



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Public/Middle School 109

**1001 East 45th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11203**

Principal: Denise Talley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school currently serves students from kindergarten through grade 7. There are currently 775 students on roll; 81% are Black, with 16% coming from a Hispanic background. Most students have Title 1 eligibility, while 75 qualify for special education support and 66 are English language learners. Average attendance is consistently above 90%, slightly below . This is a little lower than similar and City schools, but the school works hard to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

Since 2004 the school has been based in a new facility that it shares with a District 75 special education school. This will enable it to expand to its full capacity next academic year as a kindergarten through grade 8 school. The new building is located three miles away from the school's original site and from the community it serves. This means that all students are bussed, some spending an hour at each end of the day getting to and from school.

Because of the new building, the school benefits from very good specialist facilities in technology, science and physical education. It is committed to working closely with the special education school, sharing facilities such as gymnasias, cafeteria and auditorium, integrating rooms within its own facility and seeking to develop mainstream opportunities for the special education students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The vision and leadership of the principal have created a well-developed and effective school.
- Effective use of data enables the progress of all students to be tracked and monitored.
- The development of portfolios of individual students' work creates a practical demonstration of individual progress over time.
- The use of rubrics in class and in the display of students' work shows what has been done well and what is needed to make it even better.
- A range of effective interventions to address underachievement enables carefully identified students to improve.
- Collaboration and integration with the special education school reflect a commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The quality of displays around the school helps to create an atmosphere of effective learning.
- The Saturday program "Men As Leaders in Education" (MALE) directly seeks to develop positive social and educational skills among young black males.
- There is a real commitment from all adults working in the school to raising the achievements of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more focused senior management team in which the principal and her assistant principals have clear individual areas of responsibility and accountability.
- Integrate the newly established middle school grades 6 through 8 fully into the school.
- Develop social studies teaching by assigning responsibility for developing this area of the curriculum, in line with other curriculum areas.
- Implement well-targeted professional development to make effective use of technology in individual classrooms in order to maximize its benefits in students' learning.
- Promote images of successful Black Americans, both in visual images and in writing, around the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

After a difficult start with inadequate premises in a former warehouse, the school now occupies a new purpose-built facility. Its real strength is in the range of data it draws on, the development of individual portfolios of students' work and the expectation that teachers will make use of this information to raise individual performance. This is a key aspect of the principal's plans for maximizing the potential of each student. Current statistics show that while the school is very successful at moving students on from level 1 to level 2, it still has work to do to get equally good results in moving students up to level 3. Now that it is fully established and is developing increasingly sophisticated data on individual performance, supported by effective intervention strategies, the school is in a very good position to make this breakthrough.

The new school buildings have been built some distance from the community that it serves. This creates difficulties in building positive home-school links, and also in gaining support from the community in which it is located, since no local children attend. The parent coordinator works hard and in a creative way to overcome this problem and is an effective member of the school team. Virtually all children are bussed to school, meaning that some are spending an hour at each end of the day getting to and from school.

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 well developed.

The collation and effective use of a variety of data is at the heart of the principal's vision for creating an effective school that maximizes individual learning. This is enabling the school to identify the needs of every student and to target specific strategies for improving individual performance. Students take a baseline assessment at the start of each grade, which is supplemented from a variety of assessment tools including ECLAS 2, Princeton Review, State and City standardized scores, running records, student portfolios and ongoing informal teacher assessments. Students' results in grade tests are broken down into three bands at each level, acknowledging the considerable range of scores possible within levels. This enables the school to implement a variety of strategies and appropriate interventions to meet individual identified need, such as targeting for after school support, Saturday school or summer school, each of which will have a specific focus.

Specific data enables the school to look at the progress of different groups of students, such as those from different ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students. The Saturday school program aimed at developing the educational and social skills of Black American middle school boys is a good example of how this information is used to benefit individuals.

Scores and test results are supported by the excellent practice of maintaining individual portfolios of each student's work. This is an effective tool for demonstrating progress over time.

All teachers maintain a baseline binder based on a common rubric, which is used to monitor individual progress. For students receiving additional support, the teachers provide evidence of performance and progress, including the interventions used, differentiation, the results of from classroom assessment data and reading levels. There is effective liaison between class or subject teachers and the academic intervention teachers who support students with the greatest needs. Clear rubrics also enable students to know what is good in their work and where it could be improved.

