



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Christa McAuliffe Intermediate School

Intermediate School 187

**1171 65th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11219**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Christa McAuliffe Intermediate School is a school for talented and gifted students. There are 1006 students enrolled from grade 6 through 8. The school comprises of 31 talented and gifted general education classes and three special education classes.

The majority of students are Asian (53%), 37% are White, 8% Hispanic and 2% are Black. Most students speak English proficiently and less than 2% are English language learners. This is a much lower proportion than similar and City schools. Most recent arrivals are from China and Russia. The proportion of special education students at 4% is much lower than similar and City schools, while attendance at 96% is higher.

The school is not Title 1 funded.

The school is structured around three academies. This academy structure is at the heart of all activities at the school. Each academy has a dedicated facilitator and guidance counselor, and each academy's teaching staff roster remains basically unchanged from year to year. Students remain within their academy along with their facilitator and most of their teachers.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective instructional leader, providing consistent and strategic support for students, parents and staff.
- The principal, administrators and staff consistently organize, analyze and use data to differentiate instruction that enhances student learning.
- There is a coherent and sequential data driven plan in place for students requiring academic interventions.
- The principal and staff share high expectations for themselves and for all students.
- There is a palpable collegial spirit among staff and a sense that their work is important, meaningful and effective.
- The school nurtures the academic, social and emotional dimensions of each student and understands the positive impact that self-esteem has on learning.
- All teachers and administrators participate in ongoing training focused on efficient and effective use of data.
- The pupil personnel committee is highly effective in focusing support for students most in need.
- High-level student engagement is reflected in the school's excellent attendance rates.
- Constant conversations among staff and administrators ensure that all have a common understanding of the school's goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue efforts to include all parents and more fully engage them in the life of the school.
- Build on the school's curriculum and instructional methodologies so that high achieving students have additional opportunities for self directed research and projects.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The school is highly effective. It is a model of best practices for these grades. The academy structure offers students and staff small, stable learning communities in which theme-based academic programs align and extend beyond state standards. Curricular decisions are made by consensus and reflect close attention to the needs of grades, classes and of individual students. The school focuses on the whole child and pays close attention to individual strengths and needs, both personally and academically. All stakeholders share high expectations. There is no sense of complacency among administration and staff who continually strive to enhance learning for individuals and groups.

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 school supplements the City assessment program with two additional formal assessments so that teachers can use the information as a baseline at the start of the school year to effectively differentiate instruction. The principal has invested in laptops and software for all instructional staff to enable the efficient collection and analysis of information from tests and the school's own extensive range of assessment data. Ongoing professional development has given teachers the necessary skills to organize and track performance and progress in tested subjects for individuals and all groupings of students by class and across grades and academies. Individual progress is monitored over time through personalized intervention plans developed originally for students in need. This includes students with high standardized test scores who struggle with academic or social development, and high performing students who benefit from self-determined learning experiences that appropriately challenge and engage them. Individual student's strengths and needs are continuously monitored through an analysis of knowledge and skills in State, City and the school's own tests and assessment tasks.

The school routinely compares its results from year to year and with similar schools to analyze strengths and areas for development in its performance and students' progress. As a result, the school established reasons for and is addressing some students' drop from levels 4 to 3 on last year's grade 8 English language arts test, a trend also seen in similar schools. Teachers are analyzing assessments with current 8th graders to determine if this is still a trend or whether targeted interventions are being successful. In addition, the principal and staff are revisiting the curriculum to ensure that differentiated learning experiences are sufficiently tailored to all students' needs. The school is now tracking students' performance and progress from the time they join until they leave the school, individually and by ethnic, gender and ability groupings. In its continual push for improvement, the school continues to track graduated students into their freshman year to judge the impact of the school's academic program on student success in high school.

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.

All staff work very well together, in and across academies, to set goals for individual students, classes and grades in all tested subjects. Goals are measured by student performance and progress, and have clear timescales for their achievement. Teachers analyze data, track student progress against existing goals, and revise these to scaffold next learning steps. Several structures are in place to support the process. For example, at grade level meetings staff analyze progress and plan together toward realization of year-long grade goals. They compare and analyze data and share instructional practices to support all students, individually and across the grade to meet and exceed goals.

The highly effective pupil personnel committee focuses on students most in need of support. Staff develop individual student plans and carefully monitor progress through ongoing assessment. Close communication between this committee, service providers and classroom teachers is maintained during formal and informal meetings throughout the week. All teachers keep assessment binders. Individual files show chronological progress from initial identification to current services. The school’s extended day program enables students’ to work face-to-face with an adult on specific skills. Special education students are carefully supported in their personal growth toward independence. The principal and staff share high expectations for themselves and for all students.

Parents are essential partners, expected to share dialogue about student performance through conferences and informal meetings. The principal is highly visible and accessible. He attends every parent teacher association meeting, providing curriculum overviews and key assessment information. Though parent involvement is good, there is still a group of less active parents. To improve this, the school is conferring with principals with similar student populations to identify possible strategies for successfully engaging all parents to help their children integrate and so support their education more fully.

