisis.

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 high quality data collection and analysis provides the administration with up-to-date and highly detailed information on all aspects of school life. This is disseminated to all relevant teaching staff to provide the basis of classroom adaptations and related service support. The excellent supervision given by the coach and cabinet means that walkthroughs and observations rigorously focus on the implementation of new initiatives. Where practice or results suggest that a development is too slow or wrongly targeted, the initiative is reviewed and adjusted. The strong focus on reading and writing workshops and the full introduction of the outstanding behavior policy are instances where regular monitoring has provided guidance for small alterations along the way to implementation.

Teaching staff now use external data, together with their own observations, to replace independent education plan targets where they have been achieved. Classroom activities and groupings are regularly modified in the light of the latest progress data. All initiatives have a clear and regular monitoring process, which contributes to decisions about resourcing, scheduling and staffing.

This is a school with a clear vision: Every child should learn in the least restrictive environment. Every development seeks to move towards that goal. At classroom level, teaching seeks to develop greater literacy and math levels, better behaviors and more mature social development. The trend in results, the maturity of students and the response of parents show that the vision is being realized.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public School 993	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 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	
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?					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?					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 make 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	