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 well developed.

The school is consistently effective in using the data it has on its students. Teachers collaborate well in their teams - grade teams in the elementary school and faculty teams in the middle school years. For example, in a grade 5 planning meeting, teachers showed a real commitment to using data to help them understand how they might best support the students in their classes.

However, in grades 6 through 8 where these teams have only recently been established, subject leadership and good practice have not been embedded. Across all grades no one has been designated for the leadership for the teaching of social studies to bring it into line with other curriculum areas.

The information the school has is used to target students through a range of interventions and support. The most recent is the introduction of Read -180. Students are fully involved and appear not to be feeling any stigma in receiving additional support. The school has been successful in getting the message across that all students are valued equally and all will have their needs met as far as possible.

Students are kept well informed of their progress every six weeks at the end of the marking period. Report cards are also sent home at this time, so parents are also fully aware of their child's progress. However, parental support is a real challenge because of the physical separation of the school from the community it serves. The parent coordinator works hard to overcome this, but it is not an easy journey for many who would be using public transport, and parent events are not well attended.

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 well developed.

In developing its curriculum and planning its teaching the school is influenced strongly by its review of data. An effective range of academic intervention strategies is targeted at those identified as needing additional support. It seeks to maximize the integration of its

facilities with those of the special education school with which it shares premises, including integration into lessons when this is supported by individual education programs.

There is effective grade and faculty leadership, with the exception of social studies which does not currently have an identified teacher to develop it. However, in the middle school grades, which are only in their second year at the school, there is room for the further strengthening of faculty organization and the ability to align data with classroom organization. The school has already started to address this issue.

Staffing decisions are driven by evidence of need. Staff responsible for academic intervention programs is very effective teachers, working closely with class teachers. Where it is appropriate they withdraw students from class to undertake one-on-one support. A form has been developed for recording additional support, keeping class teachers informed. This also records the students' attendance and lateness record, so that if this is a factor in holding back progress it is clear. Data has shown that few English language learners and special education students reach levels three and four and so this is a focus for the school this year.

Although the school has a Saturday school activity aimed at promoting the achievement of Black American boys, it does not do enough to promote positive images of successful contemporary Black Americans around the school in its display, in books and other printed material. Elsewhere, however, the quality of display is excellent. Much student art and written work is seen around the school and in classrooms, with meaningful comments alongside showing why it was assessed in the way it was and what would have made it even better. This supports students in their self-assessment and promotes high standards.

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 well developed.

Professional development is effectively aligned to established goals. For example, data showed that some teachers were struggling with the full implementation of all components of balanced literacy. The school researched programs, deciding that a particular program best met its needs and worked with teachers to introduce this effectively. The English language arts and mathematics coaches are effective in supporting staff through staff development and the promotion of high standards in teaching.

The school has developed an effective learning environment in which staff show a commitment to maximizing the learning of every student. Very good levels of staff retention and the encouragement of recently qualified teachers also reflect the spirit that is evident throughout the school. However, at the leadership level the team does not benefit from clearly defined areas of individual responsibility. Assistant principals do not currently have clearly defined areas of specific responsibility and, in particular, are not given sufficient autonomy in the grades for which they are responsible.

The principal is respected throughout the school by staff and students. She knows her staff very well, and undertakes formal and informal lesson observation on a regular basis. Teachers also undertake inter-class visitations to observe their colleagues. They also meet together regularly in order to plan their lessons, going beyond their formal contractual obligations. When additional support is needed, such as in the development of the middle school, there has been no reluctance to seek external support. The principal's mentor is a

retired middle school principal who is supportively her effectively in extending her expertise in elementary education into the middle school grades.

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 well developed.

The school has set up effective procedures through which it is able to track and monitor the progress of individual students. Some of these are quite recent in their implementation, further refining well-established practice. The school is aware that it needs to be able to shift the considerable numbers of students performing at level 2 up to the next level and has convincing evidence that this will be the case. The one area where good practice is not as well developed is in the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning. It is not being used effectively at present to support effective differentiation in the classroom.

What the school does really well is to use diagnostic assessment to measure progress. It uses this to look at the progress of individuals and of different groups. This brings an objectivity which gives the school a very clear picture of what needs to be done and of how successful it is in addressing.

As the school expands and reaches its planned capacity next year when it will gain its first Grade 8 students it has the ability to move further forward.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Public/Middle School 109	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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