

Quality Review Report 2008-2009

Public School 023

Elementary-High 023

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

Principal: Phyllis Weinfeld

Dates of review: month March 23 - 25, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Louise Kapner

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 023 is an elementary-high school with 405 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 48% Black, 23% Hispanic, 22% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 63% of the students enrolled and girls account for 37%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 78.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Public School 023 is a unique organization within New York City's Department of Education's District 75. Located in five agency venues it serves students who require medical/psychiatric interventions throughout the day. Some students attend only for a short period. This results in the school having a very high mobility rate. Nevertheless, the school is able to provide an effective intense therapeutic environment without abrogating its responsibilities to offer a strong instructional program in all core subjects for its students.

The principal's drive for excellence is evident at each of the school's sites. Her efforts, and those of her administrators and staff members are highly visible through the hallways at the main building and off-site. Student work is proudly displayed and words reflective of good behaviors serve as a constant reminder of expected conduct. Staff members are held to very high standards. The professional teaching standards are used well to develop teachers' instructional goals and are a framework for the formal observation. Administrators frequently visit classes to monitor instructional practice and provide very good feedback with clear next steps. However, the administrators conference log is not yet fully aligned with the teaching standards. Teachers use a wide range of data, recorded in user-friendly formats, to identify students' benchmarks, learning needs and styles, and to monitor ongoing performance and progress. At present, while quite comprehensive, not all documents are precise enough to ensure accessibility of all relevant information in one uniform format.

Classroom instruction engages students in activities that are differentiated and well matched to their functional levels. Paraprofessionals and specialists provide much needed support and work collaboratively with teachers to form classroom teams well focused on supporting students' emotionally, medically, and in their learning. The school has key partnerships with affiliated hospitals to ensure that the therapeutic needs of the students are met. Parent involvement is crucial and outreach and communication is constant. Outside collaborations with community-based organizations brings much needed resources into the school to support instruction and recreational activities. Inquiry team work has expanded this year, and its efforts are affording students additional opportunities to be successful. The school is now ready to use their good practices more widely across other core subjects to improve student outcomes.

The principal and her strong administrative team are powerful forces behind the school's current focus on the present, with a keen eye to the future, as they continually plan and implement new strategies to meet the diverse needs of the students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, well supported by her assistant principals, leads with a clear sense of purpose well focused on raising student achievement yearlong and in the future.
- Students receive high levels of nurture and care from all staff, which provides the needed foundation for learning.
- The school works hard to sustain and establish effective partnerships with families and community organizations to meet students' needs.
- The school has very effective systems to collect, analyze and record information relative to students' performance and progress.
- The school's curriculum gives students extensive opportunities to participate in all core subjects appropriate to their functional level.
- The school's effective use of data to modify organizational structures has resulted in enhanced capacity to improve student outcomes.
- Teachers across the school's sites welcome opportunities to participate in professional development and inquiry work and use this to strengthen instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Build into the very good data collection systems a consolidation of information to ensure all relevant information is available from one source.
- Expand the good work of the inquiry team to all sites and into supporting student achievement in additional core subjects.
- Enhance the use of administrators conversation log to monitor teachers' progress towards meeting their professional goals.

Part 3: Main Findings

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

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

The school collects and astutely analyzes and records a wide range of summative data in all core subjects and depends heavily on disaggregating information culled from extensive formative assessments. As a result, administrators, teachers, and specialists have a very clear understanding of the functional level of individuals, by grade and within subjects. This year's administration of the Qualitative Reading Inventory provided a breakdown of skills that is used successfully to develop individual student learning goals, which inform both academic intervention services and classroom instruction. Teachers frequently referenced Scantron as a tool that provides a realistic measure of a student's performance, and identifies individual learning objectives and instruction to improve their skills. Of great importance and use is the daily recording of student conduct. Consequently, staff is able to understand better each student and what behaviors to anticipate. Teachers of the most medically fragile students use the Brigance to "get a starting point" of how to meet suitably each student's needs. Class lists and other profiles provide comprehensive data summaries. Changes are updated immediately to ensure relevancy but the school has yet to consolidate all available information in one format. Teachers maintain excellent individual student profiles and portfolios with authentic work to monitor student performance and progress throughout the year and to inform instruction.

