



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Greenwich Village Middle School

Intermediate School 896

**490 Hudson Street
New York
NY 10014**

Principal: Kelly McGuire

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Reviewer: Jan Lomas

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Greenwich Village Middle School serves 217 students from grade 6 through grade 8 and is one of the smallest schools in New York. It is located on the fifth floor of a building which it shares with an elementary school.

The ethnic groups within the school population are Hispanic at 39%, Black, 33%, White 14% and Asian and others at 14%. The percentage of students recently arrived in the country is 6.3% which is lower than the average figure for City schools, but is higher than that for similar schools.

The percentage of English language learners at 1.4% is very small, while there are a much higher proportion of special education students (38%) than is usually found.

The attendance rate is 94.3% which is higher than that for both City and similar schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal has identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement and is leading the school forward with a clear focus on priority issues.
- Students speak warmly about their teachers' efforts to help them to learn and the positive relationships they have with them.
- Parents' representatives are very supportive of the school and they appreciate the constructive communication they have with teachers and the principal.
- Rubrics are an established and useful element of the assessment process.
- Useful progress has already been made in the development of systems and structures for the collection and analysis of data.
- Teachers work collaboratively and support each other well.
- The principal has strengthened formal procedures in the school and has improved the quality of meetings, making them more focused and collaborative in their nature.
- The school is concerned for the social and academic progress of each young person and looks to ensure the very best for all the students in its care.

What the school needs to improve

- Build on the steps already taken to use data rigorously and systematically to raise achievement, focusing particularly upon the achievement of certain priority groups.
- Use data to develop interim goals and targets for each student that can inform teaching and be shared with students and their parents.
- Further develop strategic planning as a meaningful tool which engages all stakeholders and enables the effective monitoring and evaluation of goals.
- Further develop the ability of teachers to use data effectively to inform their planning and ensure that the tasks set are appropriately differentiated and match the needs of the students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

Greenwich Village, Middle School 896, is a small but expanding school where students feel secure and are convinced that they matter as individuals. Staff, students and parents appreciate the thoughtful and reflective community that is being created and which strives to be inclusive and to celebrate the diversity and the different abilities of the students.

At the time of this review, the principal was in his first few months of leadership and had rapidly gained a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. He has a very good understanding of the importance of using data to underpin the drive for improvement and the raising of student achievement. His leadership of the hardworking and responsive staff is enabling them to work collaboratively to take the school forward. Further work will be required to consolidate the improvements made so far and it will be some time before their full impact on standards of achievement will be seen.

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 undeveloped with proficient features.

The new principal has developed a clear system that tracks the achievement of each individual over time. This shows where students have made progress and has identified previously unknown trends in historical data. The principal has worked with his colleagues to map the range of assessment strategies currently used and has a clear overview of when these activities take place. A connected assessment team was established to analyze data and share the implications with the wider staff team. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of achievement.

Some teachers use thoughtfully constructed rubrics as part of the assessment that are carried out and share these and the outcomes with the students. Portfolios of work in core subjects are kept to show a developing picture of student work over time. There is still a need, however, for teachers to achieve greater consistency in the way that they assess progress in, for example, the development of reading skills.

The principal has analyzed data to establish that mathematics is a priority area for improvement. He has worked with staff to devise regular standards based quizzes which draw upon elements of the Princeton Review and enable rapid identification of how well students have understood and can use taught skills. This recent initiative is allowing a tracking system to emerge which shows to what extent students have mastery of skills being taught. Such data is beginning to inform teachers' planning, and is providing a clearer means of identifying those students that need academic intervention services. While this is being well received by staff, time is required to accumulate comparative data in order to assess the impact of the different approaches used and to apply the most successful strategies throughout the school.

The principal has used these new data tools to enable him to see broad trends to date in the performance of different ethnic groups and the very significant number of special education students in the school. The performance of the small number of English language learners is tracked individually. The principal has recognized that there is a need to look closely at performance by gender and has also identified that some higher achieving students are not making good enough progress.

The evidence gained from classroom observations shows that teaching is not equally effective in all classes and that much work is still required to raise the quality of teaching in some classes by improving differentiation. The principal has begun to build contacts with colleagues in networks and is working productively with his mentor to discuss various strategies and to compare practice and outcomes with other similar schools.

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 current Comprehensive Educational Plan was devised at a time when there was no leadership team and does not sufficiently represent the views of the school community. Good progress has been made in establishing a new leadership team and the principal is now beginning to develop school-wide goals which will inform the future plan. These goals are not, however, sufficiently measurable, or well enough rooted in data to identify accurately how performance will be improved. The quality of meetings within the school has been improved and they now provide good opportunities for the staff to work together to develop ideas and to prioritize their efforts.

