



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Port Richmond High School

High School 445

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

Principal: Timothy Gannon

Dates of review: November 26 - 27, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Stephen Walker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Port Richmond High School is a high school with 2,518 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 33% Hispanic, 31% White, 28% Black, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 81%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 39% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The positive culture in the school is leading to improved student progress and attendance.
- The principal provides dynamic, forward-looking and inspirational leadership that is guiding the significant improvements in the school.
- Mutual trust and respect between staff and students greatly support the academic and personal development of all students.
- The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis so that there is a positive culture within the school.
- Students who require additional support with their work are well supported by the academic intervention services.
- The specialized curriculum programs within the school provide a wide range of academic and vocational opportunities for all students within the school.
- A comprehensive program of professional development encourages teachers to be reflective and share good practice within teaching and learning.
- The school is well supported by effective partnerships with a large number of community-based organizations.
- Imaginative and strategic decisions on the budget, staffing and scheduling are significantly supporting the academic achievement of the students.
- A rigorous process of school self-evaluation drives strategic planning and school improvements.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop further the analysis of whole school performance and progress data with particular reference to similar schools, gender and ethnic groups.
- Develop the setting of aspirational student performance goals based on previous achievement so that there are clear expectations for both students and teachers.
- Encourage further instructional differentiation in classes so that teachers address more specifically the individual learning needs of each student.
- Increase further the opportunities for more parents and caregivers to become fully involved in the learning of their children.
- Involve the staff in developing a shared long-term vision for the future development of the school.

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 proficient.

Port Richmond High School is an improving school with some well-developed features. This is due to the leadership of the principal who is working with colleagues, students and parents to create a real "Raider Spirit" in the school. There is optimism among the staff that more students can succeed in the Regents examination and go on to college. The school is rapidly developing the use of assessment information although it does not yet fully analyze progress data with particular reference to similar schools, gender and ethnic groups. The school identifies students who require additional help with their work and intervention services support them very well. However, students do not have clear, aspirational targets that are based on prior achievement. The specialized curriculum programs within the school provide an exceptional range of academic and vocational opportunities for all students. There are many examples of good teaching in the school but teachers are not fully addressing the different learning needs of their students. Teachers are reflective and use the comprehensive program of professional development to share good practice. The school is well supported by effective partnerships with a large number of community-based organizations. Nevertheless, a significant number of parents and caregivers are not fully involved in the learning of their children. A rigorous process of school self-evaluation drives strategic planning and school improvements. It is now appropriate to involve the staff in developing a shared long-term vision for the future development of the school. The school's inquiry team is in place with clear terms of reference and is undertaking research on the identified target group.

The school is making good progress in addressing the issues in the last school Quality Review. A number of systems are in place to track the progress of students in the school. The assessment of learning styles also provides additional information to support teachers in the classrooms. Professional development for teachers is now a strength of the school and teachers embrace the opportunities to improve their teaching practice. The school uses a variety of intervention measures to support students who require additional support with their work. The strategies are effective although increasing numbers of English language learners who require additional support are enrolling at the school. The school is proactive in providing training in the use of student assessment data. Representatives from each subject area are familiar with ARIS and are cascading the information to their colleagues.

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 proficient.

The school is developing effective systems to analyze performance data in order to improve the progress of students. Overall passing rates in the Regents and advanced placement examinations demonstrate an improvement over the past year. The principal analyzes the achievement data from the Department of Education, including the accountability and annual school reports, in order to track differences in student performance between subjects and teachers. The assistant principals and teachers analyze individual student performance through student progress reports and report cards in order to highlight underperformance. The school does not fully consider the assessment data to identify the grade level differences between teachers and subjects. Teachers use the examination item analysis well in order to examine student responses and identify area of weakness. The assistant principal of supervision is now using a new assessment system to track individual students and undertakes a needs analysis for each student in the graduating cohort.

The school acknowledges variations in student performance by gender and ethnic groups although there is no detailed analysis of these differences across the grades and subjects. The school highlights a number of underachieving Black male students to take part in the math initiative with the College of Staten Island. However, the school is aware of significant underachievement among Hispanic males although there is no detailed analysis of this issue. Effective systems are in place to record the performance and progress of English language learners and special education students. The school does not fully compare performance with similar schools although it is particularly interested in similar high schools that are successful in improving attendance and graduation rates. Members of the new inquiry team are increasing their understanding of ARIS and are cascading their expertise to faculty colleagues.

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.

Teachers review student progress at regular meetings with the assistant principals. Subject areas are now using formative assessments during the year to check progress and highlight areas for development. All students in grade 9 take an assessment to determine their preferred learning styles. There are high expectations for the students. Commendation letters and Student of the Month awards reward good progress. Teachers do not always receive information on the prior achievement of their students at the beginning of the academic year. Teachers encourage all students to succeed but do not set clear aspirational targets that are based on previous performance. A wide variety of intervention programs effectively supports students who require additional help with their work. The school uses the New Visions for Public Schools framework to identify

students who are scoring below grade levels. The Focused Learning Center supports students well in grade 9 who are underperforming in their work. The At Promise program supports returning long-term absentees effectively in their transition back into school. Extended day and Saturday programs provide help for a range of students who require additional preparation for the examinations.

The school works closely with parents and caregivers who generally value the work of the school. The school provides parents with regular progress reports that are detailed and informative. Parents are alerted quickly if their child has learning difficulties and requires intervention support. However, attendance rates at parent-teacher conferences are very low. Many parents from the non-English speaking Hispanic community are not easily accessible which inhibits the progress of their children. The school acknowledges that a significant challenge is to further develop the opportunities for more parents and caregivers to involve themselves more fully in the learning of their children.

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 proficient.

The specialized curriculum programs within the school provide a wide range of academic and vocational opportunities for all students. The range of programs is highly motivating for the students and includes choices such as business, information technology, culinary arts and performing and visual arts. The teaching of the compulsory core subjects is within the specialist houses and this provides a more stable, group identity for the students. All students complete some community service as part of the graduation requirement. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports and creative arts, supports students well and adds considerable enjoyment to their school experience.

The majority of teaching actively engages students and many teachers demonstrate very good practice. There is a supportive atmosphere in lessons and “teachers encourage you to do well and ask questions”. There is a feeling among parents that “teachers want to make a difference so that all students can experience some success”. Some of the teaching is very formal with an emphasis on providing knowledge and information. More imaginative lessons vary the learning activities so that there are opportunities for discussion and problem solving. Teachers are now more aware of the different learning needs within the classroom but do not fully use data to differentiate instruction in order to address the individual needs of students. The school is developing the use of technology to enhance the quality of both teaching and learning.

Imaginative and strategic decisions on the budget, staffing and scheduling is significantly supporting the academic achievement of the students. For example, achievement in math is improving this year due to the change from double periods to single periods. Imaginative budgeting allows good maintenance of the buildings leading to a very positive learning environment. Mutual trust and respect between staff and students greatly support the academic and personal development of all students. Attendance rates are improving and there is good monitoring of absences. Attendance is better in the senior grades as students gain in confidence and experience success at the school.

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.

A comprehensive program of professional development encourages teachers to be reflective and share good practice. Departmental meetings provide opportunities to "turn key" information although scheduling restricts common planning time. Training programs are clearly focused on developing teacher skills in using assessment information, differentiating instruction and using the interactive whiteboard technology. New teachers receive ongoing support through coaching and mentoring through the New Teacher Institute program. All teachers have a formal observation by the principal or assistant principals with detailed, diagnostic feedback at least once per year. There are regular "walkthroughs" and teachers adopt an open approach to advice and support. In addition, some teachers are developing intervisitations with their colleagues in order to share good classroom practice within and across subject areas.

The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis because expectations and procedures are clear and reasonable. The calm atmosphere around the school supports student learning and progress. Parents and students support the "zero tolerance" discipline policy so that if "you do the crime, you do the time". One teacher said, "this is a very secure and good place to work and I feel well supported by the administrators." Effective partnerships with a large number of outside bodies and community organizations such as St. John's University and the College of Staten Island support the school very well. The alumni organization and parents association provide valuable resources and support for the school.

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 principal provides dynamic, forward-looking and inspirational leadership that is guiding the significant improvements in the school. One student explained, "we see him around school and we now want to be part of the Raider Team." There is a very clear short-term vision for the school but the challenge for the principal is to involve the staff in developing a shared long-term vision for the future development of the school. Measurable targets are set in each subject area although these are not necessarily based on the prior achievement of students. Goals for teachers are not sufficiently explicit because individual students do not have specific targets. Teachers are now using periodic assessments to confirm the standards of students as well as item analysis to highlight areas for development. Assessment information highlights any underperformance of students. Intervention strategies are quickly put in place to support students who are at risk of not reaching their required levels. A rigorous process of self-evaluation drives strategic planning and school improvements. There are clear targets and success criteria within the Comprehensive Education Plan, which are agreed upon and shared with the subject teams. The school is continually reviewing progress and adjusting strategies in the light of assessment information.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Port Richmond High School	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
Quality Score			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		
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 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			
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			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		
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				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	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	