



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Medgar Evers College Preparatory School

Middle-High School 590

**1186 Carroll Street
Brooklyn
NY 11225**

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Lead Reviewer: George McLeman

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Medgar Evers College Preparatory School is a middle-high school with 912 students from 6 through grade 12. The school population comprises 95% Black, 3% Hispanic, 0.5% White, and 0.5% Asian students. The student body includes 0.2% English language learners and 2% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 89%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school selects its students by test and interview from a large number of applications. Since 2002 the school has gradually built up its middle school student population. This is its first year of the complete grade range from 6 through 12. The school has a collaborative relationship and dual enrollment program with Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York. High School students have the opportunity to take regular credit bearing courses on the college's campus.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- High expectations of academic achievement of all students are conveyed to teachers, parents and students.
- The firm leadership of the principal ensures the school is kept on track to meet its goal of “Dedicated to Excellence”.
- The support and participation of parents is a clear and positive benefit to the school.
- The close monitoring of test results enables the school to successfully evaluate students’ progress..
- The work of the counseling team makes a large contribution towards student progress and towards their goal of gaining college placement.
- Teachers are provided with frequent opportunities to observe each other’s instruction and classroom practices.
- The assistant principals share the drive to improve achievement and a have a strong commitment to improving instruction.
- The school provides a broad and engaging curriculum.
- Individual student goals are clear and they understand what next steps they need to take to achieve those goals.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the thoroughness and consistency of feedback to teachers after the principal and assistant principals conduct classrooms observations.
- Ensure greater accountability in making instruction interesting and compelling across the school.
- Improve teachers’ skills in differentiating instruction in order to successfully meet the needs of all students.
- Link professional development decisions to data gathered about teacher’s skills and student outcomes.

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 school has high expectations of all students. It selects students who have the potential and motivation to succeed academically, and the administrative team constantly conveys to teachers, parents and students the need to reach high and strive hard. It particularly encourages high achievement in the study of science, mathematics and technology, because these are careers where Black students are underrepresented. In many respects it has been successful in meeting its goals of being “Dedicated to Excellence”. High percentages of students earn Regents diplomas, graduate and are admitted to college. These percentages have steadily increased over the last three years.

The school uses data well to continually promote the progress of higher and lower achieving students. It has recently instigated an inquiry team. Its members include a selection of teachers, administrative staff, and guidance counselors. From last year’s grade 7 test data, the learning of the lowest 20 students was identified for diagnosis and remedy. This group of students comprises a significant number of boys. The group has identified specific items from the test that the students struggled with individually. The work of the school counseling team provides a strong contribution to the improving progress and performance of students. Additionally the strong partnership that exists between parents and the school positively contributes to the high expectations for student performance.

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last Quality Review. Data is now used more effectively in the individual planning of teachers, computers are now more widely used in learning, attendance has increased significantly and the school is addressing the disparity between the achievements of girls and boys. The school also recognizes the strategies established to improve differentiated teaching and to address the underachievement of boys will both need further work and review to gain the required impact on the quality of learning and progress. The school has also identified the need to use periodic assessments to discuss and review the impact of the professional development on the quality of the instruction.

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.

In its pursuit of high achievement, the school regularly and systematically analyzes data on students’ academic progress. Scores from State tests and subject exams, together with

teacher comments, are formally reviewed at marking periods twice each term. The main thrust of the analysis is to identify students or groups who are struggling, to continually challenge those who are thriving and to provide additional support or alternative programs where necessary. The guidance counselors play a significant part in identifying and supporting individual students. Analysis of test scores are also used to identify items where classes or groups have found difficulty. There is good understanding of students' progress from the rigorous use of these objective measures.

The school has a small proportion of special education students. Their needs are carefully diagnosed and recorded, and appropriate strategies are identified for improved learning. The consistent monitoring of data demonstrates good progress of all special education students. The comparative progress and achievements of girls and boys is also closely watched. The school's rigorous screening process initially generated an imbalance of the numbers of girls and boys selected for admission. Once identified, steps were taken to rectify the imbalance and the disparity. The disparity in achievement is also a topic identified for consideration and remedy by the recently established inquiry team.

The close monitoring of test data enables the school to ensure that the pace of progress towards college placement is maintained. The school's use of data contributes significantly to its academic success. This has risen over the last three years. Last year 93% earned Regents diplomas, 30% earned Advanced Regents diplomas and 99% were admitted to college.

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.

The principal sets clear, challenging goals for the school's continued academic success. These encompass targets for individuals, grades and subjects and are generally written in the form of increased percentages in test and exam scores or graduation rates. Individual students are left in no doubt as to their progress and the steps required to improve or maintain achievement. Struggling students are given additional support in their studies with extra tutoring, and participation at evening or Saturday classes. The student counseling service plays a large and effective part in the setting of individual goals, in monitoring progress and in diagnosing and remedying problems. Where difficulties are identified, they discuss the problems with the students and their parents and quickly establish new targets and strategies for improvement. This is a successful aspect of the school's work.

