



**Department of  
Education**

*Joel I. Klein, Chancellor*

**Quality Review Report  
Office of Accountability  
2008-2009**

# **Quality Review Report 2008-2009**

**Richard H Hungerford School**

**Middle – High School 721**

**155 Tompkins Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10304**

**Principal: Mary McInerney**

**Dates of review: March 18 - 20, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Mick Megee**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Richard H Hungerford School is a middle-high school with 317 students from grade 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 23% Black, 16% Hispanic, 53% White, 7% Asian and 1% American Indian. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 67.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 32.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007–2008 was 88%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This District 75 special school is located on Staten Island in one main site, five off sites and two full-time work sites. The students are designated as cognitively challenged or on the autistic spectrum. All students have significant or severe disabilities and require a high level of support and specialist services. Class staff ratios reflect students' needs, at 12:1:4 (students to teacher to paraprofessional), 8:1:2, 6:1:1, 8:1:1 and 12:1:1. All students follow alternate assessment programs.

### Overall Evaluation

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

'Everyday is a perfect day for me, because my friends, paras, teachers take very good care of me,' was a typical comment from a student at Hungerford school. The school successfully achieves its aim of providing 'a nurturing environment that is physically and emotionally receptive to the needs of the students and their families.' The school ensures that students feel secure and comfortable by the staff's good student management and very positive relationships with the students. The favorable staff: student ratios and skilful positive behavior systems result in harmonious, respectful and cooperative classrooms, where students achieve good personal, intellectual, physical and creative growth.

The principal leads from the front and presents a very clear vision to the school community of what she wants to achieve and how to make it happen. There is a focus throughout the school on distributing leadership through shared decision-making. There is good self-evaluation underpinned by a detailed knowledge of each student's individual progress. However, the school does not fully evaluate everything it does by weighing up exactly how the students will benefit from new programs and strategies. The school's database, goal-setting and evaluation procedures do not yet extend across all core subject areas or include full information about the performance of all the subgroups in the school. Teachers, particularly those new to the profession, receive encouragement and support from the administration as well as very good professional development. They are skilful in using specialist strategies in the classroom, particularly for students with autism or multiple disabilities. Not all teachers are equally skilful in ensuring that activities are always matched up to what all the students require. Parents feel fully included in the life of the school, and receive as much information as they need to be able to support their children's growth at home.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- All members of the school community work very well together because they are united and committed to the principal's vision to provide the very best for the students.
- The school is very effective in collecting, utilizing and reviewing its wide range of information about the individual performance of students
- Students feel safe and their behavior is excellent because of the school's very effective procedures for improving student behavior.
- The very strong partnership with parents effectively promotes student academic and personal growth.
- The very positive relationships between students and adults promote a climate of mutual trust and respect.
- Teachers receive a good range of professional development enabling them to continually refresh their instructional skills.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend the good work in data collection, utilization and review across all core subject areas.
- Ensure that all teachers consistently match the class lesson activities to the differing needs and capabilities of all students.
- Make effective use of subgroup information to identify and remedy underachievement.
- Fully evaluate all plans by reference to their impact upon students' learning and outcomes.

## 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 proficient.**

The school collects a wide range of data concerning the individual academic and personal growth of students. Attendance and behavior are both covered in detail. Both teachers and related service providers gather formative and summative information at frequent, regular intervals using a broad, relevant selection of assessments, principally the New York State Alternate Assessments. In the classrooms, teachers and paraprofessionals make daily assessments of students' performance using customized tracking sheets to provide a continually updated picture of what each student knows, understands and can do. Teachers make good use of this information in planning instruction and in setting individual goals across most core areas. The school does not yet gather information about the individual performance of all students in art and music.

School leaders, faculty and the Inquiry Team make good use of the data gathered to analyze learning outcomes for some groups in English language arts, math, science and social studies. The school does not consistently cover all groups within this analysis across the core areas. This means that the school may overlook reasons why certain students are underachieving and teachers may not be using the optimum remedial strategies. Currently, the information gathered is in paper form and this slows down the school's ability to make a rapid statistical analysis. However, the school has made a good response to recommendations in last year's Quality Review and is now piloting an online assessment system in order to produce more rapidly accurate diagnostic reports on progress.

