



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Edward R. Murrow High School

High School 525

**1600 Avenue L
Brooklyn
NY 11230**

Principal: Anthony R. Lodico

Dates of review: January 8 - 11, 2007

Reviewer: Roy Storrs

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

Information about the school

Edward R. Murrow High School serves approximately 4000 students in grades 9 -12. Students are attracted from the entire borough of Brooklyn because of the school's strength in the performing and visual arts. They apply for admission through the education option program and are admitted so that the intellectual composition of each class is 16% above reading level, 16% below reading level and 68% spanning the range in-between. The school serves an ethnically diverse population with approximately 37.8% White students, 27.4% Black students, 20.3% Asian students and 14.5% Hispanic students. Approximately 394 students receive special education services including 97 who are ambulatory. Three hundred and ninety nine students are English language learners. At 91.4%, attendance is slightly higher than similar schools and significantly higher than city schools. Sixty percent of the students are female. The school benefits from a stable and well-qualified staff.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has the confidence, respect and support of the whole school community.
- The principal is a true educator and provides exceptional leadership with the students' welfare at the heart of his mission.
- The principal is supported by an enthusiastic, talented and cohesive cabinet and a dedicated, hard-working staff who are committed to high standards.
- This high achieving school promotes an inclusive culture in which every student matters; students feel respected and supported in their development.
- Effective use of data underpins the school's work.
- The school offers students a wealth of opportunities through the mandated curriculum, electives and extra-curricular activities.
- Students are mature and self disciplined and demonstrate genuine concern for one another.
- Displays of the work of students are of a very high quality.
- Staff and pupils take pride in their exceptional achievements.
- The school's excellent sense of community is actively promoted by the parent coordinator.

What the school needs to improve

- Teachers ensure that students in all classes experience high quality instruction which engages and motivates them.
- Set in place a tighter schedule for freshmen, to ensure they keep on track leading towards greater student autonomy in subsequent grades.
- Consider providing a schedule with fewer changes of teachers for lower achieving general education students as an alternative to the four cycle year.
- Look for ways to reduce further the numbers of students cutting class.
- Review the use of space to create more private study areas especially for freshmen students.
- Train and utilize senior students as peer counselors.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The Edward R Murrow High School is a unique, popular and successful school. The principal was appointed two and half years ago following the retirement of the founding principal. He provides inspirational leadership focused on every student having the best possible education. These qualities have won him the confidence, respect and support of the staff, students and parents. He and the talented, cohesive cabinet lead a dedicated, hard-working and stable faculty who are committed to achieving high standards. Teachers and students respect one another. Students are aware that the school has high expectations of them and the majority rise to the challenge. They behave well, concentrate in class and take advantage of the wealth of curricular opportunities available to them. A particular strength of the school is the amount of freedom it offers its students who consequently gain in maturity and self-discipline. The school environment is enriched by displays of exceptional art work which exemplify the high standards to which the school aspires. In spite of the high number of students on campus and the vastness of the building, clear and effective systems and the staff's conscientiousness ensure the school runs smoothly and efficiently.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently 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 has very effective systems for collecting and utilizing a wide range of data. The school customizes this data, which is enhanced by additional information from its own internal assessment systems, to track the performance and progress of individual students and to identify trends over time. The system generates cyclical reports eight times a year indicating the success rates of classes, grades and academic subjects. Any concerns are addressed swiftly. Assistant principals discuss the reports with teachers in their departments to plan ahead. The assistant principal for security and discipline and the deans investigate those students not succeeding due to factors such as poor attendance or cutting classes. An additional benefit of the effective data management system is that the school is able to interrogate the data and pull down reports in response to teachers' specific queries.

The school benefits from a wide mix of students and the data identifies performance by the various ethnic groups and that of English language learners. With an imbalance of three female to two male students, the school is aware of the need to compare student performance by gender and to address any anomalies. Detailed information is collected and progress tracked conscientiously for the very high proportion of special education students which includes 97 ambulatory students who integrate well into school life.

The principal and cabinet monitor and analyze overall performance rigorously keeping them alert to the achievements of all groups of students enrolled at the school. They follow the progress of each cohort to reveal how each grade is performing over time and are constantly measuring their performance against similar schools. Importantly, they use the information very effectively to determine action for improvement.

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.

This high achieving school promotes an inclusive culture in which every student matters. The principal, cabinet and teachers are committed to the achievement of high standards and students feel respected and supported in their academic and personal development. Very good use of available data ensures the school has detailed knowledge of the students’ progress. Results of internal tests set by teachers and observation of students provide complementary evidence. Each assistant principal and members of their department work collaboratively to set clear, measurable short- and long-term goals for individuals and groups of students. The principal and cabinet include these goals in their draft of the Comprehensive Education Plan which covers every aspect of the school’s performance at every level drives the work the school. Being a ‘living document’ it is amended regularly as the situation changes.

Careful analysis of data enables the school to set goals for students in greatest need. These include second language learners and students still achieving at Levels 1 & 2. Very detailed, individualized education plans for special education students state their specific needs and the programs required to address these. The special education teachers are very supportive towards these students and to their parents. Each student’s progress is monitored constantly, culminating in an invaluable annual review involving relevant staff, the student and their parents/caregivers.

