



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Central Park East Middle School

Intermediate School 013

**1573 Madison Avenue
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Jacob Michelman

Dates of review: January 22 - 23, 2007

Reviewer: Georgie Beasley

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Central Park East Middle School has 450 students enrolled from grade 6 through 8. The school's population comprises 48% Hispanic, 50% Black and 2% from other backgrounds. The proportion of English language learners is 6%. This is about half of what it is in similar schools. Around 22% of the school's population is special education students. This is a much larger proportion than typically found in similar and City schools. The school receives Title 1 funding. The average attendance, at 87%, is below similar and City schools.

The school has been subject to restructuring for two years resulting in unstable staffing, including four principals in as many years. The current principal has built a more stable staff and has three grades in school for the first time. This means that grade 6 and 7 students started at the same time in September and only grade 8 students have been at the school for longer than a year.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal's strong, clearly communicated and purposeful leadership is rapidly bringing about positive change.
- The assistant principal, directors, teachers and other staff give very good support to the principal in establishing and reinforcing a more positive school climate.
- The principal, assistant principal and directors are highly visible and available and, together with staff, ensure that the school runs smoothly.
- The principal and staff know students well and so relationships are mostly positive.
- Teachers are generally committed and dedicated to the school and, for the most part, manage behavior in their classes effectively.
- A varied range of extra activities enrich students' experiences and the additional tutoring sessions give students valuable support to help them move up a level.
- Good emphasis is given to students' personal development.
- Partnerships with Teachers' College give good structure and extension to the curriculum and teaching in English.
- Behavior and attendance have improved due to rigorous and consistent procedures to follow up poor attendance.
- Effective partnerships with parents and community groups has gained trust, confidence and support and raised the profile of the school in the local community.

What the school needs to improve

- Use data to set school goals which are measured and tracked against the performance of classes, grades and different groupings of students, including those who are close to moving up to the next level.
- Analyze and evaluate data to monitor and revise students' long term and interim goals which focus on raising performance in English and mathematics.
- Use data more effectively to plan instruction for individuals and targeted groups of students.
- Ensure goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan are measured against student progress and reviewed regularly.
- Increase the number of students moving from special education classes into mainstream classes.
- Continue the good work to improve attendance and behavior of the small minority of students who still challenge the school.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.

The principal has high aspirations that students can and will do well. He has been successful in building a very effective team that is rapidly turning around a school with significant problems to one that has a positive climate and is becoming more successful in its aims and goals. He is respected by staff, students and parents. With a sharp eye for detail, he has worked closely with staff to successfully tackle the school's previous issues head-on. Good emphasis on developing student's personal skills and relationships has improved the culture of the school tremendously. All students have the potential to be included on the principal's Honor Board because focus is on both personal and academic endeavors. Good support from the administration team reinforces the school's high expectations of student progress, behavior and conduct. Students now know exactly where they have to be and when. Behavior is managed well so only a minority of students spoil the learning of others. Although attendance is still too low, more students come to school regularly because they have a renewed motivation to succeed. Teaching is more engaging, particularly in English and social studies when assessment data is used proficiently to match learning to individual student's needs. Systems make sure the school runs smoothly and give staff the structures they need to review their practice and students' performance. However, these are too new to be fully embedded and there has been too little time for them to be reviewed. As a result, there is only a small amount of evidence so far to judge that their effectiveness long term is secure.

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.

The school has gathered a good range of test data which gives it a clear overall understanding of how well students are performing at the end of each grade. In addition it carries out regular assessments to build up an accurate picture of what each student is able to do in English, mathematics and science across the school, and social studies in grade 8. The school compares each student's performance against the results of state and City tests and how well it is doing compared to other City and similar schools. The data is collated by class and grade so the school can compare how well different students do in different classes and how much improvement there has been in each grade on previous years. The school has an accurate view of how different groupings are doing, for example it knows that girls do better than boys in English and that students who were previously performing at level 1 and who received intervention programs improved their test scores last year. It identifies students who are 'on the cusp' of moving up a level and keeps a closer check on their performance. It is now ready to transfer the information into measurable goals that set out the school's expectations for each student's attainment at the end of each year.

The school keeps a close eye on how well different ethnic groups, English language learners and special education students are doing and recognizes that some students can do even better. It has included a goal to identify special education students' potential more rigorously and to aim for more of them to be taught in mainstream classes more often.

The school compares performance in English, mathematics and science and recognizes that, due to a more structured and rigorously planned curriculum and teaching, improvement in students' performance is better in English and science than in mathematics.

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 undeveloped.

The school uses data effectively to identify goals for special education students and those who receive academic intervention services. It does not use data sufficiently well to set goals for each student's achievement at the end of every year. This means that the school does not have benchmarks against which to monitor and check whether students are making enough progress to achieve their goals and so reach their potential. Goals set for the school respond to data, but are not measured in terms of student performance or progress and so are not yet objective enough. Special education students have good support but there are still too few moving into mainstream classes as a result of intervention. Data from the Princeton Review is just beginning to be used effectively to identify gaps in students' knowledge and skills. It does not give the school clear enough information about whether students are moving up through a level because currently most students are performing at a level below expectation. Good partnership with Teachers' College helps the school to set interim goals in English which are helping teachers to plan instruction based on individual and group needs. The system is not yet embedded or used consistently well by all teachers because it is still fairly new.

