



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Montauk Educational Center

Intermediate School 223

**4200 16 Avenue,
New York
NY 11204**

Principal: Gertrude Adduci

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Reviewer: Veronica Young

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well
What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation
How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Montauk Educational Center is a neighborhood intermediate school, catering for grades 6 through 8. It serves 720 students, with 33% English language learners and 17% special education students. Fifty percent of students are Hispanic, 18% are White, just over 5% are Black and the remainder is Asian or Pacific Islander. Thirty three languages are spoken in the school. Attendance rates, at 92.1% are higher than the City average and almost 97% of students are eligible for Title 1 funding which is much higher than the average for the City or similar schools.

The school is housed in a purpose built block dating from the 1920s. It has good facilities including two gymnasias and a large yard.

Montauk is a magnet school, which has enabled it to bring in motivational programs such as Symphony Space, Inside Broadway and the Globe Theater. It benefits from partnerships with other outside organisations such as the YMCA and the Botanical Gardens. Technology, enabled by an iTeach/iLearn grant, has been introduced in the form of tablet laptops which are given to each sixth and seventh grader.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is well respected by staff, students and parents and has the capacity to continue effecting change.
- The school has strong leadership by the principal and assistant principals who work well together to ensure the smooth running of the school.
- Lessons are well designed and challenging, with clear aims and objectives and a variety of teaching and learning strategies used.
- There is a coherent professional development program which gives opportunities for the sharing of good practice and peer modeling, as well as participation in regional and external events.
- Staff work collaboratively, with high expectations and a shared commitment to raise achievement levels and aspirations on class, grade and individual bases.
- There is a good range of academic interventions, both inside and outside school time, with proven benefits to performance levels.
- The academy system has given students the opportunity to work with teaching and learning strategies appropriate to their aptitudes and aspirations, and has helped to foster the supportive environment usually found in much smaller schools.
- There is a commitment to the use of internal and external data to individualize programs for individual students and groups.
- There is a well qualified, hard working and dedicated staff who work collaboratively with high expectations for themselves and their students.

What the school needs to improve

- Break down data into groups in the school other than English language learners and special education students, such as those identified in the annual school report.
- Develop further formal systems for small group goal setting across the school.
- Work on increasing parent participation in partnership with, for example, similar schools or community groups.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well developed features

The principal and her team have worked very hard to improve achievement levels and behavior in the school and this is reflected in improved performance. The students are well behaved and hard working in class and achievement levels are rising.

This has been helped by the school's organization into three academies, international, mathematics and science and artists and writers. Each of these is headed by its own assistant principal and teaching faculty, although the curriculum in each is the same. This system has enabled students with particular aptitudes and aspirations to be grouped together and taught in slightly different ways. A fourth assistant principal is responsible for special education students.

A third of students are English language learners and there are three bilingual classes at the school, two Spanish and one Chinese, as well as an academy devoted to international students. There is a high level of English as a second language input, and a weekly course for parents interested in learning to speak English. All three academies include special education, English language learner and collaborative team teaching classes.

Staff use data to inform class, grade and individual programs at the school and there is a good range of intervention strategies available, including extended day, after school activities, Saturday and summer schools. However, a lack of parental support and participation in their child's education has been problematic for many students who are unable to take full advantage of the opportunities available.

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 proficient with some well developed features

The principal breaks down any new data received by the school, such as nyStart, Princeton Review, NYSESSLAT results and Gains Report Exam History report for individual students, into a longitudinal study, broken down by grade, special education students and English language learners, and this is compared with data from similar schools. It is then distributed to assistant principals and teaching staff as a basis for program adaptation and professional development.

Levels of English acquisition for students in bilingual classes are compared to those of students in general education classes who are English language learners. English language learners' data is further broken down into ethnicity groups.

