



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Middle School for Academic and Social  
Excellence**

**Middle School 334**

**1224 Park Place  
Brooklyn  
NY 11213**

**Principal: Kathleen Clarke-Glover**

**Dates of Review: May 20 – 21, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Daniel J Purus**

## **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

## **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

## **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

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

## **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Middle School for Academic and Social Excellence is a middle school with 247 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 87% Black, 9% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 20% special education students. Boys account for 60% of the students enrolled and girls account for 40%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89.5%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 72% eligibility.

The school shares its campus with two other schools; a NYC Public School and a Charter School. This is the first year that the school has had its full complement of three grade levels. Many teachers are new to the NYC public school system and have less than five years teaching experience.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal has created an environment where students, their parents, staff and other administrators feel welcome, respected and appreciated.
- Professional development for teachers, both new and experienced, is valued and provided on an ongoing basis.
- Budget, scheduling and staffing are reflective of school goals and academic priorities.
- Teachers work during common preps to modify and enhance the curriculum as a means to increase student understanding in specific content areas.
- Systems are in place to keep parents informed of school activities, ongoing student progress and attendance and lateness issues.
- The school provides a wide variety of enrichment activities both in and outside of the school setting with good support for personal development.
- Student successes and accomplishments are recognized and celebrated.

### What the school needs to improve

- Establish a clear annual cycle of self evaluation through data, goal-setting, revision and review to support school improvement.
- Implement rigorous systems for the effective collection and use of data in order to monitor, analyze, evaluate and plan how to improve student learning.
- Ensure that teachers use all available data to set realistic goals in all major content areas for each student with interim steps and benchmarks.
- Provide in-depth professional development to enable all teachers to differentiate instruction to provide the right level of challenge for all students.
- Enable teachers to make better use of data in order to identify clearly what students know and can do, and to pinpoint areas for improvement.

## Part 3: Main Findings

### **Progress made since the last review**

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

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The principal has a vision for the school that is articulated to parents, staff, and students. Staff feel appreciated and are committed to the school. The social and emotional development of all students is a priority that results in an environment where students feel safe and well supported. Students are provided with a variety of after school and in school lessons and activities. Field trips, Broadway shows, clubs, and advanced classes in math are just a few of the ways the school enhances students' learning experiences.

Attempts were made by the school to address the items identified for improvement in the last Quality Review but little is in place to actually make a difference. Teacher professional development has continued but has not addressed the reliability of teacher-made assessments. Progress has been made in the systems for recording data as evidenced by binders available with printouts of standardized tests and some ARIS reports. Continued support for teachers in using data to inform instruction remains at the whole class level and has not reached the level where it targets individual student needs. New data on subgroups and an analysis of boys and girls results is available. Knowing when the girls out perform the boys leads to an identified focus to close the gap. Parents are well informed through the systems that are now in place and play an active role in the school, without the formal structure of a parent-teacher association. The school has been successful in strengthening parental engagement in student learning. Information is sent home to guide parents in how to support their children. Since the last Quality Review, much has been achieved through the appointment of the parent coordinator.

Coaches and administration identify goals and provide teachers with data. Teachers do not benefit from the valuable experience of participating in the analysis of students' work, to provide them with a deeper understanding of what students can and cannot do. Most data is used for solely appropriate class placement. The inquiry team studies a group of fifteen grade 7 students from the lowest one-third of students on the State math test. Through item analysis number sense became the identified focus for this group. The school broadened the work on number sense to a school-wide level

Data is viewed holistically with content area teachers. Whole class lessons may be modified to address grade level concerns. The school has not yet established systems for the regular, ongoing formal collection, review and analysis of data concerning individual progress aligned with supportive classroom practices that meet individual student needs. Students do not have individual goals to aim for and the administration has not put in place rigorous enough procedures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's work on student achievement.

### **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 underdeveloped with proficient features.**

Although the school collects and reviews data to gain a broad overview of student performance, it does not do so on a regular enough basis. General results of the proficiency levels on the New York State exams and City assessments are available, shared and reviewed, but are not used to understand individual student’s strengths and weaknesses at a deeper level. The data is not used to track progress continuously toward improved performance for the general, special education or English language learner populations. Teachers rely on teacher unit assessments and report card grades that are based on a school-wide grading policy to monitor progress. Pacing calendars or the scope and sequence drive instruction.

Teachers have a general picture of where student results fall and use this information for class placement. Coaches and the data specialist prepare and provide data for teachers. This information is kept in a binder, but does not inform the work and the activities that students undertake.

Staff have not yet received the necessary level of in-depth training on the Department’s assessment tools to gather, generate and use data in order to understand what each student knows, is able to do and to monitor their progress over time. The school has not provided professional development for administrators and teachers in the use of the ARIS system to provide a deep skill by skill analysis of each students’ strengths and weaknesses.

