



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

**New Millennium Business Academy
Community Intermediate School 328
1000 Teller Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Doral Bastian

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Reviewer: John Francis

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The school is part of a campus shared with two other schools. It opened in 2004 with a focus on providing business classes to all students before graduation. This was not fully developed; however the school has recently decided to revert to its original vision. There are 317 students from 6th through 8th grade, with 45 of these being special education students. Approximately 52% of the students are Hispanic, 45% Black and 3% Asian or other ethnic groups and 17% of students are English language learners. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding. The school's absence rate for students and teachers is above the average of City and similar schools and a high number of students are regularly late for school.

The current principal took up the post six weeks ago at the beginning of this academic year. Many of the teachers have only been in the school for a short time, and most have fewer than three years experience.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has quickly and accurately begun to analyze the school's strengths and weaknesses and has made a start in addressing the most important issues.
- Many strategies have been initiated to bring order and structure to the school.
- The administration has a clear focus on gathering and analyzing data, which it is sharing with the teachers.
- Effective intervention strategies are being put in place to support students who are at risk of falling behind.
- Students at most risk of low academic achievement, poor behavior or absence are being successfully supported.
- The principal has a high profile around school and provides good support for teachers and students.
- There is a sense of unity and community among the teachers at the school who are eager to see the school progress.
- Use of diagnostic reading tests is matching books closely to the students' needs.
- The school has good links with other providers who offer a range of enrichment activities for the students.

What the school needs to improve

- Build the capacity of teachers to analyze data and to understand how they can use this to provide the focused planning and close alignment of work to cater for the wide range of students' needs.
- Through a detailed analysis of data from tests and assessments, target common weaknesses in students' learning to raise overall achievement in English language arts, mathematics and science.
- Develop targets for students in English language arts and mathematics for the end of each marking period or topic so that students' progress can be accurately monitored and share these with the students.
- Produce clear, measurable targets for improvement across all aspects of the school's work and a calendar to show how and when these will be monitored and evaluated to keep them on track.
- Address the low attendance and frequent lateness.
- Agree upon and implement a policy of rewards and sanctions to improve the behavior of students, involving both teachers and students.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school.

The school faces many issues around achievement, instruction, student engagement, behavior, absence and lateness. There are many areas relating to students' achievement that need to be tackled urgently. Graduation levels are very low. Currently teachers lack the skills to interpret and understand the test data that would enable them to shape the curriculum more effectively and target their planning and instruction more accurately.

However, the new principal has quickly and accurately evaluated the needs of the school and has already put in place a number of systems and strategies that are having a positive impact. With his high profile around school teachers feel supported and share an eagerness to see the school prosper. Incidents of disruptive behavior have reduced and the principal is clear about the expectations and boundaries he has imposed. He has begun to establish a commonly agreed culture that all subscribe to, both teachers and students but it is in the very early stages. The newly appointed principal has made an impressive start in bringing the staff along with him and gaining their confidence quickly. Given the willingness of the teachers to raise achievement, the school shows a good capacity for continuing improvement.

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.

The school is aware that it has not made effective use of the available data to fully analyze students' needs. The principal has quickly begun to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses in this area and put in systems and plans to address them. A good start has been made through faculty conferences to illustrate to teachers what the data shows and what that means for the school as a whole. So far, little has been done to compare the performance of students from different ethnic groups or by gender to evaluate the impact of different learning styles.

The standards of achievement for 2006 are very low with only around 10% of students in 7th and 8th grade making the graduation requirements in English language arts and mathematics. This was brought into sharp focus when the principal compared these figures with the performance of students in the other schools in the complex who come from the same area and have the same background. The school has some way to go in making effective use of the data it currently holds and in setting up useful formative assessment. This is an important step if teachers are to meet the needs of all students in their classes regardless of ability. Currently, too much of the instruction is the same for all students regardless of background or level.

The most effective use of data is seen where scores from diagnostic reading assessments are used to provide intervention for the lowest performing students. This diagnosis is ensuring a closer match of reading books to the students' needs. In mathematics, this analysis is beginning but is at an early stage.

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 undeveloped.

The principal and his cabinet have only the City and State data to work with at present. This has not been collated in a form that would allow close monitoring of the progress of individuals or groups of students over an extended period of time. There are no targets for students in either English language arts or mathematics for the end of each marking period or topic so that their progress can be accurately monitored. Neither are there any whole school targets for improvement over a longer time scale.

Progress is being made on developing internal assessment measures. There is recognition that developing assessment and data analysis systems will enhance the leadership role in each subject area, providing responsibility for setting the expectations, goals and numerical targets that will form part of the whole school development plan. Too few opportunities are provided to enable teachers to work collaboratively to agree upon the level of students’ work. This is required to ensure that internal data is consistent within and between departments and is robust throughout the school.

