



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Millennium High School

High School 418

**75 Broad Street
New York
NY 10004**

Principal: Robert Rhodes

Dates of review: February 26 – 27, 2008

Lead Reviewer: Linda Hill

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Millennium is a high school with 519 students from grade 9 through grade 12. The school population comprises 10% Black, 18% Hispanic, 32% White, and 39% Asian students. The student body includes less than 1% English language learners and 1% special education students. Boys account for 38% of the students enrolled and girls account for 62%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 96.0%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

The school is positioned on the 11th, 12th and 13th floors of the International Telephone Building in the heart of the business district, which serves as an inspiration to students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- All staff replicate the strong leadership of the principal in providing a clear vision for the school.
- All school members understand and contribute to the high expectations.
- The wide range of curricular opportunities linked with the YMCA after school program allows students to gain a broad and rich experience.
- The strong sense of community that includes staff, parents and students creates high levels of collaborative trust and respect for all.
- Highly effective systems and an enjoyment of learning ensure very good attendance and punctuality.
- There is high quality professional development for both new and established teachers.
- A culture of learning and reflection for both staff and students supports whole-school, class and individual goals.
- Extremely effective guidance procedures are in place to make highly collaborative links between home and school.
- The exhibition, independent research, process prepares students extremely well for future college and working lives.
- There is a clear sense that the school cares about every individual student's success.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend the use of data to support planning for gender and mid-level performing students in line with other good practices.
- Use data for better comparative analysis, such as between genders, in all areas.
- Use the well-established visits to other schools to research different uses and interpretations of data that can be applied effectively in school.
- Develop planning across, as well as in, grades to raise differentiated skill set requirements even further.

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.

Millennium High School has made good progress since the last Quality Review because of the devolved and collaborative approach to leadership provided by the principal who provides an excellent role model for all. This shared responsibility means that everyone understands the demands of the school and of the needs of individual students. Millennium High School works hard to help individual students to progress. The inquiry team is a natural extension of this process and they have clearly identified one group of students, their levels and the curriculum area needing their attention. However, the school has not given sufficient focus to cohorts in general at the level that it has for individuals. For example, aside from the inquiry team focus of one cohort, monitoring and extending the progress of middle achieving students and considering issues affecting gender are insufficiently developed. The school is aware of what it needs to do next and has many opportunities for teachers to visit other schools where it can gather examples of different practice to use in Millennium High. Teachers are also looking at best ways to extend planning through all grades to increase progress and track it more readily. Students are supportive of one another and proud of their learning and the other opportunities they receive at school. Millennium High School helps them develop skills that will equip them for their future lives. Staff work diligently and in a committed manner to plan for, and provide, a stimulating and demanding curriculum. They model for students that collaboration, learning and reflection are essential to success and this adds to the open, respectful and honest ethos that exists within the school. Students respond well to the examples provided. The student government system adopted by the school and supported by staff and local business leaders extends this ethos, providing a further opportunity to learn life skills and to participate in collaborative activities. Students have many and varied opportunities to extend their learning beyond the school day, including trips to other countries that they raise funds for themselves, a wealth of sports, creative and other activities. They enjoy coming to school because of the challenge and support they receive. They know their teachers “really care” about them. Parents are supportive and proud of the work of the school, rightly believing that if their children miss school, they miss out.

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 range of data well, including baseline and interim assessments, to gain an insight of where individual students are in their learning. The principal personally

monitors the results of subject assessments, providing written feedback to departments, and challenging teachers to explain results and to decide what they will do to change instruction and increase student progress as a result. The advisory team uses the data generated by such assessments about and with individual students to review learning and set goals both for future progress and for improved general skills. The school provides very good quality training and support for teachers to understand and use data so that they can improve ways of instructing their students.

Data use, to track the increasing numbers of special education students, is equally robust, leading to modified curricula to help these special education students progress. Although English language learners represent a very small percentage of the school's population, the school analyzes data from Regents and interim assessments to gain an understanding of the skills needed by those students to succeed. This has resulted in improved outcomes for English language learners. The school has increased its use of data to provide a good understanding of the progress of both higher and lower performing students and of ethnicity since the last Quality Review, but does not analyze gender fully. It now also intends to consider more the needs of middle performing students to discover the best ways to differentiate their learning and ensure their rapid progress. There are many and frequent opportunities for staff to visit other schools as part of their professional development, but as yet, these visits do not provide sufficient information on the use of data or enable quantitative analysis and comparison with similar schools.

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 and extended leadership, leading by example, has established a school ethos of reflection and mutual support that enables very effective collaboration to take place. Such collaboration supports the process of deciding what steps students need to take to improve their learning, because they themselves are fully included in the process along with their teachers. The inquiry team has identified Level 2 history students as an area of focus through the school's collaborative analysis of data. The school now understands that these students have an equal chance of reaching a Level 3 or remaining at a Level 2 and so it is concentrating on raising the outcomes for those students.

