



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**East Side Middle School**

**Middle School 114**

**1458 York Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10010**

**Principal: David Getz**

**Dates of review: April 14 - 15, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Florence Olajide**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

East Side Middle School is a middle school with 364 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 7.96% Black, 11.6% Hispanic, 65.93% White, and 14.56% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and 9.1% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006 -2007 was 96.4%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal inspires the whole school community and together with staff successfully galvanizes students into becoming highly effective learners.
- Very positive relationships among all members of the school community foster a friendly and upbeat atmosphere around the school.
- Staff use the performance data very effectively to understand each individual student's needs and ensure they make good progress.
- The school provides students with an extremely creative and innovative curriculum which enables them to achieve well academically and socially.
- Students are provided with very good care and emotional support.
- Collaboration among staff is very strong and they work as a highly effective team to devise and review the school's outstanding curriculum.
- Professional development activities are highly effective in ensuring that students receive good instruction which meet their needs and interests.
- The principal visits all classes frequently and makes excellent use of the information gathered to facilitate the professional development of each teacher.
- The exciting curriculum and school environment promote excellent attendance.

### What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that assessment data on ethnic and other sub-groups is analyzed carefully to address any differences in students' performance and progress.
- Refine the improvement planning process to ensure that all action plans are in written form, and include measurable goals and clear timeframes for implementation.
- Revise action plans in a timelier manner and use the data more systematically to inform professional development activities and to measure the impact of plans and intervention programs.
- Quicken the pace of implementing strategies designed to accelerate the progress of the students who are greatest in need of improvement.

## Part 3: Main Findings

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

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

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### **This school is well developed.**

This popular school provides students with an innovative, and extremely exciting and enjoyable curriculum, which motivates them to attend school regularly and achieve very well. The principal leads the school very well and has successfully fostered a very positive and collaborative environment which is strongly focussed on developing students into effective learners. He monitors the quality of instruction very closely and makes good use of this information to promote appropriate professional development activities to improve it, so that most students are able to make good progress.

The school collects and analyzes a variety of assessment data pertaining to the progress of individuals and most groups of students. However, it does not yet check for trends or noticeable differences in the performance of ethnic groups across the school even though this was identified as an issue in the previous quality review. Staff understand and use the information on each student well to differentiate their instruction and provide appropriate intervention programs to accelerate the progress of individuals who are underachieving. However, the inquiry team's work to improve the progress rate of the group of students who are in greatest need of improvement is moving at too slow a pace to make a significant impact in the short term.

The school has suitable procedures for involving the school community in identifying appropriate goals for improvement each year although some of these are not stated in objectively measurable terms. Some of the action plans are not in written form and those that are do not contain clear timeframes for implementation. As a result, procedures for monitoring and reviewing the school's progress toward its goals are not very systematic and data is not yet used as effectively as it could be to inform school-wide professional development activities or to measure the impact of plans and intervention programs.

The pastoral care and guidance provided for students enables them to develop well socially and emotionally. Parents and students appreciate the effort that staff put into ensuring that each student is well-cared for and motivated to do well. Since the last quality review, the collaborative teaching program has become more firmly established within each grade and it is successful in enabling special education students to make very good progress and achieve well. The use of technology to aid instruction and improve engagement in learning has improved, with interactive whiteboards and laptops being used more widely by teachers and students.

## **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 uses a variety of assessments to collect useful data about students' performance and progress. While these include some standardized tests, assessments tend to be created by teachers on a regular basis to track students' progress. Data analysis is strong and teachers have a very good awareness of the performance of individual students, grades, gender groups and that of special education students. The school effectively monitors the progress of other groups that are of particular interest, such as the reluctant male readers. However it does not track the data to compare the performance of different ethnicities in order to discover reasons behind any differences. The school does not have any students who are English language learners and therefore has no need to track this group.

The school puts the information it gathers to good use. For example, having noticed the slow progress of eighth graders in math, it has modified its practice in grouping students for math instruction within the grade, as well as providing additional support for the current group. The school is part of a network within which it compares its data and explores performance issues. It also visits these schools to explore teaching strategies and the impact they have on students' progress. Staff have been provided with appropriate training to enable them to use and analyze data from the standardized tests effectively. The school has started to look at methods for moderating the assessment of writing tasks to ensure greater consistency in practice across teachers.

