



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

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2015-2016

**South Richmond High School I.S./P.S. 25**

**K – 12 School R025**

**6581 Hylan Boulevard  
Staten Island  
NY 10309**

**Principal: James McKeon**

**Dates of review: February 10-11, 2016  
Lead Reviewer: Tracie Benjamin-Van Lierop**

## The School Context

South Richmond High School I.S./P.S. 25 is a K – 12 school with 517 students from grade kindergarten through grade 12. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 2% Asian, 37% Black, 31% Hispanic and 29% White students. The student body includes 1% English Language Learners and 99% students with disabilities. Boys account for 70% of the students enrolled and girls account for 30%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 77.3%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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 <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

Distributed leadership structures are in place so that teachers engage in structured professional collaborations on teams and consistently analyze assessment data and student work so that plans are adjusted to meet students' needs.

### Impact

A focus on analysis of data, shared responsibilities, and effective teacher leadership, has resulted in strong reflection and improved instructional practices that impact student achievement and progress in writing.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams effectively implement systems to monitor a variety of student data and classroom practices that inform instruction, leading to the achievement of goals for students who are New York State Alternately Assessed (NYSAA) and standardized in all of the educational sites visited. The sites visited have school-based inquiry teams that analyze common interim assessment data to increase student achievement using functional reading level growth in Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) in grades K-12 and FAST standards results as an example. Teachers use student data to assess which students have made progress, stayed the same, or regressed. Based on student results, teachers identified students whose independent, instructional, and frustration levels increased from the QRI fall test administration.
- Administrators and teacher leaders are able to identify distributed leadership structures that are deeply rooted in the school's day-to-day operations and articulate how they serve as a medium for teacher input in strategic decisions that affect student achievement. Teachers reported they are given a platform to try different ideas and share their thoughts with the leadership team. For example, teachers recommended their meeting structure be changed from meeting in content areas to meeting in grade level teams and the results are improved student academic levels across grades, content areas and settings. Additionally, teachers proposed and were given approval to take students on a math trip to Dorney Park that was rooted in their content area work including dimensions of the park rides. The teacher teams focus on integrating real world applications into many of their course assignments and the leadership team supports their choices when attached to academic benefits for all students.
- Teacher teams meet and plan regularly and conversations are focused on why student answers are incorrect. This data informs their lesson and unit plan modifications as well as their instructional teaching practices. Teachers are sharing strategies with each other and building the capacity of the school's instructional foundation. An English Language Arts (ELA) teacher stated, "All teachers incorporate writing strategies into their content areas which has taken time for some of us teachers to fully embrace, but now we're all onboard." Teachers also shared that the team supports individual teachers to ensure that effective progress monitoring of students is in alignment with teacher practice. Another teacher team reported, "We look at our meeting times as excellent brainstorming sessions. One example is *Plicker*. This is now being utilized in multiple-choice assessments during class and teachers are able to assess student understanding right away."

## Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

### Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

### Impact

While school wide practices, including questioning and discussion techniques, scaffolds, and real-world applications, are evident across grades and classes, and student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and involvement, high quality supports and extension activities are not yet evident in all classrooms.

### Supporting Evidence

- In a science class students were asked to discuss the cell theory, identify the parts of animal and plant cells, and explain the purpose of different cell parts. The teacher used a Power Point presentation on *Cells – the Units of Life, Section 1* to facilitate the lesson while students worked in groups investigate their assigned cell – insect, animal, or plant. Students were able to articulate the teacher’s expectations of the task and the tools they needed to use to explain the importance of investigation using the microscope, and the impact it had on their observation. The teacher circulated the room to check-in with the groups and reminded the class to think about the actual size of their assigned subjects versus the magnification size and how the instrument changes the appearance of cell sizes.
- During a math class, the teacher incorporated writing, the school-wide instructional focus, into her lesson. The lesson’s objective, “How do you solve a quadratic function?” Which included a compare and contrast activity. Students worked on different tasks based on their academic levels and at the end of the lesson, a representative from each group presented their findings and explanation to the class. The teacher circulated the room checking-in with groups with the assistance of the paraprofessional support. In an ELA class with a 12:1:1:3R designation, students analyzed and interpreted given quotations from the novel To Kill a Mockingbird, in groupings of three students which were divided with varying levels of questioning difficulty. Student groupings also addressed the needs of visual, tactile, auditory, and constructivist learners. Each group presented their responses at the end of the class and were then asked clarifying questions by other groups and their teacher. The speech teacher co-taught the lesson with the teacher, while also gathering informal data on her assigned speech students in the class.
- In other classrooms that contained Autistic students, rich project-based learning, with integrated themes chosen by students were present. Students explore new learning through real world applications, exploration, inquiry, and discovery, as evident by the project on Africa, which connects to the school-wide performance of *The Lion King* during the spring semester. However, students in a Social studies and ELA class, were limited in their discussion responses to questions as the majority of questions asked by the teacher were low-level and did not allow for students to make their thinking visible.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Individual and groups of students, including New York State Alternately Assessed (NYSAA) and standardized students, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- The English language arts reading/writing curricular map is aligned to the Common Core instructional shifts and assessments to ensure that students are academically successful in grades 1-5, 6-8, and 9-12. An integral part of the map is direct Common Core alignment to writing across the content areas, a description of a performance task, format, and accompanying genre. Successful strategies include text-based responses, checks for understandings, and differentiation according to learning style and academic levels.
- Teachers reflect, revise, and refine work on The Writing Revolution curricula as it relates to meeting the needs of their different learners across settings, sites, and disabilities so that all students have access to show reflection of high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership, as evidenced during the grade level team session and revisions made to unit plans.
- Most lesson plans emphasize higher order thinking and provide a menu of strategies or resources from which students choose to help them understand the subject matter and include the support and participation of the paraprofessional. For example, in a social studies lesson plan, the teacher provided examples of assistance the paraprofessional is to provide, such as escorting students to-and-from the bathroom, speech and occupational therapists, prompting and encouraging students to follow and participate, and advising the teacher of any carry-over situations from previous periods. A math lesson plan included a quadratic functions challenge activity for students, which extended the learning opportunities for students performing at or above grade level. In an ELA middle school lesson plan, the levels of Depths of Knowledge questioning and activities varied from identify, organize, and recall to determining author's purpose, and describing and illustrating common themes.
- Staff aligned all pre-existing curricula to the Common Core and infused different programs and resources to meet their diverse student population. Resources, which serve as starting points for the work, include the use of The Writing Revolution. The school also has Alternate Assessment Core Curricula liaisons to ensure alignment for ELA and Math, Unique, Essentials for Living, and Equals Pre-Algebra and Geometry.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### **Findings**

