



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Robert Randall School**

**Elementary School 373**

**91 Henderson Avenue  
Staten Island  
NY 10301**

**Principal: Michael Zangwill**

**Dates of review: December 10 - 11, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Alvin Jeffs**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Robert Randall School is a District 75 school with 358 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 40% Black, 23% Hispanic, 33% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes .04% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 79% of the students enrolled and girls account for 21%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.9%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is located across three sites and comprises students who are drawn from the whole of Staten Island. Many (61%) are identified as emotionally challenged. This group follows the mandated curriculum and takes standardized tests. In addition, there are students experiencing autistic spectrum disorders and a smaller group with severe and complex learning difficulties. These students take alternate assessments. Some students work in fully inclusive classes in general education schools, which are co-located on two of the sites. During September 2007, the school opened seven additional classes for students with autistic spectrum disorders and two more classes for students who are emotionally challenged.

The school has School-Based Option status, which means that vacant posts can be filled by the school administration directly.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The significant success of this school arises from the principal's clear vision and the wholehearted way in which it is implemented by all staff.
- The school uses a wide range of data very well to evaluate the progress of all students.
- The school has been highly successful in raising both students' and parents' expectations of what it is possible to achieve.
- Behavior practices are outstanding and lead to positive and dramatic changes in all students and exemplary conduct within classrooms and around the school.
- The school has developed strong partnerships with parents that are very effective in developing plans and targets for each individual student.
- There is a strong professional development program, a large element of which is provided by teachers and highly experienced school coaches.
- Consistent implementation of a number of specialized programs means that students on the autistic spectrum make excellent progress.
- Teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists combine to make extremely effective classroom teams who meet students' needs very well.
- Class teachers are very good at assessing students and adapting work accordingly to provide the right level of challenge and interest.
- Budgeting, scheduling and staff appointments are used well strategically to develop capacity within the school.

### What the school needs to improve

- Analyze data for all relevant subgroups to ensure that the academic curriculum is appropriate for all students.
- Provide structured opportunities for staff to share good practice with regard to challenging higher achieving students.
- Ensure that teachers have adequate time and support to complete assessment activities appropriately.
- Identify space for the effective implementation of the mandated one-on-one therapeutic work and the physical education program.

## 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.**

Robert Randall School is one that achieves notable success with students with emotional disturbances and those with autistic spectrum disorder. It also assists them in securing academic success, sometimes for the first time in their lives. Many of the staff have worked at the school for a long time and this provides a stability that assists students and parents. Although there are a significant number of new teachers this fall, the standard of teaching and behavior management remains very high. Much of the staff stability and retention is attributable to the principal, whose shared vision underlies much of the good practice within the school.

The school uses data very well for many aspects of the curriculum and in exemplary fashion for the implementation of its 'Power of Choice' behavior program. Over the past two years it has also collected and thoroughly analyzed data related to students' academic performance. Summaries of this data, together with in-class observations and tests, form the basis of teachers' planning and the setting of appropriate targets for students.

The curriculum is a broad one, giving students many opportunities to succeed in core subjects, such as English and math, and express themselves through art and physical education. The school believes that what has stopped its students learning in the past is a lack of a clear and consistent framework within which to learn. The calm and respectful environment within the school provides this and students flourish as a result. The settled culture of the school is supported well by good staff appointments and imaginative use of the budget. Standards are maintained and programs adapted through excellent teamwork within classrooms and very good collaboration between teachers, and parents and therapists. All initiatives are well planned, assessed and revised in light of data from within and beyond the school. This process is also central to effective classroom teaching.

Since the last Quality Review, data collection and analysis have improved and conferencing with students has developed well, although more time is needed to ensure that all assessment activities are fully effective. A sensory curriculum is now well supported by an experienced coach and excellent professional development opportunities. It is fully in place for all students with autism and complex learning difficulties. There is more to be done in using data relating to different subgroups to ensure the most appropriate curriculum for all. The school's inquiry team is focusing on the effectiveness of phonics programs for fifteen of their underachieving students. It has reached the stage where detailed observations are about to produce recommendations and intensive support will be introduced based on these.

## **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 has a number of senior staff who are experienced in analyzing data. This is supplemented by teaching staff who have a lot of experience in classroom observations and assessments. This combination means that staff know their students exceptionally well. Careful attention is given to the progress of large groups within the school, such as the autistic students, and smaller elements such as English language learners. The wealth of data means that staff can easily identify a slackening of progress with a single student or a failure to meet targets for a key subgroup. Current data is matched to previous school performance and trends and patterns are quickly identified. The school has clear evidence that English and math performance has been rising steadily for the past three years.

Structures are in place to ensure that the best use is made of the data available. Thus, large volumes of external data are synthesized by the data analyst, who then discusses it in summary form class by class. Similarly, teachers keep extensive records of academic progress and behavior that have a two-fold use. They provide the basis of conferences with students and parents. They are also readily available for detailed discussion with therapy staff if problems arise or when individual education plans need revision. Currently, not enough work is carried out in analyzing data relating to gender and ethnic subgroups to examine whether particular academic programs are equally effective for all groups of students.

