



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Ronald Edmonds Learning Center II

**Middle School 484
430 Howard Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11233**

Principal: Herbert Daughtry

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Reviewer: Betty Feibusch

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school is a new middle school currently serving grade 6 and growing to grade 8 by September 2008. The school serves the Ocean Hill - Brownsville community of Brooklyn. Currently, 74 students are enrolled. The students are 91% Black, 5% Hispanic and 4% Asian and other ethnic groups. The proportion of English language learners is 3% and the proportion of special education students is 1%. The school is eligible for Title 1 funding. Attendance averages at 90% is slightly below that of similar and City schools.

The school is located in a building housing a kindergarten through grade 8 school which is in the process of restructuring to serve kindergarten through grade 5 students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- There is a strong sense of purpose with high expectations throughout the school.
- The principal is well respected by all members of the school community.
- The staff fully endorses the principal's strategies and ambitions for the school.
- The majority of students are engaged, well behaved, and understand the mission of the school.
- There has been careful thought given to planning the arts and accelerated mathematics programs.
- The school looks at the emotional needs of its young people and designs its program around this holistic recognition.
- The students are respectful of the school environment and the opportunities to succeed.
- The staff provides lower performing students with opportunities to succeed.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase collaboration amongst teachers, students and parents to set high goals for student learning.
- Consistently gather data about individual students and sub-groups of students.
- Ensure that the curriculum and data is used to fully differentiate and challenge each student's learning potential.
- Strengthen instructional leadership, staff and capacity to use data to increase student performance.
- Develop a system of strategic, comprehensive interim assessments in order to improve student academic outcomes.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with proficient features.

In its first year, the school has set the foundation for a college-bound attitude as it develops its culture of high aspirations. Led by a thoughtful principal who consistently demonstrates high expectations for his students, there is a strong sense of purpose throughout the school. Some data collection about student performance has occurred in this first year, although a systematic process for collecting and analyzing data has not been developed. While there is some collaborative planning, the use of available data to understand students' next learning steps is not consistent.

The principal is proficient at aligning school resources and instructional activity to improve student outcomes, yet teachers' skills in differentiation is not a strong feature of the school. Development of instructional capacity is a high priority for the principal, as evidenced by the effective professional development program, whose implementation is followed up with classroom observations. While the faculty meets regularly to assess student achievement, the school does not have a systematic process to measure and monitor student and school-wide progress towards established goals.

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.

As a new organization, the school was faced with a lack of information and records on its incoming students. During the summer bridge program, those students who attended were given baseline assessments which were used to identify needs for academic intervention service. The remaining students were assessed early in the school year. Many records of students with individual educational plans were not located until well into the academic year. The school's plan for development and implementation of a comprehensive system to track student progress on interim assessments has not been realized. Teachers use student class work and assignments as a basis for assessment, but there is no systematic structure to generate data and monitor individual student progress or the performance and progress of classes or subgroups such as special education students or English language learners. The school does track students' reading levels and visually displays the initial and midyear level of each student, by class and in relation to the end of year benchmark. The school also monitors the progress of its lowest performing students through the record-keeping undertaken by its academic intervention staff.

The principal is beginning to measure student progress by gender and is developing work with gender through instructional groupings. He is in the process of working with a commercial interim assessment system to provide question banks and rapid feedback to further inform instruction through a better understanding of performance and progress of students. With the development of this and other interim assessments the school is in a

position to improve data analysis, thereby affording them the opportunity to use it more efficiently to inform instruction. Because the school is in its first year it has not measured its performance against other schools or with the school's own past performance.

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.

The principal, teachers and parents articulate high student expectations for the students, who respond positively to them. The students note that 'they call at home' for attendance as well as if 'you do something good.' Parents are pleased that the school mission and activities are focused on the development of a college-bound attitude among its young people. The high goals set for the school are also clear. Throughout the school, print messages affirm the value of education, achievement, and a college-bound attitude.

As a new small school, there is a collegial approach to planning and setting goals for student achievement for class, grade and academic subject levels. Faculty planning is evident in the consistency of the English language arts lessons and choice of theme for the class text. Modifications are made in the delivery of the lesson, based on student response to instruction. For example, some students were engaged in planning a dramatization of a narrative text while others were learning the new vocabulary prior to engaging in the text.

