



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Multiple Intelligences School

Public School/Middle School 037

**360 West 230th Street
Bronx
NY 10463**

Principal: Mrs. Sonia Resto

Dates of review: March 14 - 16, 2007

Reviewer: David King

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Multiple Intelligences School is located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. It is a school with 562 students, heterogeneously grouped from kindergarten through grade 8. The ethnic breakdown is 66% Hispanic and 26% Black, with the remaining 8% Asian, White or other ethnic groups. The school is a Title 1 school with 72% of the students eligible. Attendance is around 92%, which is similar to other similar schools and other City schools. Twelve percent are special education students and 13% are English language learners.

The school is set up in four quadrants of Early Childhood, Upper Elementary, Special Education and Middle School and instruction is delivered through a range of programs designed to ensure that students make progress at all levels. The principal and the assistant principals have been working at the school for many years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school is well led by a principal who has a clear vision and sets a clear direction for the school.
- The school is an orderly well managed environment.
- The principal and her cabinet convey high expectations to students, staff and parents or caregivers.
- The school uses the budget wisely according to the plan the school has to improve student outcomes.
- The teachers know the students well and respond positively to their academic and personal needs.
- The academic intervention services are effective in improving the academic performance of those students with the greatest needs.
- The principal has a rigorous system for teacher observation and feedback.
- The instructional program engages the students who are aware of how to improve their performance.
- The school routinely uses a collaborative process to establish its academic goals within clearly defined time-frames.
- The school makes effective use of special advisors and consultants, targeting those areas in need of improvement.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress towards its goals.
- Develop systems for tracking all individual students, sub-groups, classes and grades longitudinally.
- Improve professional development on differentiation of instruction based on needs revealed by student data.
- Introduce professional development on strategies to challenge the most able students.
- Continue to implement the teacher accountability profiles.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Multiple Intelligences School is a welcoming, caring and highly inclusive environment providing a rich educational experience for the whole school community.

The principal is creating a school where the staff feel empowered, where working collaboratively is routine, where students enjoy learning and feel safe, and where parents are confident about the work of the staff. The principal has very strong values and promotes high expectations throughout the school. The principal and her cabinet are deeply committed to the students getting the best start in their education and experiencing a wide range of opportunities. She is ably supported by a highly committed group of staff who are often willing to put in extra work for the benefit of the students. The principal has a strong professional relationship with her staff and she is fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

The school's performance in English language arts and mathematics has shown a small degree of improvement in recent years and there has been a reduction in the number of students achieving level one and a small increase at level three. There is, however no complacency and the school cabinet and staff are frequently reviewing progress and aiming to develop strategies to raise the scores at all levels.

The school has many strengths, key ones being the detailed knowledge that is held about each student and the support for for special education students and English language learners. There is also good communication amongst staff and with home. A strong sense of community runs through the entire school. The students are well mannered and articulate young people.

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 collects data through daily assessments, observation notes, running records and conference notes which it uses to inform planning and decision making. Data from formal assessments is also collected and displayed on a helpful spreadsheet. The school data team reviews the data regularly. Class profile sheets are given to all teachers and the progress of any students receiving services are closely monitored, as well as a group referred to as promotion in doubt, and who may be holdovers. As a result of these processes there is a good understanding of the performance and progress of all students, classes and grade levels in the school.

The progress of English language learners and special education students is closely monitored by the data team and they are highlighted on the spreadsheet. Academic intervention services are adept at generating their own data from specific intervention tools

and programs. Comprehensive personal intervention plans are in place for all holdover or potential holdover students. This data is used successfully in placing students in appropriate groups and supporting their learning. The school has not pursued a similar analysis of the performance of ethnic groups.

The performance in doubt group represents a category of students subject to close scrutiny and the monitoring of their progress is good. The school is also monitoring closely those students, who receive an extended program. Importantly, there are plans to analyze performance of the students who stay at the school from kindergarten to eighth grade and compare it with the more transient population of the school, which is high.

The school is fully aware of how it is performing in comparison with similar schools and has made successful comparisons of performance with previous years. It has begun to work on producing longitudinal data to monitor the progress of each grade more closely.

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.

A considerable amount of goal-setting takes place throughout the school. The schedule allows teams to meet frequently and engage in rigorous goal-setting. The academic intervention services use a particularly effective process to set closely focused goals for their special education students. An equally rigorous system exists in the mathematics and English language arts teams, who are capably supported in this by the coaches.

Goal-setting is strongest where the grade teams are most secure in working together and making use of data. This is the case with grades 1 and 5 where a significant amount of effective goal-setting happens. These teams are confident about relating goal-setting at grade level to whole-school aims, as are the mathematics team and literacy teams. Students in need of improvement are taken out of class by the academic intervention team on a regular basis and given good support. Small groups are established in September and then reviewed regularly. Groupings for targeted students have been drawn up carefully on the basis of students’ individual goals.