The school is now implementing systems that will enable a clearer focus on emerging data so that the progress of students can be better tracked. Interim goals for all students are not yet set routinely, but these procedures now starting to be put in place. Goals are, however, set and reviewed for the large proportion of special education students. Recently produced overviews of the needs of these students are now proving helpful in ensuring that the work is accurately matched to the needs of each individual. The recent staff retreat was particularly useful in addressing these issues and also in considering the needs of English language learners.

The process of collecting five major pieces of writing during the year is supporting the development of good practice in English language arts. New and effective strategies for tracking progress in mathematics are beginning to identify with more consistency which students need academic intervention services. The principal has also become aware that further attention and scrutiny now needs to be given to the performance and progress of higher achieving students. Students appreciate discussing their work with their teachers through the use of conferencing and rubrics. The new mathematics quizzes are requiring students to note and correct their errors, thus focusing them upon areas where they need to improve. They like the opportunities to discuss their portfolios with the principal and are motivated by the “warrior cards” used to reward classes against identified criteria, including timely arrival at school.

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 literacy coach has recently worked with teachers to map the curriculum for English language arts. Mapping is aligned with standards and was planned in accordance with the outcomes of recent assessments. Staff members regularly analyze writing samples to gain an understanding of strengths and weaknesses and to modify their practice. The next area identified for analysis and improvement is the development of reading skills. In mathematics, the curriculum is planned using the standard pacing guide and ongoing amendments are made in response to emerging data about student progress. The new focused mathematics quizzes are ensuring a better alignment of teachers’ planning to the specific needs of students.

The school works hard to overcome the constraints of a shared building and this has had a negative impact on the development of areas including music, drama and technology. Scheduling has been amended in an attempt to overcome congestion and delay into classes at busy times and a 3 minute transition time has been successfully introduced. The budget has been managed to ensure the employment of literacy and mathematics coaches in order to underpin the school’s drive to raise standards in these key areas.

Where teaching is matched to the needs of the students and tasks are interesting, students enjoy their learning and are fully engaged. The principal is aware of the need to continue to build the capacity of all teachers to provide differentiated instruction that is appropriately challenging and engaging for all students. The recently constituted “town hall” is cultivating a group of student leaders who will add their voice to school development planning. The school continues to work hard to ensure that busy times of the day do not cause undue disruption or behavioral problems. The school has proficient procedures to encourage good attendance and to discourage lateness. This latter issue has now been firmly tackled, because the longer distances many students travel have historically led to tardiness.

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.

On his appointment, the principal constituted a hiring committee of teachers who together have established five valuable key questions to be utilized as part of the selection of new staff. These are important in finding out, for example, how the teacher will use data in order to plan for their work with students. Teachers work with the coaches on a weekly basis. They are given opportunities for one-to-one sessions, including informal observations, and coaches also work alongside teams at staff meetings. The principal often attends these meetings which focus upon key areas and enable teachers to collaborate and engage in purposeful professional dialogue. Study groups have been established for all core subjects and for special education students. The latter group has, for example, been considering how to accurately assess growth against goals. This has involved the group working with a small number of students in order to monitor and discuss their progress over time. Observations are then brought back to the study group. Such work strengthens the valuable links between school improvement priorities and ongoing

professional development. The principal has established classroom observations in line with mandated requirements. Teachers have known professional goals for the year and teaching standards have been used to identify appropriate evidence of progress towards these. Observation is now focused upon these goals, enabling teachers to explore and refine their practice. Inter-visitation has been introduced in order to encourage peer mentorship and self-evaluation. The new principal has strengthened procedures and systems within the school and it now runs more smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The school has well established partnerships with several outside organizations in order to enrich opportunities for students and to encourage community service. America Reads volunteers from New York University support mathematics and literacy classes.

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 current Comprehensive Educational Plan was not produced by the existing leadership and does not include goals that are either sufficiently measurable or focused upon clearly identified areas of student achievement. The new principal has, however, enabled departmental teams to set new goals and these have already been revisited. This development, alongside the establishment of a school leadership team, signals a clear move towards a more strategic style of school planning. There is already a clear awareness that all school plans must be measurable, clearly identify precise success criteria and include timeframes showing progress towards completion.

While the school now has a good view of the historical and current school position, more time is needed to allow for new developments to become established and to make a positive impact on student progress. The careful evaluation of new initiatives and strategies that have been implemented by the school are demonstrating to staff how important the review and subsequent realignment of these plans can be. Several teachers, for example, are now much responsive to exploring new ideas and structuring their lessons in different ways so that they provide greater challenge and better meet the needs of the students. The current development of assessment and goal-setting procedures is involving all staff in a professional and active way.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Greenwich Village Middle School (IS 896)	∅	✓	+
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	