



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Middle School 322

**4600 Broadway
Manhattan
NY 10040**

Principal: Erica Zigelman

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Reviewer: Tim Boyce

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Middle school 322 was opened in July 2005 and shares the Salome Urena Campus with IS 218, a similarly sized and well established middle school and MS 293, a much smaller middle school that is part of the City Empowerment Zone. The school provides education for 551 students from grade 6 through to 8. All of the students are from Hispanic backgrounds and the majority of homes have Spanish as their first language. Just under a half of the students are English language learners, while a further eighth of them are special education students.

The percentage of students with Title 1 eligibility is 100% which is much higher than is usually found throughout the City. Attendance is higher than in similar schools or City schools. The school is located on two floors in an attractive and well maintained building.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal, who has high expectations of all staff and students, provides the school with clear and effective leadership.
- There is very good communication between the members of the school's administration team, the coaches and the lead teachers.
- The school is very effective in enabling the students to develop self discipline.
- The staff form very positive relationships with the students, often based on empathy and shared experiences.
- Absences are followed up rigorously to ensure that students are in school and ready to learn.
- There are well developed procedures for the professional development of the instructional staff.
- A wide and interesting range of out of school activities are provided for the students.
- Good use is made of the limited range of data that is currently available to align instruction to the needs of the students.
- High quality portfolios of student work are being developed.

What the school needs to improve

- Raise standards of achievements in all subjects.
- Further develop the differentiation of teachers' planning so that work is better matched to the needs of all the students.
- Continue to gather performance data about the students and use it to guide the planning of the curriculum.
- Continue to raise levels of subject knowledge of the relatively inexperienced staff, particularly in science.
- Continue to develop assessment materials so that work is consistently challenging for all students.
- Further develop the links with parents so that they are more involved in the education of their children.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with important strengths, but some key aspects that require further development.

This relatively new school has gone through some very challenging times since its foundation in the summer of 2005 and has now established an effective climate for learning that is beginning to serve its students well. Standards of behavior are much improved and the number of suspensions is considerably reduced from last year.

The school is making good use of the available data and is developing some very effective procedures to track the progress of all its students as they move through the school. The principal and her administrative team are well aware that levels of achievement were not good enough last year, and have put in place a range of measures to improve the quality of education. As a result, there has been a significant investment in the professional development of the teachers. This has improved the quality of instruction in the school, which is now at least proficient in almost all lessons. Parents and students are developing pride in their school and appreciate the hard work being invested by the principal and her administrative team.

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 is making good use of the rather limited range of assessment data that is available so far to gain a developing picture of the academic and personal development of each student. In addition, it is now developing its own assessments so that instructional staff have a better understanding of the performance of each student. Test data, particularly the Gains Report, is analyzed carefully by the principal and the administrative team to discover whether students in each class and grade level are making at least the expected progress. This analysis, which has been shared with all staff, reveals that levels of achievement were not up to the required standard last year. This was at a time when the climate for learning had not yet been established and there were numerous incidents of indiscipline that disrupted the quality of learning in too many classes. This problem has now been resolved and the school has a calm environment that encourages students to concentrate on their learning. Particular care is taken to track the progress of English Language Learners and special education students.

The principal and leadership team has a clear understanding of the school's performance in comparison with similar schools and with schools City-wide. They know that much work still needs to be done if a larger proportion of students are going to achieve the expected level, particularly as, currently, only 17% of students are achieving the expected standard in English language arts and mathematics. Since staff and students now know what is

expected of them they are working hard to raise the academic and personal standards of all students.

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 and her administrative team are using the data at their disposal to set realistic and challenging goals for all the students. Teaching staff are now developing detailed plans and timeframes for reaching these goals. The teachers are aware that, because of basic weaknesses in their literacy skills, many students have great difficulty understanding the meaning of questions asked in class even though they may know the answers. While the teachers are working hard, and effectively, to develop the students’ general and technical vocabularies, more could be done to identify the key words to be used during lessons and share these with the students at the start of tasks. In a science lesson, for example, students were applying themselves enthusiastically and were greatly enjoying experimenting with various materials to try and make a solution even though none of them actually knew what a solution was in the context of the exercise. Therefore, work is needed to make sure that students have constant access to dictionaries and word banks.

