



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The New York City Museum High School

High School 414

**333 West 17 Street
New York
NY 10011**

Principal: Darlene H Miller

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Reviewer: Peter Williman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The New York City Museum High School serves 374 students in grades 8 through 12. The student population comprises 30.0% Black students, 40.0% Hispanic students, 20.0% White students, and 10.0% Asian and other students. Two percent of students were identified as English language learners on the 2005 School Report Card and 10% as special education students. Average attendance reported in the last School Record Card stood at 91.5%, above that of City and in line with similar schools.

The school changed grade range in September 2006 from grade 8 through 12 to grade 9 through 12. The principal is in her second year of appointment. The assistant principal was promoted at the same time from the role of dean. Fifteen teachers joined the school in September 2006 within a teaching staff of 21.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly motivated leader, committed to the welfare and achievement of her students and uses her high expectations and perceptive observation to drive her school development decisions.
- The principal and assistant principal collate a relevant range of data in detail to review and compare student, group, class, grade and subject progress frequently and this analysis informs school planning and strategy well.
- The principal demonstrates a good knowledge of the capabilities of both staff and students.
- Revised programs are beginning to create a stronger structure within the curriculum and raise engagement for students.
- Professional development is well focused to support school goals and as result there is momentum to school development.
- The budget is well used to resource the school's key goals.
- The administration, team leaders and coaches provide clear leadership and support to the faculty.
- The school has consolidated the relationships with a range of partners and as a result opportunities and experiences are significantly extended for students.
- Students and those with special education needs are well provided for as a result of use data analysis and flexible change to intervention services.
- Students have a positive attitude to their school.

What the school needs to improve

- Consolidate the understanding and competency of all staff to generate and use data effectively to underpin differentiated teaching and learning.
- Raise the pace of the development of teaching strategies which challenge and engage all students at their academic and instructional levels.
- Develop the use of objectively measurable goals at student, class, grade and school level to inform judgments of progress.
- Develop protocols to raise the consistency of Tier 1 interventions.
- Identify more explicit success criteria in long term planning in order to refine judgments of progress of plans.
- Research and continue to implement further strategies to raise attendance.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The New York City Museum High School has been regenerated in a short period of time to be a thriving, well-led, learning community committed to raising achievement. The vastly increased enrollment application to 2300 for this small school supports the view that students and parents are on message with school developments. However, the school is in transition. From a point eighteen months ago of inheriting a school with, for example, no fully defined curricula, no structured academic goals and significant disruptive behavior, the principal with her cabinet and department faculty have brought about a transformation, within the context of hiring fifteen new teachers, the majority of whom, are between one to three years into teaching. The school has a clear vision to move instruction forward, to be academically aspiring and pedagogically interactive for students while retaining the founders' principles of a curriculum established upon museum-based authentic research. The principal does not accept the current base of 100% graduation pass but wishes to challenge teachers and students alike to achieve a profile of much higher levels. To this end, a structured plan of school review and goal setting, staff development, curriculum development and in depth whole school data analysis is in place. As a result expectations are clear, achievement is rising and student engagement in their learning is visibly occurring. Curricula are substantially in place, but this is a work in progress. A minority of staff is resistant to change in favor of the previous culture. This factor combined with new staff getting established compromises the pace and significantly the consistency of development and hence a higher overall judgment is not appropriate at this time.

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 principal and assistant principal collate a relevant range of assessment data to review the progress of students, classes, grades and subjects in detail and this very effectively identifies the relative impact of teaching and of departments. In addition to the data from the regular Regents examinations and the four marking periods, the school generates mid-marking assessments to maintain a closer perception of its students' progress. Analysis of the Regents assessments by ethnic grouping, by gender and by grouping of students receiving interventions provides further valuable perspectives to deepen the administration's review. The administration is beginning to track grades of students year-to-year but this system is in its infancy.

Whole school data analysis is now established as systemic and as a result all teachers and departments have a good overview of the impact of their work. Some departments, such as mathematics, go further to carry out and share item analysis to better inform their understanding of students. Teachers' individual day-to-day records are less consistent in quality and value and, although most teachers know their students well, their recorded data is not easily accessible for comparative discussion. Some teachers are experimenting with records of student engagement in lessons, for example, and conference records and this is informing their instruction appropriately.

The school focuses very well on the progress of students who receive additional intervention and those who qualify for special education and as a result these students are well provided for and make good progress. An initiative has now begun to track higher achieving students to ensure that expectations, challenges and provision are being set appropriately in the classroom and over time.

The administration displays data very well, numerically and graphically and as a result the relative progress of groups, classes, grades and subjects is clearly distinguishable. Comparison is made with previous years where possible. Additionally, and unusually, progress in summer school is compared to semester progress as a further indicator. The principal draws useful comparisons with other similar schools through data and visits.

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.

From her initial detailed review of the school the principal identified a set of priority goals. These addressed the school’s most urgent needs of structuring the curriculum and raising the quality of instruction. The result of this strategy is that student behavior has improved, and teaching is generally more effective. Departments have worked hard to improve subject plans and to revise practices.

The principal uses data very well to review subject progress rigorously and consequently sets realistic statistical goals for the current year. The assessment program provides good opportunities to monitor this progress on a regular basis and evidence points to generally significant progress towards each target. Planning by faculty at grade and class level is not well developed or statistically explicit. The principal recognizes that there is a prerequisite for grade teachers to have a stronger understanding of what precedes or follows their grade to refine such planning.

