



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Magnet School of Multicultural Humanities

**Elementary School 253
601 Ocean View Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11235**

Principal: Lisa Speroni

Dates of review: October 11 – 12, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Stephen Walker

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Magnet School of Multicultural Humanities is an elementary school with 571 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 52% Hispanic, 38% Asian, 9% White and 1% Black students. The student body includes 25% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 94.4%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 86% eligibility.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal provides inspiring and forward-looking leadership so that parents, teachers and students greatly respect her clear vision for the school.
- There are high expectations that enable all students to experience success in their academic and personal development.
- The high degree of mutual respect between students and teachers leads to a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school.
- The school has a very good understanding of the performance and progress of all groups of students.
- Teachers keep very detailed assessment records for their classes, enabling them to highlight the precise learning needs of the individual students.
- Students who require additional support with their work are well supported by the academic intervention services.
- Parents and caregivers are regularly informed about the progress of their children and greatly appreciate the work of the school.
- The high quality of teaching ensures that students are fully engaged and motivated in the lessons.
- There is an excellent program of professional development for all teachers and support staff in the school.
- A rigorous process of school evaluation and analysis of assessment information drives strategic planning and school improvements.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that the curriculum and instruction continues to develop greater challenge and enrichment for the higher achieving students.
- Further develop the opportunities for parents and caregivers to become more fully involved in the learning of their children.

Part 3: Main findings

Progress made since the last review

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous Quality Review report.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

The Magnet School of Multicultural Humanities is a well-developed school with some outstanding features. The school has experienced a period of significant improvement and is now providing a high quality education for its students. The principal provides energetic and inspirational leadership so that teachers share her vision for school improvement. There is a good understanding of assessment information and a desire to improve further the progress of students. Teachers keep very detailed assessment records for their classes and this enables them to highlight the precise learning needs of the individual students. Academic intervention services assist students who require additional support with their work. The school recognizes the need to ensure greater challenge and enrichment for the higher-attaining students. Teaching standards in the school are very good and there is an excellent program of professional development for all teachers and support staff. Students enjoy school and are fully engaged and motivated in lessons. However, not all parents and caregivers are fully involved in the learning of their children. The school is continually seeking ways to expand the uses of assessment information to inform strategic planning. The school's inquiry team is already established and they have begun research on an identified target group of students.

The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues in the last school Quality Review. Staff are now more involved in self-evaluation activities, particularly through the grade and instructional meetings. Teachers are participating fully in consultations regarding the Comprehensive Education Plan. The school has also addressed the issue of providing more opportunities for English language learners. Additional support is provided through smaller classes and academic intervention services before the students are fully integrated into the main classes. The school is gradually developing partnership with community-based organizations. There are good links with the Brooklyn Arts Council which greatly supports the visual arts and dance programs. The school is developing other links with local organizations such as Coney Island Hospital, Lincoln High School and Music Wizards.

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 the student's progress over time.

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

The school has a very good understanding of the performance and progress of all groups of students. The school is focused on raising the performance of the students in State and

City standardized assessments. Teachers are confident in the use of assessment data to inform their planning and instruction. There are very clear procedures for recording assessment information so that teachers very effectively track the progress of their students. The school uses a wide range of data to understand student performance and progress. Running records and conferencing provide detailed records for reading and writing. The school monitors results on a monthly basis for each class and identifies students who are at risk of not reaching the required levels. The principal and vice-principals meet regularly with grade teams and individual teachers to discuss student progress and variations in progress between classes. There is an open discussion within grade meetings about differences between classes and subjects. The school makes a detailed analysis of previous performance and analyzes the trends at each grade level. The school highlights the small number of students gaining Level 4 and the need to ensure that the curriculum and instruction provides sufficient challenge and enrichment for the higher achieving students.

The principal makes a detailed analysis of similar schools in the peer group and visits schools in Borough Park and East New York to examine the progress of English language learners in Urdu speaking communities. There are very good systems to record the performance and progress of English language learners and special education students. The school undertakes a detailed analysis of progress differences between ethnic groups and highlights some underperformance among the non-Hispanic, White students in the school. The analysis of gender differences highlights the underperformance of a number of boys in grade 5.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student’s next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

Teachers keep very detailed assessment records for their classes and this enables them to highlight the precise learning needs of the individual students. Each teacher keeps records of specific skills in reading, writing and math so that individual areas of weakness are targeted during lessons. This helps teachers provide each student with very clear goals for improvement. Inter-grade articulation between teachers ensures that student progress records are passed on to the new teachers. All teaching is driven by the principal’s bottom line expectation that “the school is a data driven institution”. Grade teachers meet each week and discuss the individual progress of their students. Teachers highlight deficiencies in skills areas and the students who are not making the required progress. Students who require additional support with their work receive very good support from academic intervention services. Struggling readers are supported through the Wilson and Great Leaps reading programs. The school targets support for special education students and English language learners in small teaching groups. The main partners in intervention meet regularly as a pupil personnel committee to review the progress of students who are performing at Levels 1 and 2.

