



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**The Multicultural Magnet School**

**Elementary/Middle School 212**

**800 Home Street  
Bronx  
NY 10456**

**Principal: Yohan Lim**

**Dates of review: January 28-29, 2008**

**Lead Reviewer: Denis Pittman**

## Content of the report

### **Part 1: The School Context**

Information about the school

### **Part 2: Overview**

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

### **Part 3: Main Findings**

Progress made since the last review

Overall evaluation

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

### **Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Multicultural Magnet School is an elementary/middle school with 539 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 33.4% Black, 60.3% Hispanic, 2.4% White, and 3.9% Asian students. The student body includes 18.7% English language learners and 10.2% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2006-2007 was 90.3%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 91.2% eligibility.

The school shares its building and some resources with two other schools.

The school has a new principal who has been in post since September 2007.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The new principal has a clear vision for the school's development and leads by example in creating a supportive learning environment.
- Parents value the improved openness in communication and the commitment of staff in helping their children develop and make progress.
- The school systematically collects data to monitor the progress of English language learners effectively.
- The school's partnerships with the community and other agencies enhance its instructional program and provide support for students.
- Relationships between students and staff are positive so that students feel that staff are willing to help them improve their work.
- Efficient monitoring procedures have ensured that attendance levels have been sustained.
- The school carefully manages a tight budget to acquire resources and sustain curricular programs for promoting students' achievement.
- Professional development is focused to meet staff needs and is particularly effective in the support given to new staff.
- The school has successfully introduced new systems to enable it to run smoothly and encourage good behavior.

### What the school needs to improve

- Identify interim goals with specific timeframes for the evaluation of improvement plans for student and teacher outcomes.
- Develop strategies for promoting the consistent implementation of differentiated instruction in classrooms.
- Monitor more systematically the progress of special education students.
- Continue to provide support and training in the use of data for staff, to build confidence and competence in its application to improve instruction.
- Develop opportunities for parents to become more participant partners in the education of their children.

## 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 proficient.**

The Magnate Multicultural School provides a safe and secure environment in which students can learn. The shared educational values of the principal and school community inform the school's activities and provide clear purpose and direction. The school consciously celebrates the multicultural diversity of a diverse immigrant school population. The support and care of each individual student is central to the school's work and is shown in the positive relationships which exist in the school. Teachers are effective in helping and encouraging students in their learning. They are committed to ensuring that their teaching is varied and stimulating. However, the monitoring of the progress of special education students is insufficiently systematic. The school strives to improve its practice through effective professional development. A continuing focus is to ensure that instruction meets the varying needs of students within classes through differentiated activities. Parents are becoming increasingly involved with the school but the administration recognizes that more work needs to be done in developing this participation. Parents are appreciative of the caring learning environment which is being created and value the openness and greater accessibility to the principal. The school has clearly established day-to-day routines which are well understood and carefully followed by students. The curriculum is designed to reflect and build upon students' interests and is successful in engaging them through technology, sports and performing arts. The latter emerges from a productive working relationship with support organizations which successfully promote the goals of the school. Given the vision of the principal, the revived enthusiasm and hard work of staff, the school has the capacity to sustain further improvement and development.

The school has made some progress in addressing the issues raised in the last review. The setting of specific goals in subject areas has improved but the school is insufficiently strategic in identifying interim goals so as to monitor these development plans. Professional development is now more geared to the sharing of good practice amongst teachers. An inquiry team has been established to focus on improving the writing competencies of a sample of grade 7 students who have below average proficiency rating in English language arts.

### 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 proficient.**

The school is achieving greater consistency in its systems for monitoring the performance of individual students. There are standard procedures which give a picture of student performance with a specific reference to reading competencies. Particularly

effective is the monitoring and assessment of the progress of English language learners. The ongoing assessment through “running records” provides a constant update of their achievement and enables appropriate interventions to take place to support their learning. The data collected provides a focus on issues such as being able to make inferences. The effectiveness of these analyses is reflected in an improving trend in English proficiency. However the monitoring of the progress of special education needs students is not so systematic. The completion and review of individual education plans for special education students has not been sufficiently rigorous to ensure their learning needs are met.

The formative data which is collected about individual students is aggregated systematically to give an overview of the performance of classrooms and specific grades. The school has been pro-active in its thinking about working towards standardizing data collection through the compilation of portfolios of students work. This is providing an effective basis for comparing standards and moderating students’ work to achieve consistency in grade allocations. In some classes there is variability in the use of individual education plans to track the learning needs of special education students. The relative low achievement of a specific ethnic group is part of the focus of the inquiry team’s investigations.

The school routinely analyzes the data in relation to the past performance of students. For example, the item analysis of student responses in recent predictive assessments showed the school that pupils had difficulty with the identification of the main idea in non-fiction text and prompted staff to put in place a program to improve these skills. Comparisons with the performance of similar schools are undertaken and indicators such as community participation levels are examined to look for effective practice. Some staff require further training in the use of data to inform their instructional planning to provide a range of learning activities for special education students and English language learners.