**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 underdeveloped with proficient features.**

The principal has established overall goals for the school, which are shared with parents, staff and other stakeholders. Goals are communicated via a school newsletter. These goals are very broad and do not reflect precise curricular or instructional goals that will improve student outcomes. Parents receive progress reports between report cards and teachers contact homes on an “as needed” basis to discuss both progress and difficulties students may experience in a particular class. This form of communication is effective in keeping parents involved in the progress their child is making in comparison to teacher expectations for success. The school uses the scheduled parent-teacher conferences effectively twice per year as an opportunity for parents to provide teachers with insight into their child’s learning habits, like and dislikes and to communicate the school’s academic and behavioral expectations. The school also uses progress reports well to keep parents informed about their child’s progress and learning needs.

A review of the New York State math data has been a good first step for the school. Through an analysis of the progress report and State results, the school has identified math as an area in need of improvement – more specifically number sense has been targeted as the area of weakness. Although the school has made this a school-wide focus, systems are not yet in place to set the next steps in the process toward improved student achievement in this area.

There is no process in place to set individual student goals other than those set for special education students on their individual educational plan. Teachers have a general idea of who performs well in class and who the struggling students are. The school does not set student goals based on up-to-date information. This means that teachers have no way of measuring student progress on a regular basis, or of modifying goals based on regular assessments. The opportunity to involve students in assessing their work and in setting new goals is missed.

**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 proficient.**

The school provides a good variety of in school, after school and extended day services to enhance the curriculum. Students experience Broadway shows, field trips related to content, visits to prospective high schools, advanced tutoring in algebra and clubs such as percussion.

Resources are allocated and aligned with the school's priorities. The principal has created support positions for a literacy coach and math coach to assist the teaching staff in improving teaching practices and as resource specialists for students in their area of expertise. The school is effectively addressing their priorities that are focused on organization, programming, attendance, maintaining an orderly environment and meeting the social and emotional needs of the student body. The school successfully addresses these priorities by providing additional staff where necessary, adding supplemental instructional classes such as a school-wide critical thinking period and enforcing expectations for appropriate behavior. There is a high level of mutual respect and trust between staff and students resulting in a high level of loyalty to the school.

Within the core curriculum, the process for the acquisition of interim data is not embedded into the fabric of the curriculum and daily lessons that take place in the school. The English language arts department has created a school-wide writing rubric and adjusts instruction based on observational soft data and on results of teacher designed tests. This is a developing model for all subject areas. Accountability for improving instruction and student outcomes to ensure that each student makes appropriate academic progress in all curriculum areas has not been formalized. The differentiation of instruction that takes place in the school is based on whole groups within a grade and not on individual student needs.

**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 underdeveloped with proficient features**

As a school in its third year of development, the principal has appointed new staff each year as grades are added to the school. The school effectively supports teachers new to the school. The principal assigns coaches to work closely with new staff and charges them with the responsibility to quickly acclimate them into the school internal systems and environment and support them in content area rigor and with classroom management strategies. Upon discussion with her cabinet, professional development plans are constructed based on observations made during classroom visits. This offers the same opportunities to all teachers. It is not effective as it could be in improving teaching and

learning as professional development is not differentiated to directly meet individual teacher's needs.

The effective use of common planning periods by department allows teachers to discuss curriculum across the three grades. For example an important curriculum decision from the math department was made after a discussion about the success of the current math program. After research the coach and staff decided to adopt an alternative program which has proven more effective.

Inter-visitations both within and outside of the school are arranged so that teachers can share good practice, but considering the lack of experience in some teachers they may not possess the skills to identify and analyze a good lesson. Coaching in the school has been effective in assisting new teachers so they may be able to incorporate observed best practices into their own teaching. Teachers regularly review student classroom performance, grades on teacher made assessments, homework and projects. When students do not demonstrate success or perform up the standards set by the teacher who then confers with students and/or parents to discuss issues that may be impeding their academic progress. This is an effective way to use classroom data to address both instructional and social and emotional needs.

**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 underdeveloped.**

The principal and school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school. The school has made the gathering and analysis of data a priority for the professional development of administrators, coaches and staff. However, there remains a lot more work to do before the school has consistent systems in place to track the progress and performance of individual students throughout the year, modify instruction to meet individual needs, evaluate whether or not the intervention was successful and plan goals for each student. Students in the lowest third have been identified and academic intervention services are being provided to these student. All identified students have also been assigned to the extended day program. Students outside of this targeted group know that if they need help they are free to contact a teacher at any time. Some teachers are available before school, during their lunch or after school. All of these intervention strategies lack effectiveness without a clearly defined focus and identified sub skills to be directly addressed.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Middle School for Academic and Social Excellence</b>	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
<b>Quality Score</b>		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 . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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 . . .	Δ	➤	✓	+	◇
2.1 engage in collaborative processes to set rigorous, 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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		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 and tardiness?			X		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent does the school . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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, and effectively address discipline related incidents?				X	
4.7 create effective partnerships with outside entities that support the academic and personal growth of the students?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>					
			X		

<b>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.</b>					
<b>To what extent do . . .</b>	<b>Δ</b>	<b>➤</b>	<b>✓</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>◇</b>
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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>					
	X				

◇	<b>Outstanding</b>
+	<b>Well Developed</b>
✓	<b>Proficient</b>
➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>
Δ	<b>Underdeveloped</b>