Instructional staff modify plans for students based on their current performance and progress. Student class work and homework are used to develop plans and timeframes for reaching objectively measurable goals. For example, when student weakness in mathematical skill became apparent, teachers collaboratively revised their instructional plans prior to implementing Impact Mathematics. Currently, classroom teachers use class assessments, unit tests, homework and periodic assessments to determine student learning and identify their next teaching moves. Academic intervention is provided by two core faculty members, as well as by classroom teachers, who work with students in greatest need of improvement in a small class setting to deliver focused instruction.

While students are beginning to participate in school goal setting, through the student council, parents are not yet as involved in this endeavor. Additionally, teachers do not use data systematically to understand each student's next learning steps and redefine student goals.

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 school plans and implements its curriculum based on student need for accelerated learning and on its ability to provide meaningful data. Initially the school planned to provide a balanced literacy program, however, based on data showing the specific needs of the students, the school decided to utilize Ramp Up, a more scaffolded approach to the

development of literacy skills. High interest books are provided across reading levels, so that students can access the curriculum at various points.

The principal holds teachers accountable for good quality instruction through frequent observations. Faculty members hold each other accountable to strong student outcomes through frequent conversations about each student and collaborative goal setting focused on student achievement.

Decisions around budget, staffing and scheduling are made based on student need. For example, the school chose to purchase the services of a high-quality arts partner to promote student achievement in their chosen talent areas. Additional faculty time for academic intervention services is scheduled as a result of the analysis of updated student data. This thoughtful scheduling allows weekly afternoon planning time and faculty development while students are engaged with the arts partner.

While many students are actively engaged in classroom activities, differentiated instruction is not consistent throughout the school. The dramatization of text, use of mathematics manipulatives, and daily challenges posted in the hallway serve to further involve students in their learning. Students know and trust adults in the building. They are able to talk to the principal or their teachers with personal or academic concerns. They are engaged in advisory and gender groups which help them build connections to adults in the building and raise self esteem. Higher rates of student attendance are a growing feature of the school and are closely monitored, with parents being regularly updated of outcomes.

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.

Staff members are selected by the principal based on their potential to use data to set high expectations for academic performance. There is a strong commitment to professional development. Topics for inquiry are chosen based on staff interest, student performance as well as the principal's identification of needs. Based on the learning needs the students presented early in the school year, staff expressed interest in attending workshops on differentiated instruction. Several staff members attended the workshop and brought back information and strategies to their colleagues. Teachers have incorporated instructional strategies from classroom inter-visitations, visits to the Ronald Edmonds Learning Center and other professional development programs into their classroom practice.

The principal frequently visits classrooms to identify strategies for improved instructional delivery and to ensure teachers are implementing what they learned in professional development sessions. The principal and faculty meet to establish and revise plans. As the school grows to scale, more teams will be formed to allow collaboration across grade levels and content areas to impact further upon instruction.

The school runs smoothly, the students follow rules and act with respect toward adults and peers. The principal is well respected and has the capacity to bring about change.. Teachers support the ideas presented by the principal and appreciate that he includes them in decision making. Students acknowledge the principal's efforts in establishing the student council, provision of various enrichment activities including visits to historically Black colleges and his belief in their efforts for positive behavior. Parents are especially

appreciative of the positive changes in their students' academics and behavior over the course of the year.

The connection with a community based arts partner, as well as the school's collaboration with the guidance staff, psychologist and other supports located on the school campus are used to effectively achieve academic goals.

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 faculty meets regularly to assess how students are progressing, based on their class work, homework and behavior, and plans are revised based on this information. However, since the system of interim diagnostic assessments has not yet been implemented, and comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are not presently made, teachers are not able to modify interim and final goals based on this data.

The school's Comprehensive Education Plan is not yet being used strategically to drive the activity of the school. The school checks the progress of its students at designated times through assessment of each student's reading level. Benchmarks to measure student and school progress have not been established and, as a result, not all plans are changed midcourse to meet the goals of accelerating student learning.

In its first year, the school has focused its attention on making its mission come alive and developing a school wide culture of high expectations. It is now well placed to incorporate strategic student goal setting into its culture as it continues to grow to scale.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Ronald Edmunds Learning Center II (MS 484)	∅	✓	+
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 knows and respect students and responds 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		