



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Edward R. Byrne School

**Middle School 101
2750 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10465**

Principal: Kim Hampton-Hewitt

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Reviewer: Mike Doran

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Middle School 101 was established in September 1998 and draws its multi-ethnic student intake from the whole of District 8 in the Bronx. The school was founded as a magnet school, housed in the Edward R. Byrne building with two other schools PS 304 and P10, to promote racial equity and unity within the district. The school operates a policy of admitting students who achieve levels 3 or 4 in State in reading and mathematics tests, and who are identified through a lottery drawing a minimum number of students from all the elementary schools in district 8. Its current population of 586 students in grades 5 to 8 reflects the cultural diversity of the district. The largest proportion, (55%) are from Hispanic families, with 21% Black, 14% White and 10% from Asian and other backgrounds. There are no special education students or English language learners. The school receives Title 1 funding.

The school has a very clear commitment to enabling students to reach high standards and has been recognized as a high performing and gap closing school by the State University of New York. The school has built upon its status as a magnet school to develop a distinctive curriculum with a special focus on science, mathematics and technology. The school has the highest attendance rate in Region 2 and almost graduating students transfer to specialized high schools or honors programs in the City's high schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The highly effective gathering and use of student performance data underpins the planning and delivery of well structured and carefully differentiated teaching programs in the classroom.
- The school has the full trust of the parents who hold the school and its staff in high regard.
- High expectations, shared with the students and parents, drive the work of the school and lead to high levels of achievement.
- Students are very well behaved and have a positive, responsible and enthusiastic attitude to their learning.
- The school provides a distinctive and highly effective personal development program for its students supported by a dedicated and multi-talented team of three counselors.
- Attendance is good and is well above the average in the local region.
- Staff support for one another is outstanding; they are well supported by a systematically planned professional development program.
- The principal, supported by a highly effective and committed administration team and lead staff, provides very good leadership to the school.
- The school provides a calm, orderly, safe and supportive learning environment for the students.
- The analysis and use of data to review students' progress and evaluate plans is a major strength.

What the school needs to improve

- The school's baseline testing does not sufficiently inform curriculum and instructional planning in science at the start of each grade.
- Individual student plans, with associated goals and timescales, are not yet fully developed.
- Some teachers do not use technology to fully support teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Student performance data does not fully inform the annual Comprehensive Education Plan about the comparative performance of specific student groups.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well developed school.

In the short space of time since her appointment, the principal has developed a positive climate of mutual trust and respect between the leadership, staff, students and parents. The school is a place where staff enjoy coming to work and where students want to learn. Teachers constantly reflect on their practice and align it closely to the needs of their students in order to accelerate their learning. The principal knows her students well. She also knows her colleague administrators and delegates very effectively.

The school's emphasis on the rigorous development and use of internal qualitative and quantitative data has been the key to year-to-year school improvement. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up about each of its students. This enables it to promote the highest expectations for academic achievement without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

Areas for improvement identified in this report are mainly issues that the school has already identified for development. Given its demonstrated capacity for change, the school is in a good position to carry out these further improvements.

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 well developed systems for collecting and analyzing a wide range of data relating to the performance and progress of individuals and groups of students. This includes information from standardized tests information produced by tests designed by teachers to monitor learning in subject areas of the curriculum and continuous assessment during lessons. This data, together with information about students' personal development, is carefully analyzed by teams of staff. The school's Tier III, Pupil Personnel and Academic Intervention, grade-level and subject-area teams collaborate effectively to give a detailed picture of the progress of each student and to indicate next steps in learning. Gap analysis is also used to identify and rectify particular weaknesses in the instructional programs and their delivery.

The assessments, scored and sometimes designed in school, play an important role in informing instructional planning on a continuous basis. The school recognizes that its baseline testing to inform curriculum and instructional planning in science at the start of each grade is not fully developed. The school has effective systems for tracking the progress of every student throughout the year and timely contact is made with parents during each marking period to address any concerns.

The progress of students in each subject area of the curriculum, class by class and grade by grade, is carefully scrutinized to ensure that teaching and learning are equally effective

for all students. School performance is compared with similar and city-wide schools. Present and past results and the relative performance of each cohort of students are compared as they pass through the school. The proportion of students achieving levels 3 and 4 in state tests for English language arts, mathematics and science has been maintained at a level well above that of City-wide and similar schools over the past four years.

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 very detailed performance data systems described previously are used effectively to ensure that students make good progress. The school has high expectations of its students, but recognizes that individual student plans, with associated goals and timescales, are not yet fully developed. The progress of students is monitored closely. Where there is a concern, parents are involved and students are referred to appropriate additional support or intervention programs, such as Saturday school, extended day, Generation 101, Project 101, or the Big Brother/Big Sister Program. The last three programs are led by a strong and talented team of three school-based counselors.