These strategies are important in the drive to raise overall achievement in English language arts, mathematics and science. The school acknowledges that detailed analysis from tests and assessments should be used to identify and then target common weaknesses in students’ learning. A similar emphasis is required to reduce the number of students held over each year. The teachers are aware of the very low levels of achievement and recognize the magnitude of the task facing them. There is a good sense of unity and collegiality among the teachers and they are eager to develop their skills and see the school progress.

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 undeveloped.

The administration is now focused on gathering and analyzing the data it has to provide a clearer picture of the school’s situation to share with all teachers. However, at present, there is no clear recording system for formative data that identifies targets for all students, so that their progress can be carefully tracked over time. The capacity of teachers to analyze data and understand how they can use this to provide focused planning is undeveloped, meaning that planned work is not closely aligned to cater for the wide range of students’ needs. In their planning, many teachers identify the learning objectives for the lesson but even where they do, these are not consistently used by teachers or students to evaluate their progress or success. In some instances the learning goals are merely a description of the activity students are to do rather than an understanding of what they are expected to learn. This limits the teachers’ knowledge of how well students have understood the concepts and prevents the students playing an important part in the assessment process. Daily grading and conferencing in class is not sufficiently meaningful to be used as formative assessment.

The school is being more effective in providing support for those students at risk of falling behind and is introducing intervention strategies to support their learning. However, it has not given enough thought to identifying those students who are close to grade level boundaries and identifying exactly what they need to move forward from where they are. Changes are needed in instructional practice to enable students to aspire to the next level, particularly those at the top of level 2 who need only a little encouragement to move into level 3. As there is likely to be a significant group of students at this stage in each grade, this would also have the effect of raising the school's overall grade level achievements.

Attendance in the school is well below the City average and that for similar schools. There is also frequent lateness. However, this does not only involve students but some teachers as well. The school has put strategies into place but additional approaches need to be explored, for example, setting targets for students and rewarding improvement.

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 undeveloped.

One of the top priorities for the principal has been to establish a safe and secure learning environment for students and he has initiated many strategies that bring order and structure to the school. This is starting to show impact in the reduction of serious incidents that occur. However, it remains an area for continuing development. As well as the work of the principal, there needs to be an agreed policy of rewards and sanctions, understood and consistently applied by all. Students would have increased ownership if they were involved in its formulation. One positive step has been in the identification of students most at risk from poor behavior, low academic achievement or regular absence and putting measures in place to support them and help their parents to be part of the solution.

The principal has a very high profile around school, as he regularly patrols the corridors and visits classes. This is seen as a very positive and supportive action by teachers. They like the way in which he engages students in discussion about their work. There are daily learning walks thorough the school by the principal and assistant principals. These are carefully recorded: strengths celebrated and development points followed through. The principal's evaluations are astute and well focused on improving instruction.

Teachers are developing the workshop model but it is not yet at a stage that will enable students to reflect on what they have learned, what helped or hindered and why. The principal has already identified that few teachers are ready to modify their lesson plans to provide different activities with the right level of challenge for students of different abilities in the same class. To make progress toward this, professional development is being planned to show teachers how they can use data to direct what and how they should plan for the range of achievement in the class. Higher-achieving students describe work that is too easy and that they are quick to finish. Many of the lower achievers need to constantly seek support from the teacher because they cannot access the text or understand the written instructions for their work. Data is used to target groups for additional support during the extended day but attendance at these is not high and not always enforced or followed up by teachers.

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.

The school recognizes that it is reaching the stage where it needs to make the Comprehensive Education Plan a manageable tool to influence school development. Teachers are not all fully aware of how their instructional practice relates directly to the agreed goals. There is the intention to include in this document, clear, measurable targets for improvement across all aspects of the school's work, and alongside this, a pacing calendar to show how and when these will be monitored and evaluated to keep them on track, but this is not yet in place. The principal and assistant principals have identified the importance of giving teachers the skills they need to understand and use data more effectively. Teachers are also clear that they will need to become accountable for the progress of their students.

Many teachers display the grading rubrics in English language arts and mathematics to show students what the expected levels are. However, this is not seen everywhere. These rubrics are not always clearly explained to students so that they understand how performance is evaluated. They are not commonly revisited at the end of the class to check on progress. Teachers do not yet know their students well enough, whether through formal or informal assessment. Additionally, there is little evidence of detailed feedback or grading of students' work in many subjects. While oral feedback does take place through conferencing, other written feedback is not sufficiently detailed or perceptive. Consequently students do not have a clear enough understanding of where they are going and the sequence of instruction is not adapted sufficiently well to address weaknesses in performance. This clarity is required to enable teachers to measure students' progress and performance over shorter periods of time as they work towards their grade level. Targeted interventions can then be introduced where needed.

There are examples of good practice in some classrooms that show proficient links between the social studies curriculum, for example, and English language arts. However, this is underdeveloped across the curriculum and better links would reinforce the school's drive to improve English by ensuring all teachers become teachers of literacy.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: New Millennium Business Academy (CIS 328)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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		