At subject department level, the assistant principals draft goals in relation to the school's overall targets. They firmly convey these to the subject teachers who scrutinize the students' scores in relation to the targets set. The administrative team pays particular attention to disparities of scores of students among similar classes and to where this relates to the quality of instruction. Following the identification of the imbalance on numbers and achievement between the sexes, the school has recently done much to rectify the situation and to raise the achievements of boys. It has ensured, for example, that the intake of students at grade is broadly similar despite clear indications that girls perform better in selection than the boys. Additionally, it has, in collaboration with the Medgar Evers College instigated a male empowerment program. The principal is convinced that gap in achievement is closing but this is not yet fully borne out by the exam results available.

The school goals and targets are also regularly conveyed to parents and caregivers. This is a feature much valued by parents. They comment on how the school staff is quick to spot and communicate any omission of homework or deterioration in their children's progress. This helps to form a strong relationship between home and school and contributes to the students' progress. The parents and caregivers are welcomed in the school, they are invited to sit in on classes, and they fully appreciate the school's efforts to raise the achievement of their children. In return the parents give much time to the school in the form of commitment to the parent teacher association and school leadership team. The strong support and participation of parents is a clear benefit to the school.

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 school promotes the study of math, science and technology and, while these figure prominently, the curriculum as a whole is wide, balanced and engaging. The core curriculum and electives encompass art, dance, music and all students study Chinese, French or Spanish. Despite the limitations of the building, the school provides a good range of extra curricular activities. These include choral, chess, athletics, dance and art.

The school uses test data well to allocate suitable programs, schedules and instruction for the students. At the direction of the guidance counseling team, students are allocated to small group activities, extended day and after school homework centers to help them individually and to collectively drive up achievement. With similar purpose, the school has a vertical staffing policy where subject teachers teach classes across the full grade range. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, and the policy is meant to combine detailed knowledge of the students with higher expectations of their learning. This is an interesting faculty arrangement but there has been no formal review of its impact on the quality of instruction overall.

While the administrative team and faculty use test data well to monitor students' achievements in tests, many teachers do not explicitly use it to differentiate instruction or assess learning during class. Some teachers rely too heavily, for example, on the responses of a few students and consequently do not have a clear picture of the learning and progress of the whole class. Similarly, the strong emphasis of the faculty on presentation and exposition, gives few opportunities to focus on the learners progress and difficulties. The school is aware of this, however, and is working on widening teaching approaches, increasing accountability and gaining greater effectiveness in the school's instruction as a whole. The school is also planning on tightening procedures to increase student attendance.

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.

The principal and assistant principals regularly visit classrooms to observe teaching and they frequently compare notes and discuss needs. This contributes to their detailed

knowledge of the quality of teaching across the school. At subject department level, teachers regularly discuss approaches and achievement data. They share perceptions and ideas, frequently visiting other classes to compare practices. There is little explicitly noted or conveyed to teachers from the informal visits of the administrative team, however, and teachers are not fully aware of how the team views the quality of their individual teaching. The data from the visits, together with the teachers' perceptions and student data are not yet used directly and productively in the selection and targeting of professional development both individually and collectively.

The selection of professional development activities is based on the views of the administration. From a recent scrutiny of the students' writing and an analysis of their test scores, it was found that more emphasis should be given to reading and writing in all subjects. It was consequently decided to instigate professional development across the subjects on this topic. This was well conceived but there has been no review or discussion of the response of teachers to this activity or of its impact on the quality of the instruction.

The school's guidance and counseling service is effective and valued. In the intensive drive to lift achievement, it offers good support to individuals who struggle with their work. Close monitoring and quick spotting of difficulties, together with full communication with parents, enables this service to contribute to the school's goals. The school's partnership with Medgar Evers College is a mutually beneficial one. The dual enrollment program offers opportunities for the students and the college to prepare for entry and the preparatory school gains from the use of staff, resources and premises.

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 proficient.

The school has clearly specified annual and longer-term targets and interim goals. It has, for example, the five-year goal of gaining 100% pass rate in the advanced Regents' diplomas. The school regularly and rigorously reviews its progress in meeting these numerical targets set. Each assistant principal keeps a close eye on the exam scores within their subject responsibilities and, where necessary, makes adjustment to the scheduling of programs or provides additional support for strugglers. This may also include additional tutoring, homework and extra school support. This is working well and there are numerous examples of mid term adjustments having successful outcomes on the students' accelerated progress.

While the school continually monitors its pursuit of students' achievement goals it does not yet place similar emphasis on looking rigorously at how developments at the school, including for example, the vertical teaching policy or the selection of topics for professional development, impacts on teaching and learning. The recent whole school professional development on reading and writing, for example, was securely based on test data, and from most accounts was well delivered, but the school did not look at how this was received by the faculty or how it contributed to improved instruction. The school is at an early stage of developing rigorous review procedures but it has the capacity and the motivation to meet this next challenge. The principal and the school community have a clear vision for the school.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Medgar Evers College Preparatory School	△	▶	✓	+	◇
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 make 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	