The school has high expectations for the students and this enables all children to experience success. The school works very closely with parents and caregivers who greatly value the work of the school. Communication with the parents is outstanding as the school regularly contacts them regarding the progress of their children. Parents are alerted quickly if their child is having learning difficulties and requires intervention support. The school uses every opportunity to invite parents to informational workshops about the courses and assessment procedures. All communication with parents is translated for the non-English speaking parents. Progress reports for parents and caregivers are detailed

and informative. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences is very good. Parents and caregivers are very supportive of the school but many are not fully involved in supporting the learning of their children at home.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The balanced literacy program and Everyday Mathematics provide regular assessments which highlight the skill areas of the students. The magnet specialty supports a very successful integrated humanities program for all students and encourages the integration of literacy and math. It also develops citizenship awareness and multi-cultural understanding among an ethnically diverse school population. The curriculum is broadened by the creative arts program of visual arts and dance which greatly engages the students. A wide range of highly relevant programs meet the needs of English language learners and special education students. The assignment of teachers and the scheduling of classes are clearly guided by the drive to improve student performance. For example, specific teachers work with higher achieving students in order to increase the number of Level 4 grades in the school. Budgeting decisions focus on improving students’ performance. The newly purchased Wilson Foundations phonics program helps students in greatest need of improvement and English language learners to develop word-level skills. New furniture in classrooms and the upgraded computer laboratory are the result of over a million dollars in grants.

The majority of teaching is very good and many teachers demonstrate outstanding practice. Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students. The high quality of teaching and planning encourages engagement and motivation in the lessons. The effective use of data encourages teachers to address the individual needs of students. The groupings of students within classes also support accurate differentiation. There is a real emphasis on “metacognitive accountability” so that students understand what they learning and why it is important. The high-quality display work provides a stimulating environment for learning in classrooms and hallways. Students enjoy the lessons and really appreciate how the teachers take time to explain the work. Some teachers are now using smart boards but the school is not fully developing the use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning. The high degree of mutual respect between students and teachers leads to a very positive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school. There is a real feeling of collegiality and support in the school “where little feet take big steps towards the future”. Students speak highly of the support and guidance from teachers and support staff.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school’s collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

There is an excellent program of professional development for all teachers and support staff in the school. New teachers receive ongoing support through coaching and mentoring. Trainers differentiate the programs of support depending on the individual

staffing needs. The math and literacy coaches provide excellent support for teachers with planning and instruction. Modelling of lessons and collaborative teaching provides good opportunities for teacher development. Lesson observations are well established in the school and all teachers have a formal observation by the principal or assistant principal with detailed, diagnostic feedback at least once per year. Teachers are encouraged to be reflective and evaluate their own pedagogical competencies. The school uses Marzano's *Handbook for Classroom Instruction that Works* as a training tool this year. Teachers use the grade meetings imaginatively as training and planning sessions. They give freely of their time for staff development after school and during lunchtimes through "chat and chews". There are regular "walkthroughs" by the cabinet team members and teachers adopt a very open approach to advice and support. The school does not fully use inter-visitations with their teachers in order to share good classroom practice. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis because expectations and procedures are clear and reasonable. There are high expectations in place that enable all students to experience success in their academic and personal development. One parent said, "the school is welcoming, calm and stress free. I am very lucky that my children are at this school." Student support services, including the guidance counselors, family workers and parent coordinators, provide very good support for the students and families. One student said, "the school cares about children and I enjoy this school."

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

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

Parents, teachers and students greatly respect the principal's clear vision for the school. She is a dynamic and highly effective leader. Her enthusiasm is infectious and she empowers staff to make the school even better. There is a clear aim throughout the school to raise standards in each grade so that students perform at or above the designated performance targets. Her cabinet team works well with the teachers in order to put the vision into practice. A rigorous process of school evaluation and analysis of assessment information drives strategic planning and school improvements. Staff involve themselves in discussions on school improvement via the grade meetings and whole school decisions are made based on teachers' understanding of students' progress. There are clear targets and success criteria within the Comprehensive Education Plan. The plan is guided by the analysis of assessment data and is a very good working document that provides clear direction on the action points for each subject area. Monitoring and evaluation of targets takes place on a regular basis.

