



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Edward R. Byrne School

**Middle School 101
2750 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx
NY 10465**

Principal: Kim Hampton-Hewitt

Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2007

Lead Reviewer: Jill Bavin

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

MS101- Edward R. Byrne is a middle school with 446 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 21% Black, 56% Hispanic, 14% White, and 9% Asian students. The student body includes no English language learners and no 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 94.8%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 64% eligibility.

The school is mostly situated on the 3rd story of a building shared with two other schools. Some facilities, such as the art and music rooms, are situated in the basement.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal leads with compassion and strength, steering the school through its increasing development very effectively.
- The principal is ably supported by her assistant principals and cabinet, who share the same high expectations of students and adults.
- Professional development is a strength of the school, leading to good quality teaching and learning.
- Teachers consistently plan for differentiated activities and learning styles, meeting differing needs in their class well.
- The school places a strong emphasis upon evaluating student progress and the value it adds to their learning.
- Students are well informed about what they need to do next to improve their work.
- The system for planning action for school development, evaluating its impact and revising plans is well aligned.
- The school is highly successful in uniting culturally and geographically diverse students and reaching out to their families.
- There is a strong culture of mutual respect and collaboration between staff and between adults and students.
- Students enjoy school and attendance rates are very high.

What the school needs to improve

- Extend school analysis and evaluation by involving teachers more formally in predicting student performance.
- Build on existing good practice to ensure that objectives shared with students, including the lesson purpose, are consistently clear and measurable.
- Continue with plans to use partnerships to extend the arts curriculum.

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.

This school is very successful in meeting its initial purpose of uniting students from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds across District 8. Students, parents and faculty alike greatly value the school's family ethos. One boy summed up the school by saying, "If one person falls down there's always someone to pick them up." The principal leads with sensitivity and compassion as well as a strong determination for continued school improvement. This results in a strong culture of mutual support, professional respect and collaboration. Students benefit directly because one teacher's good idea is shared and swiftly adopted by others.

A key strength is the school's primary focus, at all levels, on students' progress. The administration closely scrutinizes the impact of its decisions on student progress and teachers plan, differentiate, instruct and evaluate with a clear focus on taking each student forward. Students have a good understanding of these high expectations. One girl explained, "Whatever your grade you must go up." There are very helpful and consistent systems for identifying each student's success and "next steps" at the end of each topic in each core subject, and sharing the "agenda" for each lesson with students. Occasionally the purpose of the lesson is not expressed as a measurable objective, which would aid students' evaluation. Similarly, while the topic learning reviews usually provide clear indicators of success and measurable "next steps", this is not totally consistent.

Students benefit from the school's partnership with the Pearson Foundation which has funded a sophisticated "digital arts" computer program, much enjoyed by older students. The school has rightly identified the desirability of extending its arts program and is seeking new partnerships to help with this.

The school has made very good progress since the last Quality Review in three of the four areas for improvement. Baseline assessment for science is established and already used to identify curriculum priorities. Technology is being used well in the classroom to support instruction and learning. There is a vast amount of data about the progress of different groups of students and this is closely linked to the school improvement plans that supplement the Comprehensive Education Plan. The school has made good progress in collecting data about individual students and having clear learning goals for them and some progress in these being aligned to timescales governed by testing. While there is a wealth of data and it is being used effectively, it is not yet used to generate predictions of student performance, although the data is in place to do this, and teachers and cabinet have begun to do it informally. The Inquiry Team is already established, meeting and focusing on selected 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.

Key strengths in this area are the school's use of its own baseline test in English language arts, mathematics and science at the beginning of each grade. This means that instances of relative weakness quickly inform curriculum planning and students' individual strengths and weaknesses are rapidly established to aid differentiation in class. Students comment on how quickly help kicks in when they need it. It is this system of baseline assessment that steers the whole school focus on concentrating on "progress" first, from which performance will follow. Teachers do not formally predict student progress and anticipate patterns of relative weakness or strength within their classes. Consequently they miss an extra level of analysis to extend existing good practice in the school's evaluation and rapid response.

There is a close analysis of data to compare progress and performance between groups of students across the school. This resulted last year, for example, in the guidance counselor successfully working with a small group of girls on a "leadership and self-esteem" program. This year the school has quickly used ARIS to identify that some students missed a grade level by a very small margin. They have become a target group and teachers' spotlight, to receive, for example, extra air time at grade meetings. The school is measuring its own performance through student progress and tracking demonstrates significant improvement over the last couple of years. Data also demonstrates which classes promote most student progress. This information is shared among faculty and contributes to holding teachers to account. This is managed sensitively by the principal in order to maintain the school ethos of mutual professional support. There is only a small group of students in school with individual education plans, but their progress is compared with other groups, and they demonstrate similar patterns of good progress. The principal takes considerable care to be informed of how well other schools are performing. She has analyzed data from schools in her "peer horizon" and planned visits to those demonstrating areas of "best practice" information to benefit her students.

