



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Port Richmond**

**High School 445**

**85 St. Joseph Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10302**

**Principal: Timothy Gannon**

**Dates of review: December 18 – 20, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Safiyah Satterwhite**

## **Part 1: The school context**

### **Information about the school**

Port Richmond is a high school with 1,950 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 29% Black, 40% Hispanic, 23% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 6% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 85.0%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and faculty create an environment that personalizes supports for all students and encourages student growth and development resulting in a safe school that supports student-learning needs. (1.4 )
  - The school spearheads three out of school time programs (OST, The Y Scholars Program and Graduate, Prepare, Succeed <GPS>) for students entering the high school whereby students are supported in their transition and have opportunities to feel connected to the school early on. This work has impacted first year student pass rates in the first and second marking period with a higher number of students passing marking period one and marking period two, exceeding the City's minimum 5% annual pass rate increase. The freshman academy additionally supports students by providing incentives, such as keys for success, where students are recognized for various achievements, "Student of the month" and "Total Raider of the Month" where school-award breakfasts are used to celebrate students. The school also conducts evening ceremonies for parents featuring Honor Roll Awards ceremonies, Merit Roll Awards Ceremonies and Outstanding Attendance Awards Ceremonies. Additional incentives to support school goals include raffles, movie tickets, and other competitions, thus aiding in building team spirit at Port Richmond and reinforcing effective academic and personal behaviors. College experiences, such as a leadership program through the Wagner University partnership, enables students to live on campus and experience the college lifestyle thereby supporting the schools focus on ensuring a smooth transition from high school to college. Additionally to support student well-being and provide for personalized support, the schools' Small Learning Communities (SLC) embody systems where teachers gather to warrant that students receive one-on-one attention for attendance, support from a SLC counselor, and an additional staff member who provides purposeful attention via the Conference Advisor Program. Teachers meet weekly about students in their SLC's to address needs and share strategies for reaching students. These practices have resulted in incremental gains in attendance data monthly as well as annually, supporting the schools attendance goal. Lastly, student testimony revealed that through student government students feel that student voice is very strongly heard and guides many decisions in the school. The students and parents collectively exclaim that the principal is instrumental in including and keeping them abreast of the happenings at the school, and ensuring that all constituents are aware of key decision making, as well as having an opportunity to contribute. The principal's purposeful actions to reinforce these systems and elevate their impacts through continuous communication to families results in clarity amongst the student body and an adoption of school values and behaviors.
- School leaders provide teachers with continuous feedback aligned to professional goals and strategically manage professional development resulting in teacher growth and support. (4.1 )
  - School leaders provide feedback to teachers regularly through formal and informal observations, guided by the lens of the Danielson Framework for Teaching (FfT) and aligned to teacher professional goals thereby supporting teacher professional growth. The teacher feedback observed provides teachers

with clear next steps and contains low inference evidence as to ensure a clear understanding and roadmap to evaluative decisions. This work, alongside that of the strategic provision for professional development has led to increases in teacher instructional practices per school summary observation data. For example, in the Danielson competency of 'Questioning 3B' in the 2012–13 school year, 53% of the instructional staff were rated as effective or higher, whereby in the 2013–14 school year the support provided to the staff in this area resulted in a 5% increase in the same category. Teachers attest that this increase is a result of teacher evaluation data analysis and the support provided accordingly. The school tracked similar gains in the Danielson competency 'Assessment 3D', where the instructional staff rating of effective or higher increased school wide by 9% this school year due to the strategic support provided to teachers. This outcome encouraged administrators to continue to provide for professional development that addressed the needs of the instructional staff in a variety of areas including Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP), Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), incorporating the instructional shifts in classroom practice. These practices have led to deeper learning for students, and professional learning, growth, and support, for teachers. Lastly, the school seeks to sustain the practices developed and refined by teachers via the intentional planning of partnerships with universities that allow for student teachers to observe and train with the school, as a succession planning system. This continuity of staff and on the job training aids in supporting the development of new and existing teachers resulting in valuable instruction that leads to a greater quality of student work.

- Teachers administer common assessments and use rubrics aligned to the school's curricula that determine student progress towards goals and provide actionable feedback resulting in identifying instructional foci. (2.2 )
  - Teachers administer State assessments, pre- assessments, common assessments, and mock Regents through the use of DDC: Data Driven Classroom to gauge student performance. Teachers and administrators use item analysis from these assessments to identify specific areas of foci for students school-wide. Through the analysis of academic data and student work, the English department found that students are approaching mastery with regard to citing evidence from text but need additional support in syntax. Math instructors found that answering open-ended questions posed a concern for their students. Analyses not only support academic achievement, but additionally support students' social-emotional success. For example, freshman seminar, instituted this year to support the students' academic and social-emotional transition to high school, is a result of analyzing data and viewing a rise in the disciplinary incidents of incoming students. Thus the school's work supports a culture that incorporates necessary supports for students and is clear on holistically helping students to achieve.
  - In the classroom, teachers have instituted various strategies to check for understanding, including red and green cards, questioning, accountable talk, and exit tickets. In a math Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, students were randomly selected to explain their reasoning for coming up with an answer to an equation on the board. Using the green and red card method to identify how many students were 'stuck' on the problem, the teacher was able to reveal that most students were struggling. This prompted the teacher to re-teach and clarify some areas that may have been unclear, resulting in many more 'green cards' being raised on the second round. In the vast majority of classrooms student work contains specific feedback from the instructor and students

consistently state that they receive continuous clear feedback from teachers regarding their progress and what they need to do on their assignments to improve. These classroom practices from the instructional staff have resulted in a clear message of advancement for students.