The goals set for specific students are reviewed regularly at faculty and grade conferences when staff meet together to evaluate and discuss the success of particular programs and any students causing concern. In addition, teaching staff are learning to adjust their teaching programs to meet the needs of the students in their teaching groups as they gain a greater understanding of the students’ needs. The school is now developing more effective strategies for identifying those most vulnerable students who are not making the expected progress. It also effectively tracks the progress made by special education students and English language learners.

The expectations that instructional staff have of the students are now rising and students are developing a much clearer picture of how well they are doing in each curricular area. They also know what they need to do to perform at an even higher level. The school is still developing its partnership with parents. While a small number of parents and care givers work closely with the school, much more work needs to be done to involve greater numbers of parents. In addition to the frequent reports they receive on how well their children are progressing, the parents are invited to come in to school at regular intervals to examine work and discuss wider educational issues. Nonetheless, there is still work to do to explain the significance of a good education and what the school is trying to achieve.

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 is developing its curriculum to meet the needs of students as identified by a regular analysis of the available assessment data and is aware, for example, that many students have difficulty decoding written questions in mathematics and science. Regular

interim assessments are set and the school is building a picture of the ongoing progress of each cohort and class in each curricular area as they move through the school. A careful analysis of the available data led, for example, to the decision to provide the current grade seven classes with significant additional support to help them make good identified areas of weakness.

Staff are appointed in response to a careful analysis of data. Curriculum time and other resources are allocated to meet the needs of the students as indicated by the regular assessments and the instructional staff are held to account by the principal for the progress of all of the students in their charge. The school is working hard to develop an extensive and interesting range of extra-curricular activities and recently the students greatly enjoyed their involvement in a mock trial activity, where they achieved significant success.

Subject coaches for English, language, arts and for mathematics are effective both in supporting staff and in the sharing of best practice throughout the school. As a result, the school is developing an open and positive learning environment with staff freely exchanging the most successful ideas and techniques. Significantly, they are also now confident enough to share their failures as well as their successes. Most teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons and are learning to match work more accurately to the needs of their students. However, further work is required by some to differentiate their planning and better link the work to the students' achievement levels.

Relationships throughout the school are becoming much more positive and in the best lessons there is a genuine sense of empathy between the teachers and their students. As a result of this growing trust and understanding, behavior in classes is good and little time is lost in lessons because students are not fully on task. Behavior in and around the school is monitored very closely and students are learning to develop self discipline. The students like and respect most of their teachers and report that they could discuss a problem with several adults in school. The school follows up on all absences diligently and takes immediate action when any patterns of absence are identified.

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.

The school is now finding it easier to recruit high calibre staff and as a result the quality of instructional teaching in the school is rising steadily. Considerable care is being invested in the support and professional development of all staff with the subject coaches playing a very significant role in this process. The staff are encouraged to attend teacher development workshops and to visit other schools, and do so willingly. Teachers now have a much clearer focus on helping students to achieve their potential by matching work to their needs, particularly special education students and English language learners.

Staff are enabled to meet as often as they can in various teams to plan and revise work programs and to discuss the progress of individuals and groups of students. Nonetheless, they would benefit from even more frequent opportunities to complete this vital work. Many teachers chose to give up their own time to attend additional meetings of this type and often stay long after the end of the day. The school uses performance data effectively when making decisions about future professional development.

The school is well managed by the principal and her assistant principals and is a highly organised and well run institution. The principal is respected by staff and the student, who are used to seeing her each day when they come in to the school. She regularly patrols corridors and classrooms and performs regular lesson observations which are having a positive impact on teaching. Students rightly believe the school to be a rapidly improving place. The coaches for English language arts and mathematics work very effectively supporting and developing staff in their professional skills. The school has good relationships with outside agencies which are used well to achieve the academic and personal goals set for students.

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 is very self critical and is aware of the need to continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the school and to raise the standards of achievement for students in all areas. This message is now being clearly shared with the administration and staff and there is a real sense of purpose throughout the school as it moves forward and develops its ethos. The detailed comprehensive education plan is reviewed regularly and adjusted, as required, to reflect changing needs as identified by the latest available data.

The comparative performance of students in different classes and subject areas is monitored effectively by the principal and her cabinet. Where shortcomings are identified, decisive action is taken to remedy issues. As a result, little time is wasted and steady progress is maintained because work is becoming much better matched to the needs of the students. The school is now aware of the need to monitor even more carefully the relative progress of students in different classes and cohorts, particularly English language learners and special education students. The school is working extremely hard to provide new, even more challenging programs for its students and to further develop its links with outside agencies.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Middle School 322 (MS 322)	∅	✓	+
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	