The school, with the help of a very energetic parent coordinator, successfully shares information with parents. A newly implemented school messenger system relays timely information to and from parents about items of interest relative to the school and their children. As a result of tracking out-reaches, the school has identified an increase in the number of parents receiving information daily. Parents appreciate the home visits from the school's affiliated hospital staff with whom they also attend treatment team meetings to help plan for their child. One parent spoke how she "felt so alone", but now appreciates all the help she and her child receive.

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 principal is keenly aware of her unique program, which in affiliation with hospitals across five sites provides effective settings for students with intense medical and/or severe behavioral issues. To this end, she carefully reviews the available data, identifies school-wide needs, and works collaboratively with all constituents within her school to develop the Comprehensive Educational Plan. Realistic, measureable interim- and long-

term goals are well matched to meet the needs of a very fragile population and focus on all components of an effective school. As the principal stated, "We will accomplish them." They include increasing student performance, reducing bullying incidents, expanding partnerships and parent involvement, and transitioning students to less restrictive environments. Thus far, this year, each month about 40% of their students has moved back into district-based programs.

The school very effectively uses weekly newsletters, email, and a school blog to inform and include teachers school-wide in all plans and timeframes. Committee-based work in various areas includes representatives from all sites. They work collaboratively to develop and implement effective strategies towards meeting targeted goals. As an outgrowth of the environment committee, beautifully crafted signs are displayed throughout the hallways to remind students of expected behaviors. Staff members are beginning to see positive changes in students' conduct and based on anecdotal data, bullying incidents have decreased by 23%.

High expectations are part of the school program for all stakeholders and are prevalent in all conversations. The assistant principal spoke of a "spirit of excellency" that permeates all that they do. Teachers work with students during "empowerment conferences" to help them set daily goals in instruction and behavior. Careful daylong monitoring allows students to earn positive points that they can use at the end of the week to participate in selected activities. Students recognize this as a tool that "encourages me to do more." Teachers use very good differentiated instructional rubrics to guide students. Displayed student work reflects teachers' comments, grades that are consistent with report cards, and clear signals for next steps in improving their work. Students' individual education plans show careful thought and are well focused on identifying annual goals and short-term learning objectives that are specific to each student's needs. The physical therapist worked with a medically fragile kindergarten student to build up her endurance. The choice of activity showed a clear sense of purpose while engaging the student in a fun activity.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

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

The school's instructional program successfully mirrors the needs of its diverse student population. A standards-based uniform curriculum with explicit pacing calendars in all core subjects is in place across all sites for standardized assessment students. A well-developed program in the arts enables students to have alternate means of expression and to develop innate talents. Instruction for alternate assessment students is stimulating and highly individualized and classrooms reflect attention to theme-based teaching. The principal is enthusiastic about the school's focus on encouraging positive attitudes and a high regard for learning. Once a student is accepted into the program, careful consideration is given to suitable class placement, and students receive extensive on-going levels of support from their treatment team. Students know "when I need help" and rely heavily on their teachers and therapists for support. Results from the Learning Environment Survey identified a need to refocus the school's efforts on student behavior. As a result of the newly introduced anti-bullying program students are beginning to have a more positive attitude towards each other, are more cognizant of harassing behaviors, and incidents school-wide are decreasing.

Teachers show great skill in shaping instruction and include a range of activities differentiated to meet the functional levels of their students. Supplemental materials and computer-based learning effectively engage students in suitable independent instruction. As result of using Scantron and Jamestown as instructional literacy tools, well matched to an individual's functional level, students are showing a high level of determination and making significant gains in reading. One student has improved close to three grade levels thus far this year. Teachers, paraprofessionals and specialists work together as well-oiled teams. In a high school class, small groups of students were highly engaged reading a public document for information. The teacher and paraprofessionals engaged students in good questioning, and worked with them to complete differentiated activity sheets. Highly energetic staff involve medically fragile students in learning activities. The use of augmentative devices and extensive prompting engages students. As a result, students are learning how to respond to commands. A teacher shared, "My student was finally able to activate an adaptive switch for cause and effect on her own." This teacher is working on the ultimate goal of providing the student with the ability to use a device to communicate in all situations.