There are well-developed organizational structures that encourage teacher collaboration at grade and departmental level to improve the curriculum, instructional programs and assessment. The high level of trust that exists among staff means that teachers are not afraid to share reflection on their practice and make improvements.

The literacy and math coaches play a valuable role and ensure that the school’s programs for literacy and mathematics link with learning objectives in other subjects. The two coaches work effectively in close collaboration. Their shared understanding of how their subject responsibilities interrelate makes a significant contribution to accelerate each student’s learning.

The school communicates clearly and effectively with parents. It involves them from the start in their children’s learning. The school provides a wide range of well attended curriculum events for parents. They share approaches to teaching adopted in the classroom and link them to strategies parents can use to support their child’s learning at home. Parents appreciate the ready access they have to staff and the timeliness with which teachers let them know of any concerns.

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’s curriculum is firmly based on the high expectations of students and systematic review of their progress. All teachers are involved in curriculum development as they review and evaluate the impact of their teaching. In this way, the school very successfully develops its instructional programs to meet the needs of all students,

including, through preparation for the Regents examinations, the most able and the highest achieving students.

Instructional programs require students to be active participants in learning. Much teaching is of good quality, and some is of a very high standard. Teachers plan their lessons well, by following the "Point of Entry" model. They differentiate their teaching by using well judged individual and group activities. Collaborative learning in pairs and in groups is a positive feature of most classes. Students respond positively and enjoy these interactions. Some student discussion is of high quality and contributes significantly to their learning. Students feel confident to try out ideas and solutions so that they are able to respond to challenges without fear of "being wrong." Information technology is recognized as a powerful learning tool in the classroom but its potential is not yet fully realized. The school recognizes that a few teachers require sustained professional development support in order to implement these approaches more fully and consistently.

Students' attitudes to learning and their behavior are very positive. Attendance is the highest in the region, and well above city-wide and similar school averages. Student attendance is monitored closely and any absences are pro-actively pursued. Appropriate responsibility is placed on teachers to monitor and follow up such issues directly with parents. Students greatly appreciate the openness and approachability of staff and can identify a staff member with whom they would wish to discuss issues of concern. They also confirm that the principal's open-door policy works in practice.

Knowledge and data about student performance drives key decisions about the budget and resources, including staff. The school ensures that curriculum requirements are met and that students are well prepared for tests. It is also very concerned to provide opportunities for the development of broader skills and interests and offers enrichment and extension activities to interest and motivate students. The school's greatest strength lies in the detailed picture it builds up of each of its students, enabling it to promote the highest expectations for academic achievement but without losing sight of the need for individual personal development and support.

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 school carefully selects staff using a range of criteria and procedures, such as demonstrating a lesson, and involves the administrators in a rigorous interview process.

Professional development is firmly based on the continuous drive to improve student achievement and is well managed by the Tier III group in consultation with staff. It draws on rigorous monitoring of the school's performance. Newly qualified teachers, and teachers new to the school, confirm that the school provides an extremely supportive professional learning community. This is particularly important as most of the teachers have less than five years teaching experience. Discussion and debate in subject-area and grade-level teams is an important part of professional learning. The school provides a generous allocation of individual planning time for teachers, with carefully scheduled common time for teams to meet. This provides a forum for planning interventions, collaborative team teaching, and revising decisions in the light of new information. The school is actively considering how to make greater use of common planning time.

The school is a very calm and orderly place. It is welcoming to students, parents and visitors. The principal, assistant principal and other school leaders are highly respected. They provide a model not only of their high expectations but also of their care and commitment to students and their families.

There are productive partnerships with other schools for professional development and with high schools to prepare students for effective transfer. Without special education students or English language learners, the school receives little additional funding for paraprofessional support in the classroom. However, it is proactive in seeking financial support from a variety of sources. It has invested wisely in a strong team of three counsellors who run a wide range of student support programs and extra-curricular activities.

Formal and informal lesson observations and evaluation provide evidence of the effective implementation of strategies and developments. Teachers are self-evaluating and regularly reflect upon the impact of their work. Leadership team members rigorously analyze instructional practice and provide feedback to teachers. This, in turn, informs planning for professional development overseen by the Tier III group.

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.

All areas of the school's work are carefully planned and since they are based on all available data are kept under constant review. The way that the analysis and use of data permeates the school's practice is a major strength. Staff take responsibility for assessing and analyzing student progress and for planning, evaluating and revising interventions, according to need. Students are also engaged in the review process and have a formal voice in the decision making through their student government.

The Comprehensive Education Plan is a useful working document. It is reviewed as a whole, regularly throughout the year, and this is overseen by the school leadership team. In addition, elements of the plan are reviewed in team meetings and in the principal's regular discussions with particular teams such as the grade-level teams. The school recognizes that Comprehensive Education Plan fails to take into account the analysis of data regarding the comparative performance of specific student groups. Neither does it take account of the different starting points of students through consideration of value-added performance data.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edward R Byrne School (MS 101)	∅	✓	+
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