



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**Michael J Petrides School
715 Ocean Terrace
Staten Island
NY 10301**

Principal: Joanne Buckheit

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Reviewer: Barry King

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school educates students from kindergarten through grade 12. It has three classes per grade up to grade 8 and four thereafter, when additional students are admitted to the high school component. To ensure equal access to all wanting to attend the school, admission to Kindergarten and fill in seats in grades 1 to 6 is through a blind lottery process. The current roll is approximately 1250.

Three-fifths of the students are White, which is much above the average for the City. About one-sixth of the students are Black and a similar fraction is from Hispanic backgrounds, a lot lower than the City averages. A small number have Asian and other heritages. The proportion of English language learners is small, at 2%. The main languages spoken at home other than English are Spanish and Chinese. Approximately 12 % of students are identified as Special Education. In addition, the school hosts an Inclusion program which involves 14 autistic students. The school does not receive Title 1 funding. The stability of the school population is very high. Attendance, at around 94%, is consistently above the City average.

The school is housed on a campus that was once used by a college. The available space is plentiful, but several spaces are unsuitable for use by school children.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is successful in reaching its overarching goal of ensuring that students graduate and find college places.
- Through the use of data and other information, staff have a very good understanding of the achievement and welfare of individual students.
- The principal is very highly respected for the way in which she leads the school and gets the best out of others.
- The staff adopt collaborative approaches for reviewing performance, and planning interventions and improvements.
- Students enjoy good relationships with each other and the staff, whom they respect and trust.
- Teachers have a mastery of their subject matter and a commitment to improving their teaching techniques.
- The curriculum is well aligned to the needs and aspirations of the students.
- The school has a good understanding of its strengths and the areas that need developing.
- Programs for professional development are extensive and well aligned to the needs of staff.
- The students have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities, and participate well.

What the school needs to improve

- Use performance data and ongoing assessments to improve the planning for, and delivery of, differentiated instruction.
- Ensure that clear, measurable goals for achievement are communicated to the students.
- Aggregate and analyze data to understand how well different groups of students perform.
- Develop the use of information technology to underpin instruction and learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

The school's outstanding success in getting college placements for its students is realized for many reasons. The staff have a thorough understanding of the progress of each student and collaborate effectively to support anyone who is in danger of slipping behind. The curricular and instructional programs are well aligned to the aims of the students. The principal leads the school well and has earned the respect and support of all those with whom she works. The staff are dedicated to the achievement and well-being of the students and to their own professional development.

Academic success is complemented by a school culture in which the students can flourish, develop their personal qualities and take up a wide range of enrichment opportunities. All stakeholders, including teachers, parents and students, see this as a happy school where everyone counts. In the words of one parent, 'this is a whole family here'.

The principal and her colleagues know the school's strengths well and are aware of what to improve. Between them, they have created a strong capacity for moving forward.

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 well developed.

The school has a very good understanding of the progress of each one of its students. It is helped in this by the small number of students in each grade and the long period of time that most students are in the school. This means that, in addition to the well developed formal procedures for gathering data on the progress of each student, the staff get to know most of the students thoroughly over a very long period. For the same reasons, the school has an excellent understanding of the welfare of its students, the promotion of which is at the heart of the school's work. The students' work is regularly assessed by teachers and the outcomes recorded, and external diagnostic instruments are used to get further, objective assessments of performance. The data on each student is shared and agreed by regular collaborations between teachers, which enable the school to make effective use of the data to promote the students' progress. As one teacher said in relation to the way they watch carefully over the students, 'we really give the students personal care'.

Based on the data collected on each student, the school aggregates the information to form a good understanding of the progress of each class and grade. It compares one year with another, evaluating whether there has been enough progress, for example in relation to similar schools. It is well aware of the performance of different groups of students from the City's annual school report on the school but it does not routinely collect its own information on this to see if strategies are necessary to improve the performance of a particular group which might be underachieving.

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 school has a clear and well understood goal that provides its overarching purpose. This is to ensure that students graduate and find a college placement. As the principal said, ‘our goal is to prepare everyone for handling college’. In this overriding purpose, the school is outstandingly successful. Throughout their time in the school the students benefit from a climate of high expectations, and they are motivated to do as well as they can by the end of each grade. The school assists this through its curricular programs, for example by putting on three Regents courses in grade 8, which differentiates goals for those making faster progress and accelerates their movement along the pathway to college. In the assessment of their work, teachers provide constructive comments, indicating clear goals that students should aim at to improve their work.