High expectations are clearly conveyed to students and parents or caregivers, who are closely involved in the process of setting goals and sharing information. Regular updates on courses, support available and student progress are provided for parents and caregivers.

Teachers set suitably challenging goals for mathematics and literacy. Expectations are high. Goals from each grade are shared with grade teams on either side of them and are constantly updated with the support of the cabinet. Grade teams create regular assessments in mathematics and English language arts and the data generated by them, as well as conference notes, is provided for the cabinet. This regular realignment of goals is central to driving the activities of all members of the school community and a good start has been made to ensuring that this happens. The cabinet is aware of the need to monitor interim assessments even more closely and systematically to ensure they align closely with City and State standards.

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 delivers the mandated curriculum. There is evidence of curriculum maps and the teachers have been diligent in trying to ensure that their planning is aligned with the students' needs. However, some teachers are insecure about making accurate and consistent judgments of student progress and matching the instruction to students' current levels of knowledge and understanding.

Teacher accountability is high and the coaches are usefully employed where support is needed. The principal has recently introduced an accountability profile which monitors the work of teachers very closely, but it is too early to assess the impact of this on current practice. Some teachers are not confident about the way in which data in a variety of forms should impact on differentiation of instruction and the school is aware that they require professional development in this area.

Resources have been allocated well according to the needs of the students. A considerable amount of the school budget has been allocated to support academic intervention services instruction. This is a notable strength of the school. Academic intervention services staff are used particularly effectively in Reading Recovery and literacy intervention programs throughout the school. Small group programs, one-to-one work and the extended day program are other ways in which the school effectively uses the budget so that the weakest students receive good individual attention to help them to achieve.

The principal and her cabinet are very adept at ensuring the strengths of the staff are matched to the teaching groups. The effective selection of staff for grade teams has ensured good planning is taking place and that standards-related assessments are pitched at appropriate levels. Scheduling decisions are driven by the school's plan to raise levels of performance. Every student receives instruction in mathematics and English language arts for 90 minutes per day and always with the same teacher. There are common grade preparation blocks and weekly grade-wide professional development administrative meetings. Importantly, the special education teachers are also available for grade meetings. These all make a positive impact on learning. The teachers are fully aware of the academic and social needs of all the students and the students themselves state that they enjoy their lessons when the work is challenging. In many of the lessons visited student engagement was good. In particular this was seen where students were given the responsibility to reach conclusions and respond to careful questioning.

Attendance is improving and is in line with that of similar schools and other City schools. The school is concerned about making further improvements and a number of suitable initiatives are in place.

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 a rigorous selection procedure for her teachers. She aims to select lifelong learners who will fit into a young team and has succeeded in doing so. Potential candidates must have a compassion for children. They are required to undertake observations and then teach a demonstration lesson. The coaches and the assistant principals are included in the selection process.

A thorough professional development model has been developed by the cabinet and the whole staff is included in the program. This has very useful in helping teachers to become more confident at data analysis and subsequent planning. The workshops set up have been effective in improving the skill levels of the staff as well as providing them with an opportunity to turnkey knowledge gained from other courses they may have attended. The school is aware that staff need further development work on the differentiation of instruction and challenging the highest achievers.

The principal and assistant principals undertake a wide range of formal and informal observations which have been followed up with useful advice on areas for improvement. The newly introduced accountability forms are an impressive strategy to complement the monitoring of classroom practice.

Planning takes place routinely in teams and the high level of performance review and evaluation ensures that the rationale for next steps is thoroughly researched. The mutually supportive environment means also that teachers are confident about seeking each other's advice and ideas.

The entire school community has enjoyed strong collaborations with the Bronx Zoo, Young Audiences United Nations, Manhattan College and other arts projects. They have been well integrated into the instructional program and have proved important activities to enrich and enhance the students' learning experience.

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 undeveloped.

Goals have been established within the Comprehensive Education Plan which includes the development of a planning template and the development of differentiation for students. These goals are not, however, easily measurable and other numerical goals set by the cabinet are largely arbitrary in nature. There are no planned interim checkpoints and although the effectiveness of budgeting, intervention and professional development are being reviewed at class and grade level there is no real connection to overall goals.

Students are making progress within their classes, but the data generated is not consistently being used to help make interim diagnostic judgments. The quality of the use of data to measure progress is variable according to the skills of individual teachers. Periodic assessments are undertaken throughout the year and some grade teams are very

good at reviewing progress and modifying targets. The Comprehensive Education Plan however is not altered frequently enough to reflect the changing needs of the whole school. Staff members understand the school's goals and aspirations. However, ownership of plans is not clear throughout the whole school community. The evaluation of goals is variable and is not yet a part of each planning cycle for all of the various teams operating in the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Multiple Intelligences School [PS/MS 37]	∅	✓	+
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		