General education students are currently tracked on a class basis, with individual students being identified and tracked three times each year if there is parental or teacher concern or

students are dropping levels. The school plans to identify priorities for all students' individual performance. Other forums for discussion of grades and performance include instructional team meetings, grade meetings (each grade within an academy has a common prep); pupil personnel team meetings and subject meetings. However, achievements of sub-groupings in the school, such as by ethnicity, are not generally discussed.

Individual students are profiled in accountability reports, showing broken down levels in English language arts. Further individualization is carried out by skills in English language arts and mathematics assignments being identified and graded according to published rubrics. However, this emphasis on individualization means that data is not analyzed or interpreted according to specific groupings in the school.

Students who have been identified for intervention are carefully tracked and strategies are at three levels: the first two are classroom, then mandatory additional classes. If neither of these strategies proves to be working, testing by the school psychologist or for special education status is carried out.

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

Each year, three common expectations for students are published as a result of received data. These 'bottom lines' are used across the school and are expected to be seen in all lesson observations, thus becoming embedded in the minds of staff and students.

Cross-curricular skills are assessed from the New York Start statistics and used to differentiate work for groups of students, including grade levels, classes and academic subjects. In some cases this also includes groupings and pairings of students within classrooms. Some lesson plans reflect this differentiation. As yet, there are no personalized progress reports for individual students.

Particular attention is given to those students in greatest need of improvement. Pupil personnel team meetings for each academy take place monthly and are pivotal in ensuring appropriate academic intervention takes place. All levels 1 and 2 students receive intervention, plus any who drop levels. English language learning takes place either in bilingual classes which have been requested by parents, or with specialist English as second language teachers. Although data shows that English improvement is slower in the bilingual classes, some improvement has been made.

All teachers have high expectations for their students, and these are shared with parents. Parents are encouraged to come into the school and regular communication is made via letters and flyers in several languages. Translators are available for non-English speaking parents. However, many parents have little contact with the school other than at parent/teacher meetings, which are well attended. Education is not prioritized in the homes of many students, so although high expectations are shared with parents, they are not always continued at home. For example, one student was not able to attend after school classes because of having to look after younger siblings.

Higher achievement and goals for improving student performance and progress drives all activity in the school. The academy system has been instrumental in this, as the assistant principals can work with smaller numbers of students on a more concentrated basis, with those teachers who know the students very well. Grade, subject and academy meetings facilitate this for whole school and individuals as well as grades and classes, if not for other groupings in the school.

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 with some well developed features

The school uses the mandated curriculum for mathematics and English language arts, although Magnet funding has enabled further development of these curricula. This includes social studies and science across the school, in the form of a resource bank of lesson plans to develop ideas. These show different teaching methods and cover all learning styles. They can also be used for cross-curriculum activity, encouraging student collaboration. Strategies for the development and improvement of reading are emphasized and libraries have been expanded to encourage further reading, leading to raised expectations and achievement.

Each teacher is responsible for monitoring his or her own students’ test results and discussing intervention strategies at grade and pupil personnel team meetings. The common preparation times across grades facilitates this. Work is generally differentiated for students, especially those who are English language learners or have special needs, although students not deemed to need specific improvement are not always given differentiated work, for example, those who are high achievers.

All budgeting, scheduling and staffing decisions are driven by the needs identified in the data. The school budget, along with additional monies from the Magnet program, Title 1 funding and iTeach/iLearn grant has meant the principal has been able to deliver a good range of enrichment programs and to keep class sizes to below average. Lead teachers have been appointed in English as a second language and English language arts and these, along with the technology and literacy coaches, work closely with the rest of the staff to raise achievement. If specific mathematics expertise is needed over and above that already present in the school, it is bought in as required.

