



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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Michael J Petrides School**

**Elementary-High School 080**

**715 Ocean Terrace  
Staten Island  
NY 10301**

**Principal: Joanne Buckheit**

**Dates of review: December 4 - 6, 2007**

**Lead Reviewer: Martin Newell**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Michael J Petrides School is an elementary-high school with 1273 students from kindergarten through grade 12. The school population comprises 17% Black, 17% Hispanic, 57% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes .02% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 93.2%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective and respected leader who continually sets the bar of expectation higher.
- The school collects extensive data to monitor and evaluate students' performance.
- School leaders have a very clear and strategic vision of what is needed to take the school on to the next level.
- The school's highly successful graduation rate is aligned with how it builds students' confidence, self esteem and love of learning.
- Instruction is often challenging and fun and makes good use of data to match work to the individual needs of students.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum and wide array of enrichment activities enthuse and motivate the students in equal measure.
- Students add much to the success of the school through their very good behavior, desire to do well and readiness to look out for one another and in making it the place to be.
- Instruction and learning are monitored and evaluated regularly and the guidance given is valued, acted upon and leads to improvements.
- Professional development is used well to meet the needs and aspirations of the school and individual teachers.
- The principal purchases high quality resources and makes the best use of the individual skills of teachers to impact on the quality of learning.

### What the school needs to improve

- Make the best use of all available data to rigorously measure progress as well as it measures performance.
- Ensure all teachers emulate the practice of many in utilizing data to drive and differentiate instruction.
- Improve the marking and leveling of student work by making clear goals for improvement or explaining why a piece of work is good.
- Raise students' awareness of their individual goals for improvement and enable them to play a more active role in setting their own targets of success.

## 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.**

Michael J Petrides is a school with many strengths. The success of the school owes much to the leadership of the principal. She is the catalyst for making things happen, continually improves the school from year to year and brings students, staff and parents with her. She is highly respected within the school community and beyond, but there is no sense of complacency, just a fervent desire for the school to be the best. Testimony to this is the rigorous and effective way in which the issues from the last review were addressed. There is a very strong sense of team spirit that envelops the school and all staff and school leaders work together with one goal and one vision, which is success for each individual student. Much of this is realized because every student that leaves Petrides graduates. But there is more than this because students leave as confident, self-assured and caring individuals who are more than ready to face new challenges.

The school collects an extensive amount of data and analyzes it well to evaluate the performance of students by achievement, gender, ethnicity, grades and subjects and the inquiry teams have already done much good work in seeking to accelerate the learning of those students in greatest need. The school is quick to identify any dips in performance and to put in place strategies for improvement. The school is fully aware however that it does not track the progress of students as well as it evaluates their performance and plans are on hand to tackle this. Good attendance rates abound because students do not want to miss anything that is offered. Students are motivated, very well behaved and eager to do well. Younger students rightly see older students as role models to aspire to. Older students show high levels of care and respect for their younger counterparts. Students are now ready to take a more active role in their own learning by setting their own targets and goals. While there are some good examples of marking students' work with clear levels and pointers for improvement, this very good practice is not yet embedded in every class. The curriculum is packed full of music, physical education activities, art, performances and foreign languages, all in addition to the key core subjects. Add to this the outstanding enrichment opportunities and it is easy to see why students see school as the place to be. Key to the good learning that students benefit from is the good instruction that is evident in many classes. This is because it asks a lot of students, keeps them engaged, on their toes and is often well matched to their individual needs. When this is not the case it is because teachers do not make use of data to guide instruction. Staff at the school are always looking to improve and regularly attend professional development activities geared to their own as well as the school's needs. They readily take on board comments made by school leaders and colleagues to improve their instruction. The principal's shrewd awareness of individual skills results in staff being assigned to where they will have the most telling impact.

## **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 collects an extensive amount of data through a vast array of assessments. This enables the principal and other key school leaders to have a very good grasp of the performance of students across grades and subjects. The rigorous manner in which the school analyzes data means that it gets a good picture of how different groups of students are performing. Its systems are such that comparisons of performance are made and knowledge is plentiful about the performance of special education students, English language learners, ethnic and gender groups and of classes within grades. The principal has facilitated visits to other schools to look at their practice and performance and to see how this school can benefit from the practice of similar high performing schools. The key factor is that the principal leads the drive to tackle any areas for improvement that data analysis highlights. Improvements have been seen in the performance of Hispanic boys and girls' performance in math and science because strategies, resources and staffing decisions have been targeted to these areas. The inquiry team is also doing a good job of supporting and enhancing the learning of students in particular need. When all of these factors are put together they go some way in explaining the school's high level of performance where all students graduate. The principal shows a fervent commitment to take the school on to the next higher level. For this to happen she recognizes that the progress of all students has to be tracked as rigorously as their performance because at present data analysis is geared more to performance. Inroads have already been made because two data specialists have been hired whose task is to "help staff to ensure all students make good progress".

