



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Millennium High School

High School 418

**75 Broad Street - 13th Floor
New York
NY 10004**

Principal: Robert Rhodes

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Reviewer: Denis Pittman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Millennium High School opened in 2002. It received a grant from New Visions for Public Schools that included contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, and the Open Society Institute. The school is housed on the 11th, 12th and 13th floors of the 'International Telephone Building'. Millennium High is one of the New York City schools participating in 'The Empowerment Zone' which gives additional autonomy funding to the school. It has agreed to take greater responsibility for academic achievement. Principals at these schools have greater discretion over budgets, scheduling and hiring.

There are 525 students enrolled in the school. Students come from a variety of multi-cultural backgrounds. The ethnic composition of the school is 40% Asian students, 30% white, 20% Latino and 10% African-American. There are relatively few students who receive special education support (6%) and very few English language learners (3 students). Attendance rates are above city and state levels.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The administration of the school provides very effective leadership in promoting its values and achieving its goals.
- The relationship between students and staff is excellent.
- The school promotes a strong sense of community in all its members.
- A culture of high expectations has been very successfully established at the school.
- There is a strong team ethos and a depth of commitment from an energetic staff.
- Students greatly value the support and guidance given to them.
- The curriculum is innovative and challenging and effectively promotes the learning experience of students.
- The school has established positive and mutually productive links with the YMCA and with the community and local business.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of the progress their children are making.

What the school needs to improve

- To continue to build upon the efficient use and management of data to monitor more closely the progress of individual students to identify trends.
- To use current classroom rubrics provide an integrated whole school from rubric used in best assessment practice within the school.
- To improve communication links between co-planning teams to ensure that the review of instructional programs is consistently effective.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

Millennium High is an innovative school which challenges its students to succeed. The Principal and Assistant Principal have successfully developed a culture of high expectations and achievement. These expectations are set within a spirit of community which is highly supportive of both students and teachers. Relationships between students and adults in the school are excellent. Students are highly motivated and keen to participate in all aspects of school life. The curriculum is innovative and with its emphasis upon independent research and thought, is successfully developing students who are articulate, have an opinion of their own but respect the views of others. Teachers are reflective practitioners. Lessons are well prepared with an emphasis on providing an interactive environment for students to learn. Given the relatively small size of the school, teachers have a multiplicity of roles and responsibilities. These are carried out with commitment and energy and to good effect. Parents value the support and guidance which is given to their children. They strongly endorse the openness and willingness to communicate which are strong features of the school's administration. A firm foundation has been created for the school's future development and success.

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 a wide range of standard tests and formal assessments which are compiled to provide data on the academic and personal development of all students. The results of the Regents examinations are studied and analyzed to identify trends and potential areas for improvement. The school performs well in relation to these City and State standards and from results is able to assess the next focus for improvement. The school also generates substantive amounts of assessment data which is based upon its curriculum programs. A systematic review of the item analyses of examinations enables the school to identify student competencies which need to be developed, for example, interpretation of scientific evidence. The formative assessment of students compiled by teachers is detailed and comprehensive but the analysis of this data to identify trends in progress, over time, is an area for further development.

The school has a broad awareness of trends in the data of groups of students related to ethnicity. Although this group is small, the assessment of their needs is detailed and provides supplementary evidence for teachers to amend their programs of instruction where appropriate. A particular strength of the school is the effective way in which students with special education need have been absorbed into the school as part of the collaborative team teaching program. The school has secure diagnostic information and data about the needs of this group of students. This information is used well to schedule the instructional needs of these students. The staff are provided with informative

summaries of the students individual education plans (IEP's) to add to the data profile of individual students. Overall the analysis of its own data is robust and rigorous.

The comparison of performance with similar schools is an evolving process because of the changing reporting structure as to how such schools are related to each other. In a similar vein there has been little analysis of data in relation to graduation rates since there has been only one previous cohort of such students. The variability in trends of performance between different subjects is appropriately identified. The introduction of the periodic assessment procedures is providing a more coherent profile of the student's progress. The good practice which is being developed in English is being shared in other areas of the school to support an emerging 'culture' committed to interim assessments.

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.

The identification of the school's goals is a collaborative activity. These goals are continually referred to during meetings and discussions about the curriculum and the quality of teaching. A particular strength is the regular meeting of the Faculty to analyze student data and identify issues to be dealt with. For example, a focus has been the systemizing of the rubrics in humanities in order to bring their practice more in line with that of other subject areas. On broader issues of consistency a committee reviews progress reports and the comments contained within them to look for accuracy and identify areas for improvement. A unique aspect of the school's provision for students is its commitment to promoting research and independent study skills. An exhibition committee tracks individual students' progress and records grades on the database and then looks at trends in achievement for papers and presentation scores.

Data is used well to identify issues relating to specific groups within the school. For example, the variability in the performance of Grade 11 students is not in line with high levels of performance which are seen elsewhere. In addressing this issue the school is effectively analyzing its data on the basis of subgroups, such as the number of English language learners and students receiving special education needs support to look for patterns. This is illustrative of the way the school continually explores ways of improving its practice through data analysis.