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.

The school plans its curriculum using the School-wide Enrichment Model which supports the learning of all students equally. For instance, when English language learners needed additional support, staff developed a course designed to build contextual understanding through vocabulary development. As a result, the curriculum aligns with City and State mandates and the outcomes of the school’s analysis of data.

Teachers effectively analyze data to identify and align best practices with student needs, and skillfully assess and refine methods to differentiate for all groups, and for individuals in classes. High-level student engagement is reflected in the school’s excellent attendance rates. The school monitors attendance closely and all absence is followed up rigorously. When allocating funding, the administrative team reviews data to determine needs. For

example, when first appointed the principal identified the better use of technology as a high priority. He purchased laptops for teachers and new desktop and laptop computers for students' use. Texts to support instruction for higher achievers have been purchased.

Strategic staffing and scheduling decisions reflect the school's overall plan for improved student achievement, at and across grades and for every disaggregated group. For instance, recent data indicated that some high scoring 6th grade students struggled during classroom conversation, debates and public speaking. The principal engaged key staff to design and instruct a course that effectively built communication skills. Data indicates that identified students have made marked improvement. Additionally, a new 6-day cycle was established this year to allow sufficient time to implement the full academic scope of thematic programs. Though successful, the principal feels staff need more time to adequately reflect on practice and plans to further revise the schedule. He has also recognized the potential to build on the school's curriculum and instructional methodologies so that high achieving students have additional opportunities for self directed research and projects.

Teachers know students' personal and academic needs well and so during conferencing offer clear guidance on the development of skills and positive work habits. Students feel able to approach an adult with any concern. Building students' self-esteem is one of the school's key goals, believing that effective learning grows from good self-confidence. One of the school's most successful initiatives involves daily collaboration between general and special education students on projects, such as taking lunch orders for staff who eat in the Kid's Café, a student-run business that is part of the special education program.

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

The principal stepped into a school with a stable and high-functioning staff. He has successfully claimed his position as leader by honoring established excellence and involving teachers in the decision-making process. Under his leadership, the school has improved its use of data to drive decision-making at all levels, to continually improve an already highly successful school. When recruiting, the school looks for teachers with the skills and experience that match and support its identified needs. Applicants must demonstrate a passion for personal growth and a belief that every child can achieve.

Teachers actively participate in decisions about curriculum and instruction, and accept responsibility for student achievement. All staff are committed and involved in improving teaching and learning. Ongoing formal and informal meetings establish a cycle of review, implementation, evaluation and revision of the school's goals. Teachers take ownership of their professional development. For instance, teachers identified as a training priority the need to improve their skills to differentiate instruction. Subsequent workshops have been well attended. Teachers build capacity by observing effective teachers' classes to see best instructional practices on site and in similar schools.

The principal conducts ongoing observations and evaluations and regularly confers with teachers on how to improve their instruction. Constant conversations among staff and administrators ensure that all have a common understanding of the school's goals and curriculum implementation. All teachers are involved in ongoing evaluations of the academic programs. During grade-level study groups, teachers work together to assess

selected students' work in all grade classes. Performance and behavior are closely monitored for students at risk, through a report sheet carried through the day, on which each staff member comments on engagement, follow-through or cooperation. Homeroom teachers review sheets daily, using them to conference with students about goals and appropriate follow-up.

The principal is well respected. He has effectively implemented changes that have increased student performance every year. The school is very well run. A culture of respect and commitment to excellence permeates the school environment. In collaboration with community partners, students participate in a range of arts experiences and character building community service projects. Through long-standing relationships with academic institutions, for example with The New York Academy of Medicine and Maimonides Medical Center, interested students design and develop extensive research projects.

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.

Through well-structured committees and teams, the school constantly monitors, evaluates and reviews its work and effectiveness. Discussions focus on students' achievement against their interim and long-term goals which are used as measures to judge how well programs and plans are working. The work of the pupil personnel committee documents the reflective nature of this review process. Students' progress is very carefully evaluated with revisions made weekly, and sometimes daily, to interventions, programs and plans. The school is highly responsive to student needs and on improving academic outcomes. Never complacent, the principal and staff continue to self-monitor and strive for new understandings of how to teach so that students will thrive academically.

In weekly academy meetings teachers assess progress, for individuals and groups, against the school's curriculum goals. Together they review and compare progress of identified students across grades and subjects. Teachers who work directly with students discuss recent class work and the effectiveness of differentiated strategies. Goals, plans and programs are revised in response to evidence. Everyone is informed about concerns and agreed-upon actions because all academy members are present. Guidance counselors lead discussions, keep meeting notes and follow up with students, parents and teachers, should any concerns be expressed about individual students. Each year's review and an analysis of assessment data, lead to the setting of following year's goals.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Christa McAuliffe Intermediate School (IS 187)	∅	✓	+
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