**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.**

Whole school goals are derived from drilling down into data, and expectations and targets are set at grade and class level to make these goals a reality. Goals are generated and evaluated through cabinet, faculty and grade meetings, and the setting of challenging but achievable timeframes adds to the sense of accountability. The school has set up four inquiry teams for the different ages of students in school. This work is already well advanced and accelerating the learning of those students in greatest need of improvement. A particular strength is that strategies that are working for these students are utilized for other students in the school. This readiness to disseminate successful practice and instruction is a key factor in the school's success. The principal leads the way in setting high expectations which is reflected in the belief that if graduation for all students is to be the ongoing goal then all teachers must play an effective part. Students are under no illusion as to what is expected of them both academically and socially. This is because of the consistent manner in which all staff set the bar of expectation high. The areas for development are to make students more aware of their individual targets and goals, for students to play a more active role in setting some personalized goals and for the marking of students' work to be used as a vehicle for making clear what has been done well, why and what needs improving. There are some good examples already

evident in school but it is not yet prevalent in all classes. Parents greatly value and appreciate the openness and accessibility of the school and staff. They readily approach and share with the school if they have any concerns about their child's learning, confident in the knowledge it will be acted upon.

**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 a vibrant and challenging curriculum that motivates and enthuses students of all ages. The core curriculum centers on the development of students' English language arts, math and social studies skills. A good emphasis is also given to enhancing students' investigative and problem solving skills. The school is rightly looking at how to improve students' writing skills through their utilization across different subjects of the curriculum. A real strength lies in the emphasis given to the arts through the school bands, orchestras, choirs and through initiatives such as artists in residence. The standard of musical performance is very high as is the school's success in physical education competitions both statewide and beyond. Enrichment activities are outstanding because they include a wide array of sporting, musical, dance, environmental activities and a plethora of academic clubs. Trips to museums, galleries, theaters, and further afield to Washington, Boston, Florida, Italy and Spain together add another significant layer to the quality of students' learning experiences. There is a strong and tangible bond of mutual respect between students and staff. The culture of the school is one where the individuality of students is recognized and celebrated and where older students show genuine respect for the younger ones and at the same time provide very good role models. These characteristics provide an atmosphere where teachers can concentrate their efforts into teaching and students' learning and they do so well. Much instruction is lively and engaging, challenging and fun. Many teachers make good use of data to guide and inform their instruction resulting in much work that is pitched at the right level for students' differing achievement and skill levels. However, this good practice is not a strong enough feature in some classes. The principal's astute purchasing of resources, readiness to tap into different grants, capitalizing on the individual skills of teachers and utilization of specialist teachers are pivotal factors in ensuring that the diverse academic, social and personal needs of all students are met well. It is little wonder that given the learning activities offered both within and outside of the school day, coupled with good instruction and high levels of mutual respect, that students love coming to school, as reflected in the good attendance rates.

**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.**

A strong sense of accountability pervades the work of the school. Aligned to this is the readiness of staff to reflect on their performance and to improve. The principal and other school leaders regularly observe instruction on a formal and informal basis. Staff are accustomed to this and regard it as ongoing professional development because of the constructive feedback they receive. The teachers value this highly and recognize that it leads to better practice. Teachers are ready to learn from one another and do so well

through class intervisitations, modeled lessons, team-teaching and by sharing good practice at grade and common prep meetings. Staff are surveyed regularly to ascertain their professional development needs. The analysis of data is used to identify priorities that may be at school, subject or grade level. The strength lies in how professional development activities, particularly those provided in-house, meet the needs and aspirations of the teachers and addresses wider and whole school issues. With this in mind the principal has identified the need for some teachers to have further training on making the best use of data to drive instruction. Teachers new to the school and the profession are supported well and this enables them to quickly adapt to the routines and expectations of the school. The school runs very well on a day to day basis. Much of this is due to consistently applied procedures relating to discipline and the very good work of the deans which mean that teachers can teach and students can learn in an environment of safety, harmony, and enjoyment. Students rise to the high level of expectation in behaving very well and contributing significantly to the life of the school as a community. The school has established good links with Wagner College and other colleges which have led to improvements in the curriculum and instruction.

**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 principal is a highly effective leader with a very clear and strategic vision of what the school needs to address to make it an even better place to learn. The school has access to much data and regularly analyzes it to look at trends and patterns in performance. Any dips at school, grade or subject levels are quickly identified. What then follows is an evaluation of the reasons and programs are put in place to address any weaknesses. This can often lead to modifications in the curriculum, in resources or a need to make staffing and scheduling decisions that make more incisive use of teachers' individual skills. The principals and assistant principals conference with teachers about student performance and set goals for improvement which at times necessitates modifications to instruction. Interim targets are not always set to better track the route to these goals. The setting up of four inquiry teams is testimony to the school's commitment to improving the performance of those students in greatest need. The work has already seen the good use of Acuity to identify weaknesses in aspects of reading comprehension which are then addressed through modifications to instruction and assignment. The school has a good track record in implementing and sustaining modifications that make a difference. The fact that the school is a high performing one in terms of graduation rates reflects this. However, the mindset of the principal is now rightly geared towards ensuring that progress is measured and monitored as effectively as performance is. The thrust is to now measure, evaluate, modify and implement strategic decisions based on data analysis so that progress as well as performance is a key indicator of the school's success.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: The Michael J Petrides School (R080)</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 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	
<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?				X	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>				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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>				X	