At the end of each marking period, faculty assess thoroughly how well each student has progressed towards their individual goals, and students and their families receive a good range of feedback about their children's growth. Every six months, there is a parent/teacher conference and each year there is a formal review and a complete report. The school exchanges information every day through parent/teacher communication. The school makes good use of portfolios to demonstrate clearly how well students have done. Parents appreciate how the school keeps them completely informed. As one said, 'We get lots of stuff from the school. The para is always putting sticky notes in every different color in the bag to tell me what's going on and how my daughter has done. You're always informed. Good and bad.' Parents say that the school in turn welcomes their feedback and encourages any suggestions they may have about how to support even faster progress.

**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 proficient.**

The school is very student-centered and students’ individual education plans underpin all aspects of the school’s work. The good arrangements for common planning mean that teachers and related service providers regularly sit down with each other to plan and review goals, as well as to set up instruction that is both differentiated and integrated. They set goals for individual students across most core subject areas, as well as behavior. Goals are not always set in art and music. Individual goals are normally of good quality, being specific, measurable and time-related. The school reviews individual goals four times a year, and they are revised if they are found to be too easy or unachievable within the time frame. This means that appropriate and vital next steps are always clearly laid out for students, teachers and parents. In most lessons, teachers make sure that all staff constantly emphasize students’ individual goals, with tight assessment systems to chart daily progress. Goals are set for grades, though not classes, and for some, though not all, groups in English language arts, math, science and social studies. The school does not set group goals in all core subject areas. These omissions mean that the school cannot easily measure whether every group is performing to its best.

The school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan contains priority goals agreed by the whole school, including the administration, faculty, student and parent representatives. For each agreed goal, there is a change management plan with specific actions and timelines. Not all of the plans contain criteria to measure the impact of the actions upon students’ outcomes. This means that the school cannot be absolutely sure that resources are being deployed to maximize students’ academic and personal growth. Parents’ representatives on the school leadership team are fully involved in deciding the school-wide goals. At the level of the individual student, every parent is fully involved in setting and reviewing their children’s goals. This means that families have a good understanding of the next steps their children need to take and can assist them when they are not at school. The school makes explicit its mission for high achievement throughout the school, through displays and posters in corridors and classrooms. Parents are pleased that expectations formalized in the goals are set very high. Because of the school’s encouragement, students too have high aspirations for themselves. As one said, “My dream is to become a writer, and I’m enrolling on the creative writing course at CSI.” Another student expressed his personal aspiration when he said, ‘I need to get my attitude straight, learn how to be patient, and control myself.’

**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/proficient.**

The school provides a very interesting core curriculum of functional academics enhanced by a wide range of vocational and extracurricular activities. Staff work hard to ensure that students learn wherever possible in the least restrictive environment so that they become independent learners as quickly as possible. The students participate in a number of vocational programs, such as ground maintenance and horticultural work. The school’s Inquiry Team is currently evaluating the benefits of these courses.

Students love this work. For almost all students, the requirement for additional services reduces because of the progress they make in becoming independent. Artists-in-residence work at the school integrating visual arts and music in every area of the curriculum. This year, the school has had a focus on bringing in more technology such as Smart boards for classroom use. Where they have them, teachers are becoming increasingly adept at utilizing the boards in order to enliven lessons by giving an additional visual perspective.

The school leaders form an aggressive grant-writing team. Because of their efforts, for example, there is now good funding to cover the costs of the differentiated arts activities, and to build on the technological expertise within the faculty through technology-based training. The administration makes good strategic decisions on where to apply expenditure to the benefit of the students, for example in training staff in 'Chair Yoga' to maximize the students' physical fitness and flexibility. Most teachers provide activities that are well matched to the differing needs and capabilities of the students. A few teachers are not yet so skilful in this differentiation of work. As a result, some more able students have work that is too easy, while others have work that is way above their heads and get left behind. Behavior around the school and in lessons is first-class. The school has tracked the impact of support interventions through the City's reporting system. Since their introduction, there has been a dramatic drop in the number of reportable incidents. Students speak movingly about the transformation that this therapeutic approach has brought about. One said, 'It's made me want to change my life and my behavior. I'm working hard on my stuff now.'