Attendance is given high priority. On the second day of absence, a call is made to the student’s home, and if the absence continues, the City intervention service is called in, for the student’s protection. If a student goes on vacation with a parent during term-time, the school insists on seeing the ticket, and the student is taken off-roll until she or he returns, when they must then re-register. Since these measures have been in place, attendance levels have been slowly improving,

The academy system has been instrumental in improving the engagement of students. Although the curriculum and achievement levels are the same in all academies, teaching and learning methods are geared towards the aspirations and interests of the students. For example, a science lesson in the artists and writers academy may result in art work and creative writing based on the topic, while the same lesson in the mathematics and science academy may result in more scientific investigation taking place. Students in class are well behaved and interested in their work and show a high degree of enthusiasm for learning.

The academy system has been largely responsible for the mutual respect and high expectations demonstrated in the school. The smaller structure of the academies means that staff and students know each other very well. Staff can respond to student need quickly and students feel there is always someone on the staff who can help them if they need assistance.

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 with some well developed features

Instructional staff are selected on their qualifications and high expectations for students. They are expected to be adaptable to student need and be willing to learn strategies which may be new to them, such as working with data. Use of programming based on data is well embedded in English and mathematics. Staff teaching other subjects are becoming more confident, following professional development in downloading, analyzing and interpreting data. One professional day per year is devoted solely to issues relating to data.

Internal formal professional development mainly takes the form of 'lunch and learn' sessions, in which staff work collaboratively to share good practice and to disseminate information from external training sessions. Outside trainers are sometimes brought in. Staff wishing to participate in other relevant training are able to access sessions provided by the region or external providers. Professional development contributes to improved teaching, although it is too soon to tell if it has improved learning and raised achievement.

Informal professional development is ongoing, and takes place within common preparation time and by peer observation in classrooms. The principal and assistant principals try to visit classes every day on an informal basis to observe teaching and learning, and teachers are formally observed once a year. Feedback is given formally only after formal observations, although informal observations may be commented on. Peer observation is encouraged and standardization of students' work is becoming more widespread as the benefits of sharing good practice are shown to improve teaching.

The youth development workers in the school, such as the psychologist, guidance workers, social workers and the deans, have regular input into pupil personnel team meetings and, often, grade and instructional team meetings, and are part of a students' support system to help achievement. Outside bodies, such as Symphony Space, The YMCA, The Globe Theatre and Inside Broadway enrich and broaden the curriculum for students and raise self esteem, this has a positive impact on academic performance.

The principal is highly respected by staff, parents and teachers and ably supported by the assistant principals. This means that there is good capacity for change and the school is able to run smoothly with good communications and clear messages. The academy system has made team working easy and cross school teams are being developed to work with other groupings within the school.

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 proficient.

The principal and her cabinet have high expectations of the school and every student in it, and this is reflected in the monitoring of students via meetings and school plans. There is a Comprehensive Education Plan which clearly outlines the priorities of addressing the performance of low achievers and identifying strategies for improving student performance across the school. It is seen as a living document throughout the school which is written by all the staff and available to anyone wishing to see it. It is constantly changed in the light of new data and identified needs.

Regular reports such as accountability reports in English language arts and mathematics, weekly attendance reports, report cards which are mandated four times per year and minutes of meetings all include short and long-term goals for the school and students broken down by class, grade and other groupings.

Individual students have rubrics included in every assignment and assessment in English language arts so they can understand their own performance grading. Long and short-term goals can then be set for each student. This is carried out throughout the school. Links between English and other areas of the curriculum are being developed, for example, reading skills in social studies, to expand the use of goal setting.

Student progress across classrooms and the school is regularly discussed at instructional meetings, subject meetings and at common preparation time. Interventions and plans are monitored by the principal and assistant principals, assisted by lead teachers and the literacy coach. Staff are quick to change strategies if they are found not to be working, and the academy system, which breaks the school population down into small 'mini-schools' means that interventions can be monitored constantly and changed easily. However, although these procedures are working well, the school is aware that there are some groupings in the school that are not yet analyzed sufficiently, for example, those based on ethnicity.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Montauk Educational Center (IS 223)	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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	