There is a well-defined assessment program throughout the school in order to monitor and evaluate student progress. There are regular tests in each subject and parents are alerted if grades are unsatisfactory. The school identifies students who need extra support through a variety of intervention strategies. The pupil personnel team and grade meetings regularly monitor the effectiveness of intervention strategies. Teachers are held clearly accountable for the performance of their students and classes. The school is continually evaluating its performance and seeking new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students. For example, the revised targeted intervention articulation form now ensures more immediate support within the school for Level 1 and 2 students. The Magnet School of Multicultural Humanities continues to strive for excellence as it moves to the next stage of its impressive development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Magnet School of Multicultural Humanities (ES 253)	△	▶	✓	+	◇
Quality Score				X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather and generate data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor the students progress over time.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty provide . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
1.1 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of each student, classroom, grade level?					X
1.2 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of special education students?				X	
1.3 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of English language learners?				X	
1.4 an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of ethnic groups, gender groups and all other categories of interest to the school?				X	
1.5 a measurement of performance and progress based on the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grades and subject areas?					X
1.6 a measurement of performance and progress based on comparisons with similar schools?				X	
1.7 training, management systems and structures that support teachers in the use of school data to inform planning and instruction and to track the progress of students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 1				X	

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use data to understand each student's next learning steps and to set suitably high goals for accelerating each students learning.

To what extent do school leaders and faculty . . .	△	▶	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals?				X	
2.2 focus 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 identify and improve the performance and progress of those students in greatest need of improvement?					X
2.4 share whole school goals with all members of the school community to rigorously improve the performance and progress of students?					X
2.5 convey consistently high expectations to students and their parents/caregivers?				X	
2.6 regularly provide students and their parents/caregivers with information about the goals set for each student, and about each student's progress and performance, and how they can improve?					X
2.7 invite and enable parents/caregivers to provide useful information to teachers and the school about the learning needs and capacities of their children?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2				X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instructional Strategy to Goals: The school aligns its academic work, strategic decisions and resources, and effectively engages students around its plans and goals for accelerating student learning.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
3.1 select core curricular approaches that facilitate and provide meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and focus on raising the achievement of students?				X	
3.2 provide a broad and engaging curriculum, including the arts, to enhance learning both within and outside the school day?				X	
3.3 hold teachers accountable for the progress and learning of the students in their charge, for making instruction interesting and compelling, and for creating a positive safe and inclusive learning environment?					X
3.4 ensure that teachers use school class and student data to plan for and provide differentiated instruction that meets the specific needs of all the students in their charge?				X	
3.5 make budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions strategically, based on data, to meet the school's academic goals for all students?				X	
3.6 ensure that there is an environment of mutual trust and respect between all staff and students to support personal and academic development?					X
3.7 ensure that there are effective and consistently applied procedures to encourage and monitor student attendance?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3				X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The development of leadership, teachers and other staff capacity is aligned to the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.					
To what extent does the school . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
4.1 use frequent observations of classroom teaching by the principal and other available information to develop a differentiated strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction?					X
4.2 make professional development decisions strategically, based on data, to help meet the improvement goals of students and teachers?					X
4.3 provide frequent opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom instruction and to meet together in teams to plan, share effective practices, and evaluate one another's instruction in an open and reflective professional environment?				X	
4.4 develop effective procedures for the induction and support of teachers who are new to the profession or the school?				X	
4.5 align youth development, guidance/advising and other student support services around stated academic and personal development goals?				X	
4.6 consistently implement clear procedures that enable the school to run smoothly and encourage effective student learning?					X
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4				X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.					
To what extent do . . .	Δ	▶	✓	+	◇
5.1 the school's plans for improving student outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.2 the school's plans for improving teacher outcomes include interim goals that are objectively measurable and have suitable time frames for measuring success and making adjustments?				X	
5.3 teachers and faculty use periodic assessments and other diagnostic tools to measure the effectiveness of plans and interventions for individual and groups of students in key areas?					X
5.4 teachers and faculty use the information generated by periodic assessments and other progress measures and comparisons to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals?					X
5.5 school leaders track the outcomes of periodic assessments and other diagnostic measures and use the results to makes strategic decisions to modify practices to improve student outcomes?				X	
5.6 school leaders and staff use each plan's interim and final outcomes to drive the next stage of goal setting and improvement planning?				X	
5.7 the principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to effect change?					X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5				X	