The school works hard to ensure that parents/caregivers are fully involved in their children’s education. The school keeps parents fully informed of its activities. The highly regarded parent coordinator is diligent in sending by email and in hard copy a weekly newsletter detailing school events and runs a number of education classes for parents. Whenever possible, information is provided in the student’s home language. Parents appreciate this information and the opportunities to discuss their children’s progress. They value the eight informative written reports they receive each year, the four parent teacher conference and the fact that they are able to view their children’s individual files at any time.

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 has high aspirations for all its students. Counselors guide students in selecting from a wealth of classes through the mandated curriculum, electives and extra-curricular activities. They are very effective, but over-stretched. The school operates a four cycle

year which means that students' entire programs change regularly. While most students are stimulated and challenged by this arrangement, the lower achievers find it more difficult. Academic elements are complemented by a rich diet of art, drama, dance and music. Numerous students excel in these subjects.

Teachers recognize their accountability, so plan and differentiate their instruction accordingly. Consequently, their assessments have a strong influence upon course selection and ensure that students are on appropriate programs and make good progress. Students with special talents are enrolled in the music or art institute which enables them to devote more time to these subjects. High achieving students in other subjects are offered a variety of accelerated and enrichment classes in which they receive instruction to meet their needs. Similarly, the analysis of data enables faculty and counselors to take prompt action in initiating intervention programs or to intensify support for individual students. Students who have fallen behind have the opportunity to enroll in additional classes held after school and on Saturday mornings. Currently, 320 students attend these classes regularly and are making good progress.

Decisions about budget and staffing are clearly driven by the goals stated in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Some freshmen have difficulty organizing themselves and do not make best use of their free periods. Consequently, these students fail to accumulate sufficient grades during the year. They are assigned to 'Liberty House' in which they work with specific teachers and a counselor. While this initiative helps the students catch up and return to main stream classes, they have lost the potential benefit of their first year at the school.

For the most part, students are attentive, concentrate in class and are very well behaved because the instruction engages their interest. However, instructional leaders are aware that practice is inconsistent. The school is a community in which the staff regularly demonstrates how well they know and respect their students. Students appreciate this and the fact that there is always someone in whom they can confide. While attendance is good compared to other schools across the City, the school is not complacent and follows clear procedures when a student is absent. Similarly, newly introduced strategies have successfully reduced by 25% the number of students cutting class. These include a 'sweep room' where students apprehended in corridors are detained until the start of the next class. However, the number of students cutting class is still unacceptably high.

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 school is diligent in its staff selection process ensuring that new appointments at all levels have the necessary analytical and pedagogical skills to help achieve the school's high expectations. As a consequence, the school has many excellent members of staff. Professional development focuses on the areas needed to achieve the goals set in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Each academic year begins with imaginative whole school and departmental training based on these goals, this year encapsulated in the four 'A's, accountability, attendance, attitude and achievement. Ongoing discussions within departments led by assistant principals and mentoring of new teachers maintain the initiative. In addition, teachers attend conventions and courses to update their subject skills as part of the drive for higher achievement.

The principal and cabinet observe teachers regularly. Newly appointed assistant principals are supported in the techniques of observation and giving constructive feedback to ensure parity across the school. As a result of this process the leaders know the strengths of the teachers and areas that need developing, enabling them to provide appropriate professional development. While self- and peer-assessments take place they are less well established. Every department reviews its work systematically following agreed procedures. Teachers who do not achieve their targets are required to explain their statistics and how they plan to increase the pass rate. The school is quick to provide appropriate support to help them improve.

The principal is held in high esteem by staff, students and parents who recognize that 'he is here for the students'. He is an exceptional leader with total commitment to the welfare of his students. Parents and students alike appreciate his involvement in every aspect of school life. As a result he commands respect and has already shown his capacity to effect change for the better. The school has a stable and well-qualified staff. Instructional leaders, faculty and counselors are equally dedicated to the school and play their parts well. Despite its size the school runs smoothly due to clearly defined procedures which are followed conscientiously. The students' mature attitudes also contribute effectively to the disciplined yet friendly culture prevalent in the school. The school has forged numerous beneficial links with outside agencies, support services and community groups, all directed at improving performance.

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 principal and his cabinet have high aspirations for the school and its students. The CEP provides the rationale for their work. The administration is diligent in regularly reviewing progress in meeting the needs of the students, drawing upon all the available data. The school's leadership team is influential in suggesting revisions to the CEP which constitutes a valuable form of objective monitoring. Members of each department make periodic checks of each student's progress using the data and interim assessments. These reveal which students are failing, enabling them to modify their goals and instructional programs to support those students. While departments compare student progress within their subjects they do not, as a matter of course, share information to compare individual students' progress across classes and subjects.

The school is considering its performance constantly. The principal, cabinet and staff at all levels assume responsibility for assessing students' progress against stated goals and for revising plans according to new circumstances. While the goals stated in the CEP are precise, the school sees the need to be flexible in order to be able to revise them to meet new circumstances. In practice, the school sees the planning process as never ending.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edward R Murrow High School (HS 525)	∅	✓	+
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