With the favorable adult: student ratios, everyone knows each other very well, and can respond kindly and sensitively, recognizing quickly when a student is becoming upset. Coupled with the very positive interventions, this means that the school and lessons run smoothly. The school represents a quiet, compassionate learning environment in which there is a very warm climate between students and adults of affection, mutual trust and respect. An example of this was in a meeting where one student encouraged her hesitant colleague by saying, 'Come on, you can do it because you're very smart.' Unsurprisingly, the findings of the learning environment survey are 100% positive in nearly every category of enquiry.

**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.**

The administration uses both formal and informal methods for observing performance to support instructional improvement. In good response to last year's Quality Review, the school has begun to develop professional growth plans for every teacher. The plans do not yet have formal targets for every teacher, although the administration recognizes this as the next step and plans to introduce this before the summer. The school provides the faculty with a very good range of professional development activities. Leaders identify relevant activities following lesson observations, through teachers' self-assessments and through discussions with individual staff about their own aspirations and interests. A high proportion of teachers are new to the profession or new to the school. These teachers say that they find the observations invaluable in improving their own practice. They also say that their colleagues provide them with timely encouragement, support and guidance. The school's arrangements for modeling good practice, for example through peer observations and intervisitations, are a significant benefit also. The school

makes good use of the Santa Cruz model that supports the reflective practice of new teachers.

The Inquiry Team is very helpful in providing convincing insight into how to use data in order to drive instruction. Teachers say that they get regular updates on the work of the team with careful guidance as to how they can incorporate the information into their own planning. This enables them to make their instruction more relevant and compelling. The administration provides faculty and service providers with a good amount of common planning time, and this is a cornerstone for the very good collaboration and teamwork seen. The school has a comprehensive guidance plan that incorporates the work of the internal and external service providers and provides a roadmap to guide their collaborative efforts on behalf of the students. The school does not evaluate all elements in the guidance plans with reference to the impact that strategies are having on the outcomes for students. Nevertheless, students who are struggling are quickly identified and the appropriate strategies and resources are brought into play effectively. There is good monitoring to see that students who are falling behind are brought back on track very quickly.

**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 proficient.**

Throughout the year, the school measures the performance of individual students against their targets, using reportable monitoring criteria in order to identify whether all students are on track or some revision of the targets needs to be undertaken. Classroom staff undertake much more frequent assessment and most use this well to modify their instruction. Not all plans contain good quality interim benchmarks and this means that the school does not have a way of easily checking whether the plan is likely to be successful, until it is too late. School-wide goals in plans such as the Comprehensive Educational Plan, the professional development plan and the guidance plan, contain interim benchmarks and timeframes. The benchmarks do not always relate to learning or personal outcomes for students. Consequently, the school cannot see exactly how beneficial the plan has been in improving students’ academic or personal growth. However, the administration does react swiftly if its analysis uncovers any likely academic and personal underachievement. For example, in response to its information, the administration has organized and restructured a classroom for students who rely upon augmentative devices in order to communicate, supported by corporate funding. The program has been so successful that it has led to rollouts in other schools throughout the City.

Although formal elements of monitoring and evaluation are not always present, the school has an accurate view of itself, and the findings of the quality review are largely in line with the school’s own self-assessment. The principal brings about a reflective culture of self-criticism which all staff share. The commitment to self-improvement and to teamwork is absolute. There are very good arrangements to ensure that there is consistency across all the school’s sites. As one of the many new teachers said, ‘We feel that we are all members of the Hungerford family, and that we’re all going to grow together.’ The principal successfully distributes leadership at all levels. As another teacher said, ‘She empowers us so that we can continue to improve. Everyone takes a leadership role.’

## School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Richard H Hungerford</b>	△	▶	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

### 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, DYQ, 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.**

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				<b>X</b>

**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.**

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				<b>X</b>

**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.**

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

**Quality Review Scoring Key**

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