**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.**

Staff have a good understanding of what the school's goals are and parents have a satisfactory overview of its priorities. This has been achieved through informal but regular discussions with all members of the school community. The goals clearly reflect issues that have emanated from the school's analysis of its data. Nonetheless, some of them are not easily measurable and no timeframes for implementing actions have been defined. The school is very good at focusing on groups of students of particular interest especially where data and qualitative evidence suggest anomalies in their progress and performance. The school specifies improvement goals for these groups. Special education students also have clear and measurable individual goals, and their parents rightly feel that they are fully involved in the goal setting process for their children.

The inquiry team is currently engaged in researching students' thinking processes in relation to how they deal with mathematical problems. The school acknowledges that although the research is having an impact on improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of how students learn, it is less likely to have any impact on their progress this year.

Expectations of conduct and of attitudes to work and learning are high and these are shared with students and parents at the beginning of each year. The school has strong communication systems with parents and technology, especially email, is used particularly well to exchange information about students' progress. Parents therefore are kept up-to-date and well-informed.

**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 provides students with an exciting and highly relevant curriculum which they thoroughly enjoy. Students have access to an excellent range of electives both within and outside of the school day. These include technology, a wide range of sports as well as unusual subjects such as knitting, Spanish movies, and comedy. These successfully motivate students and are partly responsible for the high attendance rate which the school has maintained for several years. Staff are very creative with the curriculum. They ensure that intervention programs harness students' interest thereby promoting very high levels of engagement. The innovative graphic novels project, for example, has successfully rekindled boys' interest in reading and is helping to accelerate their progress in English language arts.

Students enjoy positive relationships with staff based on mutual respect and trust. They feel that staff go out of their way to ensure that they succeed by providing them with good guidance on how to improve and extra help when they need it. One said, "teachers want you to succeed; they set up different ways to help you do this". Another commented, "They keep you informed of your grades well in advance and give you time to catch up". Data collected from assessments is used effectively to modify instructional programs and to devise appropriate intervention programs. For example, an additional teacher has been deployed so that the 8th grade is now taught math in two parallel classes. This is enabling instruction to take place in smaller groups and has significantly improved differentiation. These strategies have the potential to impact positively on student achievement but it is too early to see if this is the case.

**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 school places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional development and uses its partnerships with external agencies effectively to ensure that staff receive appropriate support and training. The work of these outside agencies is complemented by the support provided by the principal and the two staff developers. The principal monitors instruction on a daily basis to ensure that it remains relevant to students' needs. He uses his very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in instruction, gathered from these frequent observations of teaching, to identify appropriate training and professional development opportunities for each member of

staff. Some of the professional development activities planned for the future reflect the school's goals and issues emanating from the data. However, at present, there are no formal written plans which specify the focus of professional development activities for the year at a school-wide level. It is therefore unclear as to how well current professional development activities are aligned to the school's strategic goals.

The very positive relationships among staff facilitate useful interclass visitations and other very effective collaborative activities. For example last year, up to 12 teachers were involved in a 'Lesson Study' staff development program. This involved teachers co-designing lessons, observing the lessons for evidence of learning, debriefing each other, then re-teaching the lesson based on the input of other teacher-observers. This activity had a significant impact on improving the consistency of the quality of instruction. Staff also learn from informative visits to other schools. The school does not have a large turnover of staff but there are suitable structures in place to support new teachers to the school.

The school has a very effective behavior policy which promotes peer accountability and collective responsibility. The majority of staff implement this consistently and, as a result, students understand the school's expectations and behave very well. Students receive very good pastoral care and guidance from staff. This includes very good support from the school counselor in ensuring that students transition easily to high school. The school also runs a mentoring project for boys, which provides them with positive male role models and timely counsel.

**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 principal has a clear vision for the school which is shared by staff and parents. His charismatic leadership style has helped to build a strongly collaborative work ethic among staff. This facilitates the easy flow of information, and ensures that the school's goals are widely known. However, some of the goals are not objectively measurable, and plans generally fail to specify clear timescales for implementing actions.

Assessment data is used well to make strategic decisions to modify practice. For example, a math intervention teacher has been hired to work with students at risk of failing. Based on the good knowledge that teachers have of the progress of each individual student, they modify instruction to ensure that it is effective in enabling most students to make good progress. However, the school is not systematic enough in using its data to evaluate the impact of the strategies directed at wider groups on an ongoing basis. This means it is unable to make timely changes within the year where necessary. For example, it has not yet analyzed its internal data to see if the structural change to the way math is being taught in the 8th grade is having the desired effect on students' progress. While the school argues that it will know this from end of year standardized tests, it is missing opportunities to use the data to determine whether early revisions to the plans are required. The lack of a more systematic monitoring and review process mean that the school is unable to maintain a very clear overview of its progress towards achieving its overall goals.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: East Side Middle School</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?				*	
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>