



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**The Gravesend Magnet School of Multiple
Intelligences**

Middle School 095

Principal: Carolyn Telesmanich

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Reviewer: Jan Lomas

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Gravesend Magnet School of Multiple Intelligences, Public/Middle School 95, serves 903 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The percentage of students eligible for title 1 funding is 63.8%.

The interim principal had been in post for just under three weeks at the time of the Quality Review, following the recent retirement of the previous long-serving incumbent.

The school is a multicultural community. The proportion of students recently arrived in the country is 10%, higher than the figure for similar and City schools. Many of these arrive from Mexico, China and Russia. The diverse ethnic student population includes 31% White students, 31.7% Hispanic students and 28.55 % Asian and other students.

Just over 15% of students are English language learners and the proportion of Special Education students is approximately 8%.

Attendance rates have historically been slightly above those for similar and City schools as is the rate of stability of the student population.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has made a good start in establishing her presence in the school in a positive way.
- The staff is working well with the principal to enable her to develop a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for development, showing their clear commitment to the school.
- The relationships within the school, adult to adult and adult to student, are friendly and trusting.
- The hardworking staff understands the benefits of effective professional development and many are eager to carry on refining their practice.
- The coaching staff are very effective, enabling teachers to make progress with their practice in line with school priorities.
- Students value the efforts of their teachers in enabling their academic and social development.
- The Parent and Teacher Association is active in supporting the school.
- The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop tools and strategies for the collection and use of data in order to enable the clear ongoing tracking of student progress and use this to underpin carefully structured opportunities for rigorous review.
- Strengthen opportunities for students to self-evaluate and participate in developing goals and targets for their progress in age-appropriate ways.
- Deepen the capacity of all teachers to use data effectively to drive appropriately differentiated instruction which uses an engaging range of strategies that provide challenge for all students.
- Refine the use of strategic planning as a practical and meaningful tool so that goals are underpinned by precise, measurable and frequent checkpoints that enable effective monitoring and evaluation.

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school

The Gravesend School has a friendly atmosphere that is reflected in the congenial and trusting relationships that pervade its various constituencies. Staff and parents' representatives readily express their commitment to the school community and students value the efforts of their hardworking teachers in seeking to meet their needs.

At the time of the Quality Review, the interim principal had been in post less than three weeks. Parent and Teacher Association members say that they find the new principal very open and welcoming. She has wisely started by seeking the views of students, talking with staff colleagues and observing the school's practices and procedures in order to build a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school is proficient overall, but there are a number of features that are currently undeveloped. Many staff are now eager to take the school forward with renewed purpose, embracing the journey that has already been made and grasping the opportunities for professional development, reflection and refocusing that change can bring. The school is well-placed to address key areas for improvement.

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 student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The school uses a range of data, formal and informal, including ECLAS-2, DRA and WRAP, in order to understand aspects of the achievement of each individual student. Teachers work hard with the well-informed coaches to establish this range of data. This develops their view of individual student progress and informs planning. The school knows that its use of data is developing. However, binders demonstrate collection of data from, for example, conferencing, observations and ongoing assessments.

Data about ethnic groups has been analyzed for the Comprehensive Education Plan, showing awareness of the disparity of performance between groups. Nevertheless, planning to improve this situation is not explicit within the school's goals and planning. The school does not monitor discrete ethnic groups to see if teaching is equally effective. The progress of special education students is assessed through routine procedures, though the assessment procedures used by specialist teachers of English language learners have only recently been introduced and reviewed by senior staff. The school has not yet identified other groups of students who may be of significance and might warrant ongoing monitoring.

The school is piloting the use of 'monitoring by results' with one grade group, showing who is 'exceeding', 'at risk' or 'on target' to meet the state standards and giving a clearer view of progress. While past and current performance is compared subject by subject, at present the use of tracking and monitoring to compare student progress in different grades and classes throughout the year is inconsistent. The principal also has plans to begin comparisons with other schools, but has not been in post long enough to begin this. She and key staff members agree that, while the school gathers a great deal of data its precise

use needs further development. This is to ensure that a strategic focus upon priority areas is maintained, maximizing the impact of the efforts of the hardworking teachers.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

Data is used to establish priorities with largely measurable goals, though whole school goals and action plans are not always monitored precisely. This limits the teachers’ abilities to focus on priorities for planning and assessment to bring about long term improvement. Teachers work collaboratively, using common preparation times to discuss and plan, developing the work led by literacy and mathematics coaches in building capacity to use data and match instruction to identified needs.

Attention is given to those most in need of improvement, and the academic intervention teachers and reading recovery specialist provide support through ‘push in’ or ‘pull out’. They attend grade level meetings and there is informal discussion about students’ needs and plans for instruction. However, structured opportunities for rigorous review of assessment data and amendment of intervention plans to accelerate each students’ rate of progress are a less developed element of the school’s work.