**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.**

Collaborative goal setting is well established and effective. The administration talks with class teachers about the implications of data from a range of assessments. Coaches work closely with staff to identify ways to move students forward. This has been particularly effective for students on the autistic spectrum, where staff need to identify small steps that will assist the student in relating to academic work, to adults and to other students. Much of the collaboration is informal, but highly effective. The quantity of data that teachers need to use is growing steadily. Staff feel they have very good support from senior colleagues, but also identify the need for more structured time to properly deal with the wealth of valuable data.

The school has the very highest expectations for its students. Data is central to teachers' planning. All students have goals arising from their individual education plans and these indicate high expectations for both good behavior and academic success. These are updated regularly on the basis of discussion with therapists and parents. The school is to be commended on the way it involves parents in developing plan and targets. It listens, reviews all data and develops clear and measurable targets for students. The use of a sophisticated rewards system within the school means that careful attention is paid to behavior goals. Teachers' use of behavior charts, speech therapy logs and samples of

student work is exemplary. This sharing, listening and acting is a model that is in place on all sites of the school. It means that everyone gains a clear picture of students and patterns of learning and behavior which form the basis of classroom targets that parents, as partners, are asked to reinforce at home.

**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 well developed.**

Parents seek, above all, solutions to social problems that may have been present in their family life for years. They find it at Richard Randall. The school’s greatest strength for all ages is the dramatic improvement in students’ social conduct and application to work. Students seen during the Quality Review have histories of destructive and problematic behavior at home and at school. Parents relate that the social curriculum students receive brings about “miraculous” changes for the better. Parent responses range from “there are such changes in such a small time” to “we can now take our child to parties.” Much of this success is founded in the excellent use of techniques specifically designed for students with autism, administered with skill and sensitivity. Much relates to the consistent behavior management program. Developments in technology have been very good. There is a thriving art curriculum and many enrichment activities such as circus arts.

Many students work within inclusive settings in general education. The curriculum here is the same as for every other general education student. This least restrictive of all environments becomes the goal for many students and one that is frequently attained.

The success of the behavior and academic curricula is built upon careful financial planning. The development of a teachers’ center has allowed staff to work and plan together on the main site, while other sites ensure that staff can work in appropriately settled conditions. Staff appointments are also key to the success of the school. The school has rigorous methods of recruiting and many staff have become teachers after being paraprofessionals within the school. In this way, each member of staff is trained concerning behavior policy and the administration knows the caliber of the appointee.

The school is fully utilized and this means that on some sites, there is not enough space for the many students who need one-on-one speech therapy to receive it in a quiet, distraction-free environment. Space constraints on the main site also mean that the essential physical education program cannot function effectively.

**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 principal has been able to implement his vision so effectively because he has recruited and trained top-quality staff. Just as important is the fact that the culture of mutual respect in the school means that these staff are retained. They receive a high standard of professional development, increasingly from the experts within the staff body itself. There are also many opportunities for staff to draw on expertise from outside the school. International figures have good links with the school and in highly specialized areas, such as autism, the school receives the support of district coaches. This

professional development program arises from the meticulous involvement of senior staff within classrooms. There are structured observations by administrators who have strong track records with the students they are observing. Similarly, teachers are increasingly visiting each other's classrooms to observe good practice or exchange ideas. This promotes high quality teaching. Although the school supports all students well, not enough is done to ensure that higher-achieving students are fully challenged.

The clarity of procedures throughout the school and across all sites contributes well to the excellent behavior of students. A particular strength is the start of the day, when students of all ages come into a settled and welcoming environment. This sets the tone for the day. Personal problems are dealt with and the rules for the working day established.

The school has a very strong network of partnerships and services that support individual students and families. Work is carried out on a daily basis with highly skilled speech, physio- and occupational therapists. This has assisted in the very effective development of communication techniques for some students. The counselors provide high quality advice and support for students and teachers alike. There are also opportunities to call upon the services of organizations such as the Independent Research Bureau.

**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 school's effective use of data means that administration and teaching staff can review all programs in the light of progress made. Thus, a new phonic development program, 'Mondo,' has recently been introduced for younger students. It is regularly monitored to assess whether the investment is commensurate with improvements in reading. This process is applied to all initiatives. The school is very reflective and keeps a watchful eye on all new developments. This ensures that all developments represent value for money and contribute to improved student performance.

Teaching staff adopt a similar review process with regard to their students. All students have long-term goals. These are regularly converted into short-term targets which inform the day-to-day work of teachers, paraprofessionals and therapists. Progress in all areas of work is monitored with two aims in mind. One is the rapid identification of problems and the second is to ensure that as each goal is achieved a new challenge is presented and similarly monitored. When it comes to monitoring behavior, this is done in an outstanding fashion. However, the school recognizes that it does not always use the behavior success data to its full effect and is now looking at ways in which the outstanding personal progress made by students is quantified and demonstrated.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Robert Randall School (R373)</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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 makes 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	