

The Metropolitan High School

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High School 248

**1121 Intervale Avenue
Bronx
NY, 10459**

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Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

The Metropolitan High School is a new school, which was set up in September 2005. It is a Replicate school, based on its sister school in Chicago and is committed to providing students with high quality education.

There are currently 98 students in the 9th grade. The school hopes to enroll students for the 10th, 11th and 12th grade in the next academic year. It provides an inclusive education and takes students from a variety of home backgrounds. Some come from a disadvantaged background and a few have special educational needs. Many students are performing below the expected grade level when they arrive at the school.

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Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has very strong and extremely effective leadership.
- Collaborative management ensures that the highly motivated, self critical staff constantly strive for excellence.
- A exceptionally committed, highly competent team of teachers are paving the way for students to learn successfully in this new school.
- Students display good levels of confidence in a climate of mutual respect and racial tolerance.
- The school has high expectations of how students will conduct themselves. The discipline policy is rigorously enforced to the benefit of students' well being and self esteem.
- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment for its students. Excellent relationships between students and teachers help to ensure a lively and positive learning environment.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the pass rates for science.
- Develop the students' use of literacy skills across the curriculum and insist on high quality written work in all subjects.
- Extend the current good practice of analyzing data to gain a better picture of students' progress, and devise effective intervention strategies where appropriate.
- Strengthen parental involvement with the school to help raise students' attainment.
- Seek to establish a fully operational, stable school leadership team.

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Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

This is a proficient school that is making good progress in its first year. It has some well-developed features that include the rigorous collection of data, a team of highly motivated, competent staff and very effective senior leadership. Since opening in September 2005, the Principal has appointed all of the staff and is continuing to select more teachers to build up her team. The culture of this Replicate school is one of high levels of commitment among all staff to the well being and achievement of individual students.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria.

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well-developed.

The school gathers plenty of data about students' attainment to track their progress over time and identify areas for improvement. For example, the data program 'Powerschool' is used rigorously by teachers to measure performance across all subject areas. Teachers grade students' work conscientiously and ensure that the grades are entered into the computer program and updated on a daily basis. This data is then readily accessible to be used by staff, students and their parents via the school website. For example, students are able to chart their performance for themselves, on a regular basis, to find out how well they are doing. Parents can also explore their children's progress in each subject and check up on whether or not assignments have been completed and graded.

The data collection system has only recently been set up but is already working very efficiently. Much of this success is down to the high levels of commitment and vigor shown by the staff and the Principal, all of whom are totally committed to the well being and high achievement of the students. For example, they have identified that the pass rates for science are too low and need to be improved significantly. Teachers have already begun to discuss how best to tackle this in order to push up the levels of attainment in the subject.

Suggestions to address this include developing the students' use of literacy skills to help them tackle work more effectively in all subjects across the curriculum, particularly in science, and insisting on high quality written work.

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Quality Statement 2: 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 undeveloped.

Through student and parent engagement, the school aims to reach out and involve everyone in helping to accelerate students' learning. The analysis of attendance data has meant that school leaders and teachers have been able to pinpoint trends in students' levels of attendance and identify patterns of tardiness, which has allowed them to monitor individuals. It has also led to some initial attempts at correlating these patterns with each student's attainment and progress, although this analysis is at a very early stage of development.

Despite the fact that the school has good systems for collecting data, it does not scrutinize the information as well as it could. Suggestions for improving this aspect include extending the current practice to gain a better picture of students' progress by analyzing the information more efficiently. This would help the teachers to set high goals for improving teaching practice and identify each student's next learning step. In this way, teaching could accelerate progress by way of more focus on collaborative planning and by the use of effective intervention strategies for students who are in need of more targeted support. In addition, greater parental involvement would help strengthen the links between the home and the school. This association would be beneficial to the students by helping the school to speed up progress and so raise attainment.

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school's curriculum is well suited for its students, all of whom are currently in the 9th grade. They learn effectively because the teachers adapt the content of lessons according to the needs of their classes and they include plenty of interesting ways of capturing students' imagination and curiosity. For example, linking up learning by using extracts from Verdi's Opera with texts from Shakespeare's Macbeth results in high levels of interest among students.

Instruction is good. It steers learning successfully and is based upon good organization of daily schedules and effective instructional programs. Teachers have high expectations of how students will conduct themselves. The discipline policy and dress code are rigorously enforced to the benefit of students' well-being and self esteem. This, in turn, leads to students displaying good levels of confidence in a climate of mutual respect and racial tolerance.

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Quality Statement 4: 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 has very strong and extremely effective senior leadership. The Principal has a clear vision of how the school should develop, in line with its sister school in Chicago. She has been inspirational in setting up this new Replicate school and in driving forward innovative practice, based upon her professional experience and expertise. She has already established an exceptionally committed, highly competent team of teachers, who are paving the way for students to learn successfully. They all work together in harmony for the best interests of the students.

Collaborative management ensures that the highly motivated, self-critical staff constantly strives for excellence. They regularly assess their own teaching and evaluate each others' methodology, frequently sharing best practice and pushing out the boundaries of new knowledge to help them establish goals for accelerating the learning of the students.

The culture of promoting students' well-being and achievement and a strong sense of shared goals is at the forefront of the recruitment process. The school is dedicated to making sure that all newly appointed staff share the school's vision and culture. Professional development opportunities hinge on extending the key strengths of the staff, in accordance with the school's stated goals so that it can build up a highly effective team of professionals.

Quality Statement 5: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment for its students. Excellent relationships between students and teachers help to ensure a lively and positive learning environment. Teachers know their students well and use a good range of assessment procedures to evaluate students' progress. The data gathered from formative and summative assessments is shared openly with students and their parents, as well as teaching colleagues, to evaluate progress and diagnose strengths and weaknesses. The school is aware that it needs to develop its analysis of data to help it adapt improvement plans and teaching practices more effectively.

The positive rapport between all members of the school community helps to ensure that the students' experiences are enhanced. For example, the school counselor works very closely with teachers to provide the best possible support to students requiring additional help and mentoring. Her tireless dedication and close collaboration with parents and families aid students' effectively, although the lack of a fully effective school leadership

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team is a drawback that hinders these links. The school is currently seeking the commitment of parents who will participate actively in school leadership team meetings on a more regular basis and so help the school to move forward.

Other key observations

This is a newly opened school with much potential. The dynamic leadership provided by the Principal is inspirational for the staff and students. Her dedication and high level of commitment is a strong feature. In addition, the lively teaching and boundless enthusiasm of the teachers adds vibrancy to students' learning that is highly motivating and empowering for them.

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Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 			X
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.1 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>	X		
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>	X		
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>		X	
<p>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</p>	X		

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Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.		X	
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.		X	
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	

Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X

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Quality Statement 5: 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.	o	✓	+
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 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 interim 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 each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.		X	