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 school is routinely and effectively using scale scores to measure student progress and inform student goals. A significant area of strength is the extent to which these are used on a daily basis, by teachers to inform differentiated instruction, and by students to guide them as they work. All students have individual goals in English language arts, math, science and social studies, which are identified through regular topic assessment on a pro-forma that is used consistently throughout the school. This means that students are well informed overall about what they need to address and how to do it, on a regular basis. While most written goals are clear and useful, this is not totally consistent. Close analysis of data means that the school quickly identifies students for even closer scrutiny, such as those missing a level by less than one point. The school identified weaknesses in last year's

grade 6 English language arts work during the year and responded rapidly by revising the curriculum and providing targeted professional development.

In addition to their individual learning goals the school has set realistic but challenging group goals and curriculum goals. A great deal of work has resulted in the introduction of a structured three year Literacy Plan which includes, for example, a more precisely differentiated and resourced reading program, unified baseline assessments, and a new system for tracking writing progress over time. Students say this has added interest because texts are well chosen now and they report greater enthusiasm for more stimulating and well-pitched English language arts lessons.

The school is very conscious of the wide geographical spread of its families and is constantly seeking ways to overcome difficulties parents have in getting in to school. A new electronic messaging link in English and Spanish is improving communications and is very popular with teachers and parents. Procedures to encourage an open, two-way flow of information about students are good.

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.

One teacher described that he saw students, "beginning to share the passion" for his subject. Students enjoy their lessons because their needs are well met and they are often actively involved in small group work. They are entirely confident that when they struggle help quickly kicks in and if a topic is easy for them teachers quickly give them more challenging work. They appreciate that teachers plan interesting and creative activities, such as writing the memoir of an inanimate object, and that they have many opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups. They enjoy modeling mathematical strategies for each other in front of the whole class, playing mathematical vocabulary bingo and using computers to present or research their work. The "digital arts" class with its voice recognition and opportunity for creative combined English language arts, graphics and technology work is extremely popular and is raising achievement.

While students study art or music during the school day, dance is reserved for time after school or lunchtime, and drama is rare. The school community is rightly seeking ways to extend the arts curriculum. Students appreciate the very full program of educational visits, including residential visits for each grade which support the school's strong focus on developing students personally as well as academically. Office staff make a valuable contribution to promoting students' development. For example, they are involved in providing extra student activities and, together with faculty, work strategically to help motivate students to reach their goals, either by withdrawing or introducing an activity of interest to the student.

The school's commitment to developing the whole child is also apparent in the strategic approach to assigning the budget and hiring staff. Decisions take account of the principal's determination to ensure "prevention, not just intervention", whether addressing students' personal or academic needs. Consequently there are three counselors and two additional intervention service staff for English language arts and math. There are several opportunities for students to grow socially and emotionally, for example through the "Big Sister Big Brother" program, the "Counseling through music" program or the "Radio Station" program. It is understandable that students feel very secure, confidently asserting that there is no bullying in the school. Attendance is very good. Nevertheless attendance goals and a running record of attendance rates are publicly displayed, constantly reinforcing their importance.

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 is very effectively steering the school on continued improvement, building teachers' capacity and keeping them very well engaged with the process. School-wide professional development is closely aligned to current strategic goals, such as accelerating progress for the current grade 7 students in English language arts. Teachers also find individual professional development very helpful. Regular formal and informal class observation results in constructive comments. There is much informal inter-visitation which contributes to a beneficial culture of generously sharing best practice with professional dialogue. This is clearly evident in the level of consistency in good instructional practice. For example, the practice of concluding lessons with a "3, 2, 1" moment. This empowers students to reflect on their learning by sharing two new things they have learned and one question or "next step". There are several new teachers in the school who have been very well supported seamlessly integrating into the school's culture of high expectations, consistently effective use of data and informed differentiation.

Guidance and support for students' personal development is closely aligned to students' individual and group goals and staff have a rounded understanding of student's needs, goals and successes. Parents and students remark positively about how well the school knows and understands students and how it "sticks with" students, as one parent put it. Expectations of student participation and behavior are high. Any incidents are managed with sensitivity and understanding, although messages remain consistent and clear. Students know exactly where they stand both, academically and socially, and they like it!

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 is good at monitoring the progress of individual students and sharing this information with them and all the involved adults in school. Short term goals for students are very useful because they are mostly written as "next steps" that they can readily understand and use. The school is also good at identifying the groups of students most in need for a wide variety of reasons, demonstrating its flexible response to different groups. Most importantly the principal and her cabinet specify interim goals for these groups on plans that supplement the Comprehensive Education Plan. These demonstrate a good level of precision, such as "an additional five points on the scale score" and tight timescales; for example, evidence of growth by October. Similarly, these plans mean the school is in a good position to evaluate the effectiveness of the action it takes in good time. Intervention that is not working well will not be allowed to continue for the year. This means the school has developed a secure cycle of analysis, planning, reviewing and revising. There is a strong link between individual student goals, interim plans for groups of students across the school and the school's annual goals. These all support the school's overarching mission, to help students, "discover a passion for learning", and "aim high". The principal has many high expectations of her students and is a skilled collegiate leader taking colleagues with her along the path of reflection, action, evaluation and continued development.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Edward R Byrne (MS 101)	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 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	

* 1.3 is not scored due to the absence of the population at 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.					
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	