Special education students, and those deemed at risk because their performance is below what is expected, are given particularly clear goals for progress and improvement. Staff collaborate extensively in setting out these goals. The school does not, however, set interim, measurable goals customized to the starting points and learning capabilities of students, which are communicated to them. In its pursuit of high academic achievement, the school never loses sight of the complementary aim of ensuring that students develop the personal qualities and values that will enable them to play worthwhile roles in society.

Parents are very supportive of the school’s goals and are well informed of how well their children are doing by four yearly report cards, parents’ conferences, and progress reports and other forms of communication, such as emails, when necessary. This builds a strong partnership in pursuit of high achievement.

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 school, in the words of one teacher, provides a ‘seamless education’ from kindergarten through grade 12. The curriculum is well organized, so that teachers know what should be taught and when, and the scheduling supports these intentions well. The curriculum is well aligned to the needs and aspirations of the students, and is flexibly arranged to reflect their emerging achievements. For example, for older students who can cope with more demanding work, seven advanced placement courses are provided. On the other hand, customized packages are devised, including extra tutorial time and specific learning approaches, for students at risk. Beyond the classroom, and despite its small size at each grade level, the school mounts a wide range of sporting, artistic and other activities, in which students participate well.

The school operates for the most part a system of heterogeneous classes, into which most special education students are integrated. It recognizes that this places high demands upon teachers to differentiate their instructional programs, and this is a well judged priority in the Comprehensive Education Plan. In class, teachers demonstrate subject mastery

and they maintain a good learning atmosphere. Some good practice in differentiation exists in the school and this is supported in the middle school by a budgeting decision to keep class sizes smaller than normal. However, the degree of differentiation is inconsistent between classes, and older students state that listening and note taking are the most common activities in many of them. Good examples exist of the use of modern technology for instruction and learning, but the limited amount of equipment restricts what can be done.

Good relationships exist throughout the school. Students respect and trust their teachers, and this is reciprocated. For example, the grade 10 representatives were given the responsibility for allocating the remaining places on a forthcoming skiing holiday. The leadership of the school sets high standards of behavior and is prompt in applying sanctions when necessary, but in the main the students are self-disciplined. Students' good attendance reflects the commitment most feel towards their schooling, but it is also supported by efficient systems to deal with absence, such as electronic recording and same day home calling.

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 leads the school well and is very respected by her colleagues and the students. She has encouraged an open and collaborative culture in which teams come together to examine issues and plan ways forward. This results, for example, in a rounded overview of the progress of each student and well judged plans to intervene when anyone falls behind. Staff are carefully selected for their subject mastery and other skills but also for their capacity to grow into the job. The outcome is a school that has a reflective learning culture, where staff are committed to improving what they do in an environment where they feel they can be creative.

Professional development is extensive and well matched to the needs of staff. It comprises a range of approaches, including external visitations. Staff are appreciative of the way that emerging needs, such as changes in test requirements, are addressed rapidly. The school has a good understanding of what goes on in classrooms and, through that, the development needs of staff. The first hand evidence for this comes from a well developed program of formal observations and informal walkthroughs. Feedback to staff is appreciated by them. Full records are made of what was seen, including recommendations for development, which are followed up to see whether improvement has taken place.

The school runs smoothly, all hands contributing. According to parents, who play an important part in the life of the school, it has a 'wonderful atmosphere'. Well established partnerships exist with other bodies, such as local colleges, but these do not yet include links with employers.

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 well developed.

The school conducts a variety of ongoing assessments to monitor closely the progress of students, including day-to-day assessment of students' work and more formal diagnoses of their performance through externally-acquired mechanisms. Staff also keep a vigilant watch on the welfare of the students. Frequent conferencing allows information to be shared and, where necessary, acted upon. Where students' performance does not compare well with what is expected, interventions are planned and implemented. The key to all of this is a high level of commitment to the progress of each individual student and an extensive armory of approaches for overseeing this. Students are routinely instructed how to improve their work, following assessment of it. Special education students, and those at risk, are given specific goals to aim at. However, the school does not tend to set measurable interim goals, in the light of assessment, for the majority of students. The school has a reflective culture, in which it is constantly reviewing how well its initiatives are working and if, for example, the goals set out in the Comprehensive Education Plan are being realized. Where things are not going as well as planned, effective action is taken. Equally, success is celebrated.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Michael J Petrides School (HS 80)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 			X
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
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3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.			∅ ✓ +
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