The school has been quick to take action where data has demonstrated an urgent need for improvement. Low achieving mathematics students have been matched to extended day programs or to classes in other schools to ensure they could graduate.

Students anecdotally describe a range of ways through which most teachers convey high expectations and support them in those expectations. They recount dialogues, which have helped raise their success or changed the path of their work following failure in other schools. In classes with better practice, rubrics clearly identify what is expected in high quality work. Parents confirm the ‘open door’ culture of the school through which they are able to share understanding of their children’s progress in addition to the normal formal conference opportunities.

The majority of the faculty, staff, parents and students are signed up to the goals and aims of the administration. A minority group of teachers hankers for a previous culture of independent charismatic based pedagogy and this slows the pace of school development.

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.

The administration and most departments have worked hard to raise the quality of curriculum and to focus resources and student engagement to meet the school’s goals. There is clear evidence that although this drive is still a work in progress, it is nearing completion. The newly defined curricula is planned to fully meet the state standards and enable effective monitoring of students’ progress. This particular strand is well advanced in English, mathematics and the museum modules. The principal has made it clear to staff how the quality of instruction should improve student engagement.

Teachers are beginning to become more aware of the quality and impact of their work thanks to frequent evaluations of pass rate data combined with regular classroom reviews. Recently hired teachers endorse the school objectives to change the style of instruction to engage students directly in their learning and thereby to differentiate learning. As a result of this and of professional development, instruction is beginning to support students to be more independent in their critical skills. Rubrics are beginning to be used to engage students actively in planning and reviewing their work more rigorously. The museum modules demand a good skill in analytical thinking. However, not all programs are presented well and as a result some students are not engaged and are passive in class for long periods.

School plans and data effectively drive the budget and decisions on logistical resources. For example, concerns of the negative impact of ‘pullouts’ on 11th grade students led to the funding and creation of a combined teaching team class, which is demonstrating its value through improved student progress. ‘Accountable talk’ has been introduced and is engaging students more extensively in English and social studies lessons following the funding of professional development seminars for staff. Course books in science have changed as the result of analysis of low scores.

Leaders and most teachers have good relationships of mutual respect with students. Students report teachers treat them, as ‘Friends but still are strict when necessary’. However, this approach is not consistent and some teachers are not cognizant of individual students’ personal and learning difficulties and therefore do not apply appropriate oversight.

Average attendance is better than that of City and similar schools but a 5 % improvement target is still readily sought. Protocols for dealing with attendance and tardiness are clear and rigorously applied.

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 principal has coordinated the work of the leadership and faculty well around the schools’ goals. The cabinet and the recently hired staff pay tribute to the good quality of hiring procedures and to the principal’s high expectations. The assistant principal, the guidance counselor and the dean each demonstrate high skills and insights in their

respective roles and form a very effective leadership with the principal. New faculty are directing their work to use data and a range of techniques to scaffold more challenging instruction.

Professional development has been designed to match the stages of the school's regeneration. As a result there have been two specific stages, each of which have impacted positively upon the work of students. Firstly, the introduction of the process of 'Understanding by Design' is effectively leading to structuring planning to lead to predetermined outcomes. Secondly, student self-responsibility is beginning to be evidenced through differentiated instruction, use of the workshop model and using data to focus next steps in learning. The work of the mathematics department presents a good example of the latter through its item analysis to identify areas for instruction.

The principal is very perceptive and applies both her well-considered principles and broad educational knowledge very securely to school development and this has effected significant change. She knows her staff very well and has attracted the loyalty and respect of almost all. Through her formal and informal observations, she is able to share valuable insights and as a result is developing teaching skills of faculty well. Teachers generally are very supportive of each other's development both in grade teams and departments. Some useful peer observation occurs through collaborative teaching and through the work of coaches. Good communication and organization, clear expectations and good oversight of behavior by the dean, combined with generally positive student attitudes ensure that day-to-day the school is an orderly cohesive community.

The school is founded upon strong partnerships with the Brooklyn Museum, the American Museum of Natural History and the Southport Seaport Museum and these continue to flourish. More recently a strong partnership with the Royal Bank of Scotland has brought the valuable assets of life skills mentoring for students and welcome funding for additional resources.

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.

Strategic planning as expressed through the Comprehensive Education Plan is insufficiently developed and has no clearly defined interim goals or specified links to the schedule of assessments to monitor progress. This is because the school has been in a state of transition. Initially, because the school was putting structure in place, its plans and goals necessarily were qualitative and only able to be judged by review of which activities and procedures were impacting upon student experience. The principal's 'Goals and Objectives' is a more usable document that is shared with the cabinet and as a result the school monitors its progress towards these goals through periodic assessments but not yet as a part of a structured and timetabled whole school evaluation and this is an aspect for improvement.

However, the use of a database is now securely in place to underpin definitive goals and to provide good indicators of the progress of short, medium and long term plans. The cabinet effectively compares student progress within and across classes through periodic assessments and Regents examinations. As a result of shared information, grade teams

and faculty adjust plans and priorities appropriately. The principal with the cabinet revises planning flexibly in response to its available data for example in changing the organization of intervention services and revising programs mid year to accelerate learning.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The New York City School (HS 414)	∅	✓	+
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	