**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 proficient.**

The identification of the school's goals is a collaborative activity. These goals are continually referred to and returned to during grade meetings where discussion reflects ways to improve the curriculum and the quality of instruction. This process is also evident in the collaborative planning which takes place in math and literacy teams. A particular focus has been on improving decoding skills in grade 6. This issue is part of the strategy for improving student competencies as identified in the work of the inquiry team. The school responds effectively to standardized test data, for example when the data highlighted the need for more measurable targets in math. The collection and interpretation of formative data is used well to identify the needs of individual students. For example, in English language arts there is a focus on addressing phonemic awareness and decoding for students in kindergarten through to grade 2. In planning meetings, staff systematically analyze the outcome of students’ reading to identify skills and competencies which need to be improved. These structured processes enable staff to share information about students’ progress. This evidence is effectively recorded and collated in a portfolio of student achievement.

The principal has high expectations which are clearly communicated to parents and students through newsletters and parent conference meetings. These expectations are

also passed on during productive orientation sessions with students, parents and staff. The detailed school reports and the conference meetings give parents a comprehensive profile of their child's progress. Parents, of whom a large proportion are immigrants, are appreciative of the school's "open-door policy" which encourages them be more confident in taking part in events arranged at the school. This strategy is promoting further parental involvement but proportionally, this group still remains a small minority.

**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 proficient.**

The school provides a broad curriculum that students really enjoy. It has placed a strong emphasis on the development of reading and competency in language. The spiraling of literacy skills throughout the curriculum has been effectively promoted. For example, the school has successfully introduced the Wilson Foundations program into the early grades to support the development of vocabulary. The curriculum is enhanced by the Periwinkle Theater program which promotes student engagement with the arts during both the scheduled day and after school. Students are particularly enthusiastic about the opportunities to present projects as part of the course. The evolving curriculum provides the backdrop for interesting lessons that encourage students to work hard and want to learn. Staff are held accountable for the quality of their instruction through regular monitoring by the administration. The requirement to compile a portfolio of students' work is a consequence of this accountability. Grade meetings are an effective medium for staff to reflect upon the quality of their work. As an outcome of this process classrooms are more thoughtfully resourced and planned to promote learning. However some teachers are insufficiently adept at planning instruction to match with the different needs of the students in their classes and this limits student's learning. The principal has been creative in utilizing the school's resources and limited budget in order to extend the learning experiences of students. Literacy programs have been introduced to support the drive for improving standards in reading and language skills. Staffing appointments, particularly in music, are having a dramatic impact in promoting students enjoyment and achievement in the arts.

There is a good level of mutual trust and respect around the school. Students are encouraged to be responsible and thoughtful of others. These behaviors are rewarded through a much valued '212 Buck' system. The above-average attendance levels are a reflection of the enjoyment students find at the school. Parents talk about the improved 'openness' in communication at the school as being the reason for their greater confidence of becoming involved with school events. Efficient administrative systems ensure that student attendance levels remain stable.

**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 proficient.**

Professional development for teachers is primarily orientated to meet individual needs. Understandably there is, as yet, no formalized strategic overview of professional development because of the transitional period related to the new leadership. Training objectives emerge from lesson observations and regular walk-throughs. The program

has been effectively focused on developing students' vocabulary, creating writing centers in class rooms and improving the efficacy of reading conferences. Staff are increasingly proficient in using assessment portfolios to identify common issues relating to student performance in order to improve instructional practice. Teachers value the informal observations of the administration and coach which provides them with good feedback and with a well-structured individual analysis for improving their skills. The sharing of good practice is promoted through collaborative planning meetings, although currently there is a limited amount of interclass visitation. A structured mentoring program is very effectively designed for all new staff; a major priority given the high proportion of staff that fall within this category. The quality and success of the program is enthusiastically endorsed by teachers.

The school is managed well under the leadership of the principal. All members of the school community say that they are encouraged to be part of collaborative decision-making and that this helps to reinforce relationships at all levels. The climate of the school is positive, with good discipline, organization and communication. It operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The school has developed effective partnerships with support organizations that work well to promote student interest and personal development. An after-school program promoting sports and arts has significant student participation rates. The school also supports the community through the Morrisania 'girls to woman' program.

**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 underdeveloped with proficient features.**

Staff work hard, through regular individual conferences with students, to make sure that each student knows exactly how well they have done and what they need to do next in order to improve. Recently reviewed procedures enable the school to have an improved perspective of the progress of the different groups, classes and grades. However interim goals have not been adequately identified with measurable objectives regarding student and teacher outcomes so that progress towards whole school objectives can be carefully monitored. The initiatives related to improving instruction, the organization of learning resources and further improving assessment practices are part of a continuing evaluative dialogue with the whole faculty. These general issues are clearly identified in the principal's comprehensive plan for improvement. The preliminary work of the inquiry team has already established a focus for using predictive data to improve the writing of students in grade 4. The accumulating information held in data binders aligned with systematic conference notes provides realistic goals for struggling students. This information is discussed in meetings to ensure that individual goals are adjusted so that each student remains firmly on track. The school is being proactive in utilizing the more precise information from recently introduced predictive assessments. This development aims to enhance the base of student data which drives instructional planning.

The principal has a clear, comprehensive program for improvement which has been informed from collaborative discussions with the faculty. Currently there are insufficient milestones related to this improvement strategy to ensure the school remains on track. The school has become more adaptive and reflective. Through his hard work and open style of leadership, the principal has made sure that everyone, including staff, parents and students, is fully aware of his vision and plans for the future.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME:</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 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>