The school uses common assessments to create a clear picture of student progress toward goals across grades and subjects, track progress, and adjust curricular instructional decisions. Teachers use or create assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student mastery.

### **Impact**

Actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement promotes increased mastery for students, including New York State Alternately Assessed and standardized students.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The majority of teachers use and create English language arts, math, and content area rubrics, to provide written feedback to students. This is a consistent practice across the school, as evidenced by a memoir-unit writing assignment shared during the student meeting. For example, after studying the components of memoir writing, students were directed to read the book *Tuesday's with Morrie*, and answer "If you were to have a living funeral for yourself, as Morrie did, what would it entail?" The student used the *Writer's Revolution* documents to help him with his topic sentence and organize the supporting details. The feedback to the student was based on the *Memoir* rubric and cited next steps. Students stated their memoir writing assignment self-assessment writing checklist also assisted them in knowing what to do next and score a level 4.
- All teachers engage in *Data-At-Glance* conversations with the administration and via teacher team meetings. Specific student challenges are identified and teachers are responsible for creating, implementing, and evaluating action plans for all learners, including alternate and standardized assessed students. Teachers use the *FAST* class report which provides pre and post test data for selected standards for alternately assessed students. Additionally teachers use the *Data-At-Glance* to inform their work students who take the Regents and Regents Competency Tests. Teachers report this focused and targeted look at data has had a positive impact on their students for the January testing season. For example, 11 out of 14 students passed the required ELA test, and 13 out 15 students passed the *Living Environment* test.
- The school tracks data on students who move to a lesser restrictive environment including inclusion classes, community schools, work study, and different special class setting. For example, one of the mental health sites transitioned six students to an inclusion setting and three students into a community school setting. At the main site, three students transitioned into an inclusion program and five students are currently integrated into a work-study program.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families to support student progress toward those expectations. Teacher teams establish a culture for learning that systematically communicates a unified set of expectations for all students.

### Impact

Students across all classifications and settings own their educational experience and are prepared for their individually appropriate next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams have set high expectations for student feedback, within all subgroups and across all settings. The faculty has created appropriately leveled student friendly rubrics and student reflection sheets that hold students accountable for review of their work, specific next steps, and timely follow up planning. Students reported, that there is a feeling that all teachers care about them and they have high expectations for students that sometimes the students have yet to see for themselves. Students across the different sites owned their classifications, disabilities, and their current levels, both academically and emotionally. Students were able to articulate the importance of school and how their behavior connects to their academic success. A student in one of the mental health facilities stated she wants to attend a “regular high school” and knows that she has to improve her behavior in order to be able to transition to another school.
- In the parent meeting, every parent was able to speak to the school’s high level of communication and being treated as a partner. There is a communication notebook that goes home with the students every day. The school will actually call you and explain the contents of the notebook if you need them to, stated a sister of one of the students. A parent shared, “My son is Intellectually Disabled and has Attention Deficit Disorder and I speak with the school every day to check on his progress and he is improving. He was attending another high school in Staten Island and he was failing. That is no longer the case at the school.”
- Families stated, through email and open communication with school leadership and teachers, they are able to support their children at home and in other settings in the community. As reported by a mother, “This program saved my son’s life. He is more responsible now and even has a job at the hospital where he is learning to be organized and work with others.” Another parent stated, “This is the first time in years where I am able to go to work and not have to be concerned that I will have to leave early to pick up my child. That is a peace of mind that you cannot put a price on.” The school also supports students and families with the college application process. A mother whose son applied to The College of Staten Island said, “The school helped with every step of the application process and took on the majority of the work and supported me the financial aid process, too.”