Students have a high sense of responsibility for their own learning and enjoy contributing to that of their peers. Students complete three demanding "exhibitions" during their life in the school. These are independent research projects that are carefully stepped to increase challenge over time. Students then become part of the assessment process for their peers. This reflective and collaborative approach means that expectations are extremely high and shared by the entire school community. It enables students and teachers to provide a range of support for students who may be finding work difficult and the school integrates special education students seamlessly into classes with good support. Students even speak of being able to "empower" their peers and high expectations even lead to students occasionally referring other students to guidance for personal support. The principal's address to students in the student handbook shows how much their contribution is valued in the school. He writes, "All students are urged to come forward any time with their ideas for programs that will make Millennium a better place for all".

Parents are fully involved in their children's learning. They attend exhibitions given by students, conferences with teachers and guidance and receive frequent information through the "at risk" lists, report cards, surveys, letters, email and the school website. The school has adapted some out of hours' provision because of requests and suggestions by parents.

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 is committed to finding highly creative and innovative approaches to aligning the curriculum to State standards to provide a rich learning experience for its students. The exhibition process is a good example, as students learn how to become independent thinkers who are able to research information and present it effectively according to clear rubrics. Teachers plan collaboratively within grades and the advisory team helps them understand students' needs across these individual grades. However, not all teachers differentiate instruction consistently nor are they all clear about the skills students require for a particular subject in all grades.

Learning opportunities for students are many and impressive. These also contribute to their independent development. A good example being the students' own efforts to fund a trip to Chile where they worked alongside others for the benefit of the local community as well as increasing their own learning. Their personal development was greatly enhanced by the planning, team building and responsibilities required to make the trip happen. The school is planning to extend such trips.

The school spends budgets and hires teachers strategically to support the ethos and high expectations of the school. The collaborative ethos of the school means that both students and teachers are included in the hiring process and are jointly responsible and accountable for creating a positive learning environment. Behavior in class is exemplary because lessons are exciting, interactive and engaging and students want to learn. There are also high quality resources such as science equipment that extend the independent research skills of students. The dean monitors individual students extremely effectively, and students enjoy coming to school, resulting in very high attendance and students arriving on time.

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 outstanding.

This is an open and reflective school that constantly strives to improve. To enable the highest possible professional development for teachers in reaching the goals of the school, the principal has created an extended professional development team with clear roles and responsibilities. Consequently, there are well-structured, effective and frequent opportunities for staff development, which begin at the selection stage when prospective new staff deliver an example lesson to ensure their instructional standards meet the stringent requirements of the school. The school provides extremely good support for staff new to the school, but also has very high expectations of them. There are several

rigorous formal support and monitoring systems for all staff, such as regular observations, coaching and personalized professional development on an aspect of instruction such as questioning skills to improve student learning. These approaches ensure good quality instruction and maintain high expectations. However, most impressive is the constant informal sharing of good practice and the open door policy in all areas of the school. This enables instant feedback to teachers to improve practice and illustrates the trusting relationships within the school. There are many opportunities for staff to visit and learn from other schools.

Guidance and support services are equally effective. To ensure students understand fully what they need to do to improve, each individual receives guidance and goal setting advice, linking both academic and personal development in a seamless way. Despite the small size of the school, it provides an impressive array of partnerships with other entities to promote the academic and personal lives of students. They are able to participate in a range of trips, sports, arts and business events that show the students other ways of learning. In the academic year of 2006-2007, students had the opportunity to benefit from almost 70 after school activities and the number is increasing all the time.

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.

The school has improved its monitoring of individual students since the last Quality Review and now has a clearer understanding of the progress of individual students, including special education students whom the school integrates into general education classes. The effective guidance and support procedures have contributed to this success, as has the collaborative and reflective approach to planning for curriculum change and adjustment after considering data. Interim monitoring provides a clear data set that teachers can then use to adjust what they need to teach within individual grades, although practice is not yet entirely consistent across grades as not all members of the professional development committee are equally conversant with data interpretation against school goals. The school does understand well skill demands across the curriculum and has identified writing as an issue, so it is adapting writing in science and the rubrics for exhibition pieces as a result. The school is working hard to ensure full differentiation in class to meet the needs of all students. Teachers are at different stages of experimentation, using a range of stimuli, resource, grouping and questioning skills. The professional development team continues to advance different aspects of differentiation with individual teachers so that students can have even greater success in State tests. Equally robust monitoring and revision procedures have led to the school responding to student requests for increased advanced placement courses in the coming academic year, looking for ways to accommodate their demands without compromising other aspects.

An impressive aspect of Millennium High is the ethos and vision within the school. Parents feel that the school requires and provides academic rigor, develops community awareness and is a supporting, collaborative, nurturing and safe environment for their children.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Millennium High School	Δ	▷	✓	+	◇
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 . . .	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	
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 . . .	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	
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 and tardiness?				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, 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
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

◇	Outstanding
+	Well Developed
✓	Proficient
➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features
Δ	Underdeveloped