The principal and staff have very high expectations which are clearly communicated to all. This message is conveyed through productive orientation sessions with students, parents and staff and through advisory groups. The schools' culture also promotes the commitment to high expectations in numerous ways. The parents value and appreciate the commitment to challenge and performance. They are kept well informed through a process of e-mails, surveys and workshops.

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 curriculum is very effectively aligned with state standards. It has been creatively developed to provide a unique and strong provision in developing writing skills and independent research. Curriculum maps have assessment criteria systematically built into them. In consequence the curriculum is generating a significant amount of relevant data to monitor the progress of students. A specific strength are the very detailed rubrics produced by all departments. The school is looking to establish a greater inter-relationship between these assessment devices. Teachers are held accountable for improving instruction through the co-planning which takes place within many professional meetings. These planning meetings clearly reflect a commitment to providing a range of differentiated experiences according to the learning needs of students. This aspect is a continuing focus in the school's activities.

Budget decisions are driven by the needs of students. For example, the financial commitment provides a course in writing in addition to normal English classes emphasizes with importance given to individual research and independent thought. In addition recovery programs have been established for those students who need to make up course credits in order to graduate. Additional staff have been hired to service the needs of the special education students who now figure more prominently in the school. This decision helps promote a high level of effective intervention support in classes. Scheduling decisions reflect student requirements. For example, classes in the ‘upper house’ are taught with a blended arrangement of both 11th and 12th grade students. This arrangement successfully orchestrates social as well as academic advantages and challenges. It is this sense of collaboration between students and the feel of a family community which elicits a strong identification with the school. Students enjoy their experience at Millennium High. They are enthusiastic and keen learners who are willing and able to talk animatedly about their experiences. They value the support, care and concern which are shown to them by all members of staff. It is clearly evident that there is mutual respect between students and staff. The students find their lessons to be stimulating and challenging. Attendance is given a high priority. The commitment of the students to the school is shown in the significantly high attendance rates.

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 Principal has stringent criteria for the selection of staff. Prospective new staff are required to take a model lesson, identify specific curriculum issues of interest and illustrate and discuss an initiative they have undertaken. There are clear messages of promoting high expectations of performance and providing a challenge for students. Regular grade meetings enable issues about the comparability of standards across classrooms to be discussed and analyzed. The autonomy given to these planning meetings effectively builds the capacity of its members to use data and make decisions to improve student performance. The detailed ‘Response logs’, produced by the English department, providing guidance on scaffolding writing tasks, are an outcome of this type of meeting. The multiplicity of roles which staff assume is again reflected in the composition of the

professional development committee. This committee has been responsible for organizing an effective program of courses on the development of assessments, the collection and analysis of data and new instructional ideas. Academic coaches act as a conduit for sharing ideas with and from other schools. Frequent opportunities are provided for teachers to visit each other's classes to model and develop ideas. Teachers are encouraged to attend workshops which will develop their professional understanding and competencies. Given the range of meetings that take place in a school, the administration recognizes the need to develop more efficient communication links between the respective teams of staff.

The principal has a detailed and rigorous procedure for formal observation of lessons. In collaboration with senior staff an efficient protocol for the departmental observations has been constructed. These practices are supporting the drive to improve teaching and the achievement of students. The professional development committee processes the outcomes of these observations to look for emergent issues. The results of inter-class visitations which are conducted by departments are shared with other members of the faculty on a regular two monthly cycle. The principal has the respect and support of the school 'community'. Parents are very appreciative of his openness and willingness to communicate with them and create opportunities for their involvement in the school. They value greatly his commitment and that of the staff, in making such a success of this emergent school. School management procedures are efficient and effective; the school operates smoothly.

The school has effectively established positive, productive working relationships with a range of external partners including community-based organizations. The strongest of these links is with the YMCA. They are responsible for running a number of successful programs which are designed to enhance academic and career success, promote leadership development (Asset leaders) and demonstrate the importance of community and social responsibility.

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 school effectively evaluates its long-term and short term goals in relation to students' needs and progress. The leadership team has a regular schedule of meetings to identify ongoing issues connected with student progress. The mid-year interviews with teachers are a measure of the effectiveness of the school's work. The regular reporting cycles provide effective evidence of student progress and where interventions may need to be made to address issues. For example, the necessity to improve passes in the Regents History and examination prompted the need to provide extra preparatory lessons.

The integration of the special education students has required some adjustment to the teaching strategies of staff. The use of data as a diagnostic tool to evaluate the progress of specific groups is well-established but what is not so firmly embedded is the use of data in a diagnostic way to identify trends in progress of individual students. The school has shown its ability to be adaptable in its curriculum planning. Staff have a clear perception of the goals and core purposes which drive its work. The staff have shown that they have a good capacity to consolidate it's the school's achievements and promote further development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Millennium High School (HS 418)	∅	✓	+
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	