The Parent and Teachers Association is supportive and representatives have a balanced view of strengths and areas for development. Strengths shared include the warmth of welcome to newcomers and clear sense of community. Parents attend workshops about students’ learning, and meet staff to discuss their children’s performance. Students’ views of their school and the hard work of their teachers are very positive. However, the school is aware of the need to engage more parents and students to reduce the numbers who leave at middle school stage to join other magnet programs. Coaches are working with teachers to enable them to use rubrics to assess students’ work and this is helping the development of students’ self-evaluation skills. However, all students do not yet participate in developing specific goals and targets in age appropriate ways to maximize progress.

The school is poised to make further improvements and clarify its systems, structures and channels of communication in order to focus more precisely on goals and priorities.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The curriculum for mathematics and writing has recently been mapped to meet the mandated requirements. The literacy coach ensures that planning around reading relates closely to the standards in scope and sequence. Coaches work effectively on the development of strategies which generate useful assessment data, such as rubrics, writing evaluation sheets and reading observation notebooks. There are appropriate science units for each grade. MS 95 is a Magnet School for multiple intelligences and the social studies program demonstrates clear links. However, the school is aware that multiple intelligences are not yet consistently infused into the breadth of the mapped curriculum.

Enrichment covers the breadth of arts, music, drama, dance, physical education and the natural world both during the day and the after school program, using outside agencies and organizations to deepen these experiences. Whilst the development of the mapped curriculum and its ability to generate data is a work in progress, it is proficient overall.

Students generally respond well in lessons and, when questioned, respond readily and demonstrate their eagerness to learn. The best lessons are matched to learning needs, show pace and involve questioning to extend and reinforce learning. However, opportunities are lost in some classes to challenge students or to scaffold their learning. The staff show commitment to those in their care and the school now has the opportunity to capitalize on this and the valuable coaching and training already provided, clarifying key priorities for improvement and agreeing strategies to ensure that these are fully and consistently realized in classroom practice.

Budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions have generally been appropriately made to support emerging school priorities. Scheduling has been organized so that teachers can have valuable regular common preparation time and the assignment of staff to grades and teams has been made with individual strengths in mind.

Sound strategies are used to ensure that attendance is monitored and absence or tardiness followed up. The principal receives a weekly attendance report which enables her to monitor this closely.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The new principal has not yet appointed any staff. However, the assistant principal was able to explain the satisfactory procedures used in the past.

The well-informed coaches provide very effective support for teachers in mathematics, literacy and associated assessment, and instructional practices. Regular meetings with the coaches supports collaboration amongst teachers, who also value the support of the administration. Teachers are developing the ability to reflect on practice in an open way in order to share continuous professional development. Staff members also have the opportunity to experience training from outside speakers and experts, to visit each others classrooms and to use the professional library which has recently been established. Developments still need to be embedded into teachers' everyday practice in a consistent way across the whole team. As the principal is new, she has not yet undertaken formal classroom observations. However, she has already informally visited classrooms and has a strategic plan to schedule "cyclical" observations. This means that identified improvements in individual practice will prompt support and follow up.

Partnerships with outside organizations enrich the curriculum, assist with professional development and provide opportunities for students to develop socially and academically. Examples include the 'Inside Broadway' residency, links with 'Puppetry in Practice' and the American Ballroom Theater. The school community is enthusiastic and proud about students' prowess in ballroom dancing.

The school runs smoothly and the principal is developing an overview of the school's strengths and development needs. Parents, staff and students testify to the positive start she has made in establishing her presence and students appreciate that she has sought

their views. The school is poised to harness the strengths of the staff team, and the momentum that change can bring.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is undeveloped.

The Comprehensive Educational Plan includes goals which are often measurable and action plans identify some interim ways to identify progress towards them naming a lead person for each strand. However, the plan is not always sufficiently used in practice to focus upon precise milestones towards success that would enable specific and regular monitoring and evaluation. This means that accurately adjusting plans and strategies in a timely way, so as to maintain progress towards the achievement of goals, is likely to be less easy.

Although the school is developing strategies that will help with making comparisons of student progress and achievement across classes and grades, this is currently at an early stage. The monitoring and evaluation of emerging data in order to see patterns and trends in comparative performance for classes and grades is, at present, inconsistent overall.

Teachers plan for instruction in response to emerging data from ongoing classroom assessments and from interim testing. Professional development is proving useful in supporting teachers in continuing to develop their use of data to differentiate and align practice in an agile way to meet the needs of all students, provide appropriate challenge and utilize strategies which engage students of all ages.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Gravesend School (PS/MS 95)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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 student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 	X		
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 	X		
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.	X		
Overall score for Quality Statement 1	X		

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and 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 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.		X	
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.	X		
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	

3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.		X	
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.		Ø	✓ +
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.		X	
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.		Ø	✓ +
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.	X		
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.	X		
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	