All staff, students and parents are fully committed and focused on improving student performance to help them achieve the school's high expectations of them. The school uses data well to identify students who have the potential to move up a level and successful intervention programs resulted in more students moving from level 1 to level 2 in English this year. Clinics with these students and their parents enable good information to be shared and so that everyone involved has a clear understanding of precisely what each student needs to do to improve. Parents of other students receive an appropriate amount of information about their children's performance and progress and give support to learning at home.

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 undeveloped with proficient features.

The school now ensures that students receive the mandated curriculum through well structured schedules put together by leaders and teachers. The curriculum is enriched through a new and varied range of before and after school activities which provide valuable extension and support to students' learning. Students talk eagerly about the newly formed basketball team and their involvement has helped many to gain a renewed enthusiasm for school. Students relished the chance of beating the staff in a recent match. Visits to places of interest give added enrichment and engage students' learning.

Partnerships with the Teachers' College and organizations in the local community and further afield are giving the curriculum valuable extension and structure.

The school now has access to written learning goals detailing the knowledge and skills all students need to learn and develop. These are yet to be shared with teachers so that they can use them when planning lessons. As a result, too much focus in some lessons is still on what tasks they are expected to do, or the learning habits they are expected to use, rather than on what they are expected to learn or skills they are expected to develop. Teachers know students' personal and academic needs well, but the absence of secure data until recently has hampered their ability to fully match learning to individual need and so accelerate progress. Consequently, practice is still too inconsistent across classes.

Systems for decision making have recently been put into place by the new principal and his administration team. Decisions about the budget, resources and staffing are now based on a careful evaluation of what is needed to implement agreed programs and interventions. In response to students' poor performance, the school reorganized lesson schedules by putting tutoring time at the beginning of the day and including a daily writing, reading and mathematics workshop which have helped to raise standards in these subjects.

Students find most lessons interesting and are generally engaged for most of the time. Strong links between some English and social studies makes learning relevant and so students listen and are attentive. Good emphasis is given to students' personal development and so students are beginning to feel valued. For example, the student committee has played a large role in agreeing the new reward systems for encouraging good behavior and organizes and runs school events. Behavior has improved greatly both in and out of lessons resulting in a significant reduction in suspensions this year. Leaders and staff reinforce high expectations of good behavior with good humor and respect for students. Some students always behave well but the unacceptable behavior of a small minority of students disrupts and spoils the learning of others in some classes. Attendance is a high priority and has improved significantly this year. Rigorous systems recognize good attendance and reasons for all absence are chased up immediately. The school is now shifting its focus to improving lateness.

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.

Since his appointment, the principal has established a team that is focused on raising the performance of each student both academically and personally. Senior staff and teachers are selected carefully and only after showing a commitment and dedication to help the school move forward from its previous weak standing. Teachers meet in teams to evaluate plans and look at data. This information is currently given to teachers by the administration team but some teams are taking responsibility for analyzing and using data themselves to plan action for student improvement.

The principal and his administration team are very effectively bringing about change for the better. Procedures are clear and consistently followed by those responsible and so the school runs smoothly. Students move around the building calmly and generally get along extremely well. Good partnerships with parents, outside agencies, local colleges and

institutions are bringing about exciting initiatives which help the school and students achieve their goals.

Professional development correlates well to data analysis and several successful initiatives and programs have led to improved instruction in most classes. The school's focus on gathering and analyzing data has started to give teachers the skills they need to differentiate instruction. Regular grade and instructional team meetings review student performance and so give teachers a wider overview of what each student, class and grade know and understand. As a result, some teachers are beginning to use data more effectively in classes to match work to individual and groups of students' needs. Discussions are open and honest and there is a clear focus on driving improvement. Goals are not yet specific enough to make the process really objective. However, clear evaluation of programs and interventions are helping the school to adjust plans and instruction, especially in English, science and social studies.

The principal and assistant principal regularly visit classes. Discussions before and after the visits help teachers to identify what is going well and what still needs to be done to improve the quality of instruction. Teachers give each other good support through discussions during the day and when they have the chance to watch each other teach.

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 with some proficient features.

The school goals in its Comprehensive Education Plan range from being too general to being well focused. For example, its goals for raising the performance of the school's lowest achievers in English, mathematics and science identified a specific measure of expected performance. As a result, the school has effectively monitored the performance and progress of students who receive intervention programs and those who are on the cusp of moving up a level. The successes in English and science are due to the careful tracking of interim goals against programs and instruction which gave more focus to the teaching of skills as well as knowledge. The school was less successful in mathematics because data was not used so well to set interim goals. The school's other long term goals are not linked sufficiently well to individual student's potential performance. For example, the goals set for students are too general and do not record the specific levels that the students are expected to reach. As a result, the school is able to note whether it has improved but not whether it has improved enough.

Goals in the Comprehensive Education Plan are reviewed formally three times a year to see if they are still relevant, require any adjustment and to identify further professional development needs. Discussions draw together the work of the varied committees and teams. Each year's goals grow from the previous ones and focus on improving the quality of instruction in order to raise each student's personal and academic performance and accelerate their progress. However these are not yet linked closely enough to student's performance goals for the school to effectively track how well it is doing to drive up achievement.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Central Park East Middle School IS13	∅	✓	+
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.	∅	✓	+
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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		