- School faculty establishes a culture that consistently communicates a path to college and career readiness and offers ongoing feedback to families resulting in supporting and preparing students for the next level. (3.4 )
  - The college and career center is a primary avenue in the school that systematically implements supports to ensure that all students are aware of systems in place to support their success. College level courses are available to all students through Wagner College, The College of Staten Island College Now Program, Kingsborough College Now Program and Port Richmond Advanced Placement course offerings. The school institutes a program from the Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education, an organization established to ensure that low-income students of color receive adequate resources and support in the college preparation process. In addition the school hosts college Wednesdays whereby students receive messages in the morning announcements about college fairs, college night, and college tours, to ensure that all students are not only aware of the high expectations set forth for them but that the supports are engaging and encouraging to students. The school community (staff and students) utilize the Naviance web-based program designed to support students, parents and staff members with the entire college selection process. There are activities for each grade level beginning with 9th grade to prepare students and parents for the journey to college readiness.
  - There is a guidance counselor assigned to every SLC who meets weekly with its teacher team to discuss students that are part of their SLC's and brainstorm strategies to reach students that are falling behind on the college and career path. Progress of students is tracked by the guidance counselor, and this data serves as the primary document for discussion in team meetings. This process helps to promote the unwavering support that school staff have for the success of students as well as provides students multiple avenues from which to get support.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Deepen the work around curricula to ensure that units in all subjects are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, strategically incorporate the instructional shifts, and promote access for all students resulting in instructional coherence. (1.1 )
  - The school's curricula, featuring strands from the Hochman writing program, is grounded in the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Content Standards, resulting in the promotion of college and career readiness. Port Richmond's six Small Learning Communities: The Freshmen Academy, The Medical Technology Academy, The Gateway Academy for Math and Science (PRISM), The Culinary Arts Academy, The Institute for Business, Hospitality, Entrepreneurship and Technology (IBHET) and The TV and Media Arts Academy, all feature unique curriculum foci areas and are designed to prepare students for success following graduation. In the business program students are provided an activity that includes creating and presenting a customized

business plan. The plan itself is interdisciplinary and addresses a variety of standards and subject area content such as math via the development of operating costs for the business, English via the writing of the plan, and Economics. Additionally, the math and social studies curricula represent an intentional planning of strategies and activities that seek to address the needs of English language learners (ELL) and students with disabilities (SWD). The school uses a revised Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide for rigor; essential questions are clear and aligned to this framework. However, although Port Richmond's work in the area of aligning the schools curriculum to the Common Core Learning Standards is underway this work has not resulted in an intentional planning of the integration of the instructional shifts in curricula documents nor coherence across all grades and subjects. Furthermore, though the school offers a robust Advanced Proficiency (A.P) and college preparation program via Gateway Academy and the Collegiate Academy Honors Program, and has seen gains in the graduation rate of students with disabilities, rigorous tasks that meet the needs of all learners including English language learners and students with disabilities are not yet fully embedded in the schools core program, thus limiting full advancement of its curriculum development.

- Further strengthen instructional strategies to reflect a coherent set of beliefs that strategically provide multiple entry points and supports all students resulting in high quality student work products. (1.2 )
  - Port Richmond High School believes that students learn best when they are engaged in student-student discourse, thinking cognitively through rigorous questioning and engaged in meaningful content. Classrooms at the high school were indicative of this instructional belief whereby in many classrooms observed students were grouped homogeneously and heterogeneously. In these groups students engaged in activities that required them to push each-others thinking. For example in one class students worked together on an argumentative essay task where they constructed a thesis on making their position clear, then explaining to the audience (classmates) what they needed to know about a case, while making sure to support their claims by citing evidence from text. Students later engaged in a debate whereby other students challenged their pattern of thinking, requiring the students to cite additional evidence. Additionally, teachers posed questions and prompts to students in other courses such as "What would happen if you hold the thermometer bulb in your palm?" "How can you use the sides of a triangle to determine if it's a right triangle?" Explain your reasoning behind your statement, and "How do our early experiences contribute to how we see ourselves?" However, although these activities resulted in high levels of student participation in classes, they were not evident across the vast majority of classrooms. Furthermore teaching strategies did not strategically incorporate scaffolds where appropriate and provide strategic multiple entry points to ensure that all students, including relevant subgroups, are engaged in challenging academic material.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name:	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels?			X				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X			
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations?			X				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community?			X				
4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?				X			
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?			X				
5.1 Evaluate the quality of school- level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>