School leaders ensure that excellent resources are available to assist staff in their instruction well focused on raising student outcomes. An extensive array of instructional materials and manipulatives are evident in each classroom. A full-time academic intervention teacher provides effective push-in services working alongside classroom teachers. Consequently, they are able to personalize and focus in on specific needs of individuals.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

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

Public School 23 values its staff members and boasts of having the most senior staff in the district. However, they are not complacent and administrators continually seek ways in which to improve instructional practices to raise student achievement. The formal observation protocol, redesigned this year, mirrors the professional teaching standards. Teachers were asked to self-reflect on their practice and select and set measurable objectives around an instructional strategy that they would like to improve upon. As a result one teacher shared that she "assesses daily" her lesson and carefully looks at "what is or is not working" to suitably modify her practice. Learning walks are frequent, and an administrators conversation log identifies concerns, challenges, teachers and administrators next steps. Currently, this log does not include reference towards monitoring each teacher's progress towards meeting his or her own professional goal. Staff are provided with "meaningful" opportunities to participate in professional development and they are encouraged to ask to attend off-site activities. Coaches provide excellent support and develop strategy lessons to support good classroom instruction. Teachers echoed, "They just don't throw new programs at us." Administrators welcome the opportunity to see how staff implement newly learned skills. This year's inquiry team work builds on last year's success with grade 8 students who were "immersed" in remedial English language arts instruction and as a result the majority made gains. As a result of looking at student performance, and in concert with the school's goal to raise student performance, this year's emphasis is on skill building in the area of main idea. Students at two sites are now receiving intense targeted instruction well matched to their functional level. Students are already showing gains in their reading ability and are able to transfer the strategy into social studies and writing. Teachers are very excited about their work, monitor student performance carefully, and

extend the use of the strategies in their work with other students. The school has not yet expanded this work to all sites, and is reviewing the impact of this work in other core subjects.

The school knows and values the contribution of the affiliated hospital treatment teams who work closely with students, families and staff. Collaborative planning and targeted interventions are very important to support students' on-going success. This year a high school level girls' group is helping them understand more clearly, "who they are." The school's counselor provides excellent transition services to students and is well versed in high school graduation requirements. She keeps her high school students well focused on credit accumulation and encourages those who are ready to sit for the Regents or Regents Competency exams. Excellent out-reach efforts and grant writing further supports the school's efforts to meet all the academic and personal needs of its students. Students work with Alley Pond environmental center and make excellent connections to the science curriculum. Last year they won a contest on "Going Green".

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 principal is highly self-reflective of school practice and continually looks at students' outcomes to drive yearlong and year-to-year planning. Plans to improve instruction are well focused on classroom instruction. Staff meet frequently to evaluate their practice and modify strategies as needed to meet their students' needs. They recognize the need to use "differentiated tools that are relevant to students' ability." Teachers use a range of summative and formative assessment data and authentic student work to monitor students' progress and inform discussions with colleagues. Because of the on-going meetings and professional conversations, students' progress towards attaining short-term learning objectives and annual goals is monitored continually and goals are revised as suitable.

The school effectively references the Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey and other external data to evaluate its effectiveness and modify as required. The Self-Evaluation shows a commitment to highlight what is working and to identify good next steps. Students at an off-site are now streaming for social studies to receive functional level instruction. The school recognizes the value of this strategy and plans to expand it to other subjects and additional sites. The success of the school's after-school remedial program prompted it to apply for a grant to allow an extension of these services to the weekend and summer. As a result, students will have additional opportunities to accumulate credits for graduation and can receive one-on-one instructional support. The school is hopeful that there will be four students graduating with a diploma in June 2009, an increase over prior years. The school also looks at organizational changes to enhance their practice. They are exploring implementing Gradekeeper to help in recording and monitoring students' grades.

The principal has a strong vision for the future success of the school and continually shares this with the entire community. She leads by inspiration and commitment that is contagious to those around her. She is determined to ensure that her students are "afforded the same opportunity as those in general education."

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: Public School 023	△	➤	✓	+
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?				X
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?				X
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?				X
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?				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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?				X
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?				X
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?				X
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DY0, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

To what extent do ...	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?				X
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?				X
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

To what extent do school leaders...	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?				X
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?				X
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and 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 ...	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?				X
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?				X
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?				X
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X

Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed