



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Lillian L Rashkis School**

**High School 371**

**355 37 Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11232**

**Principal: Mary Ann Andrews**

**Dates of review: March 5 - 6, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Helen Donnellan**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Lillian L Rashkis School is a high school with 305 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 59% Black, 28% Hispanic and 10% White students. The student body includes 1.5% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 76% of the students enrolled and girls account for 24%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 64.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is a special education high school for emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, school phobic and autistic students. The school has a main site, an adjoining annex for alternate assessment students, two inclusion sites and a varying number of worksites across Brooklyn.

The principal took up her post in January 2007 and is in the second year of her tenure.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has worked hard to ensure that the school now routinely gathers data on all students, as part of the monitoring their performance.
- The administration is highly committed to improving the analysis and presentation of data so it can be more widely used to inform instruction.
- Data analyses now make clear how different groups of students perform.
- The principal has introduced effective changes that enable the school to manage disruptive events and allow it to run smoothly.
- The curriculum meets mandatory requirements with wider subjects tailored into the schedule to increase student interest and learning opportunities.
- Extensive and productive working partnerships with community organizations extend and enhance the curriculum, especially at work sites.
- Teachers and support staff work together to provide unified services aligned to the academic and social needs of students.
- The school uses parent and student views when planning instruction and work placements that relate to students' needs and interests.
- Students and staff show high levels of respect for each other, which supports a positive atmosphere for learning.
- Staff are highly committed to their professional development, show a capacity to change and ensure that the school continues to improve.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop an effective long-term plan that shows the actions and interim goals needed to turn the school's long-term vision into reality.
- Ensure that plans for improving instruction show the actions planned, timescales and desired outcomes, to make monitoring progress easier.
- Explore ways of comparing the school's academic outcomes with those of similar schools or groups of students.
- Increase the capacity of staff to analyze and present data themselves and use this information in planning instruction.
- Continue to challenge lateness to maximize the instructional time for students.
- Consider how to increase contact with parents and make academic and educational information more easily understandable for them.

## 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.**

The principal has addressed many issues since her tenure began in January 2007, giving a secure foundation for the school's future development. She is determined to make further improvements and raise outcomes for students at all the school sites. The assistant principals and staff are supportive of this agenda to move the school forward.

The school now routinely gathers data on all students. It is reviewing the range of assessments used and improving the presentation of data to make it easier for staff to apply it in their planning. The school shapes the curriculum to match the needs of each individual student and blends academic learning with work-related practical activities so that students can see the purpose of their academic work. There is a high level of mutual respect between staff and students, who value the education and support offered to them. One student described this as, "If we have problems people help us to get over (them), forget and get on with life." Long-term absence is an issue and reduces the amount of instructional time for some students.

Staff are positive about professional development but currently do not have plans defining the actions needed to support their improvement. The school has established and sustained productive partnerships with related service partners and community organizations that extend its programs for instruction and support. The school plans and evaluates student progress routinely but is less systematic in planning and monitoring at whole-school level, which includes defining how it will achieve the school's vision.

The actions taken to address issues from the last Quality Review have led to greater information on the differences between attendance and learning outcomes for boys and girls and between ethnic groups. This information is further broken down to grade level, which provides valuable insights into how low attendance relates to learning outcomes. Investigating specific learning disabilities has proved more complex owing to the mandatory requirements related to assessing students. The school has started this work by observing students to gain insights into their preferred learning styles and using this to influence the delivery of instruction.

The inquiry team has been examining the progress made by a group of year 9 students in writing since they joined the school in September 2007. They are using a structured approach to plan intervention and assess learning outcomes. The school will not know the results of this work until later this year.

## **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 now gathers data on both standardized and alternate assessment students with increased consistency, which gives a more accurate picture of their performance. The administration is highly committed to improving the analysis and presentation of data so it can be more widely used to inform instruction.

External consultants analyze and present data graphically, which makes it easier for staff and administration to access data on student progress and performance. These analyses show patterns and trends in different subjects, levels and across different sites, giving a picture of outcomes for all areas of the school. The school ensures that teachers and worksite supervisors regularly gather data on the progress of students in culinary arts and work site programs, adding to the broad picture of student outcomes. The consultants have started to develop the skills of staff and administration to present data and this is at an early stage, so the school is still reliant on their analyses. This means that the school cannot always present data in ways that make it easy to detect patterns and trends. Teachers have recently started to use spreadsheets to record assessment records for their classes, but it is too early to see the impact of this change.

The school makes good use of its own and district data to compare performance in academic subjects by gender and ethnic groups and compare levels of attendance and disruptive incidents with other schools. This has shown little variation in outcomes for different ethnic groups. The school has not yet compared the performance of its students with similar schools or groups of students. Consequently, there is no formal data to show its academic strengths and areas to improve.

**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 staff work closely together to plan, deliver instruction for students at all locations, and involve students and parents where possible. Teachers use their weekly common planning time to review outcomes of previous learning and use this to plan how to deliver subsequent instruction to meet the needs of students. Staff are beginning to use data to set goals and have recently started to keep a profile of progress for their classes. This is at an early stage of development but considered as a valuable tool for goal setting.

At work sites, staff and work supervisors review work and agree the next steps for each student. The school uses the city academic transcripts well to identify the subjects students need to complete in order to graduate. It provides elective programs for grade 11 and 12 students to support them in overcoming their weaker areas of learning.

Teachers make clear to students what they need to master in classes and students on standardized assessment also give them details of the academic requirements, attendance, homework and class work needed in order for them to succeed. Recently

introduced data analyses are under-used to highlight underachievement and good progress.

The school knows its students well and is aware of the challenges many of their families face, which limits their interaction with the school. In spite of this, the school makes significant efforts to work with parents, make them aware of what students have achieved and what they need to do and achieve in order to graduate. The school has identified that information on student progress is hard for non-professionals to understand and this may contribute to limited parent involvement. The school explicitly seeks the views of students, external agencies and families in transition plans for students moving on from the school. This means it can provide realistic and relevant programs before students leave the school to aid their transfer to employment or another placement.

**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 curriculum meets mandatory requirements and offers extensive opportunities for students to engage in creative arts and work-based learning. Students and staff show high levels of respect for each other, which supports a positive atmosphere for learning. The school is creative in providing students with opportunities to apply learning and practice work skills in purposeful ways. The extent of the curriculum enables students to access learning at different levels, but the school does not make full use of data to differentiate instruction.

Alternate assessment students participate in a culinary arts program, office and run a thrift shop, which extends their learning and provides additional facilities at the school. Some standardized assessment students gain experience through working in the school office and with the janitor, as part of the after-school program. Creative arts are valued highly, which is reflected in the recently opened gallery where two and three-dimensional artwork is displayed and this raises students’ self-esteem.

During the review, students expressed high regard for academic learning. They are motivated when learning is fun and show respect for each other’s work. Mutual respect between staff and students is evident. Students are sufficiently comfortable with each other to express and share powerful feelings and emotions in poetry, published in school-made books.

The school works hard to encourage students to come to school and recently introduced incentives have helped to raise attendance of some students. The school data on attendance includes students with habitual long-term absences and this lowers the overall attendance figure. Lateness is equally important and a significant number of students at the main site enter the school building after the first period, which reduces the amount of instruction they receive.

**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 proficient.**

The staff and administration are committed to developing instruction and using data through professional development. Teachers receive written feedback after each classroom observation describing stronger and weaker areas of performance. Although use is made of intervention to improve the weaker areas there is no plan setting out the interventions and their desired outcomes, which means that teachers do not have a full picture of how different interventions are to be monitored. Teachers learn from each other through informal sharing of expertise and one teacher has recently sought evaluation of a recording of one of her lessons, which shows an open and reflective approach to professional development.

Systems are now in place to allow for good management of disruptive events so the school continues to run smoothly. There has been a reduction in the number of reported disruptive incidents and the school security team works well with staff to provide an orderly environment for staff and students. Students know how they are expected to behave and during the Review they talked of strategies they use to avoid becoming involved in disruptive events. Teachers and support staff work together to provide unified services aligned to the academic and social needs of students. This allows students to make good progress. Staff are well informed about individual needs and goals and can provide appropriate support and materials to match these.

The school has established a wide range of working partnerships with community-based organizations that provide opportunities for learning and access to specialist services. These are very well integrated partnerships, such that they appear to be part of the core work of 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 proficient.**

The administrative team and staff are clear that the longer-term vision of the school is to raise learning and work outcomes for students. There is no current definition of the vision in a specific plan that states actions to be taken, people responsible, timescales, interim goals and desired outcomes. Consequently, progress towards this vision is not systematic. Instead of plans, the school relies on numerous actions to deal with issues relating to academic growth, attendance and improving instruction and the links between these are not clear. The inquiry team is now providing a good example of the use of data to plan and assess the effectiveness of interventions. It has just begun to extend the focus in writing from an initial group of students to all students on standardized assessments in grades 11 and 12.

The principal has set out the school priorities for the academic year, which includes developing the role of the inquiry team and improving student outcomes through greater use of data to inform instruction. Routine monitoring of goals for individual students takes place three times each year, through the individual education plan process. This ensures prompt changes to interventions and minimizes further delays in student learning.

There is no formal process to improve teacher outcomes, even though staff and administration implicitly refer to this. The absence of a process means that the monitoring of improvements in teacher outcomes is unrelated to defined interim goals or timescales.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Lillian L Rashkis School</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 rigorous, 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 and tardiness?			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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				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		

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>