

Quality Review Report

2008-2009

The Multicultural Magnet School
Elementary and Middle School 212
800 Home Street
Bronx
NY 10459

Principal: Yohan Lim

Dates of review: March 30 - 31, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Multicultural Magnet School is an elementary and middle school with 542 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 37% Black, 57% Hispanic, 4% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 90%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 87% eligibility.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school has developed systems as well as its own data tools in all core subjects to assess the achievement of goals along with specific timeframes. The instructional cabinet and teacher leaders collaborate in teams to closely monitor the effectiveness of decisions. An emphasis on evaluating the needs of special education students and English language learners is evident in the reorganization and coordination of student support services and youth development programs. All students are highly engaged in youth activities, including a Senate, rewards and awards programs and enrichment classes. These programs have resulted in more student engagement and less classroom disruptions, and suspensions. Students are fully aware of their reading levels and interim targets for achieving their June goal but even though students have goals in all core subjects, they are not as conversant of them to any great detail. The school has made some recent changes in the organization of students. English language learners are grouped to better meet their targeted needs through inter-class changes based on careful data analysis. Some other significant subgroups, including absentees and gender groupings, are not considered so strategically in terms of conditions of learning and interventions and even though there are systems in place to monitor absenteeism, in depth analyses of the individual and group causes, they are not as developed.

The leadership has established rigorous curricula in all subjects that are linked by the school-wide use of the *Rigby Literacy* program. This promotes a balanced literacy approach to English language arts, social studies and science. The school strategically and effectively uses its resources by encouraging teachers to optimize small class size and to experiment with innovative techniques and procedures, the progress of which are shared during inter-visitations by school leaders. Teacher leadership capacity is built in: various areas of instruction, youth development and school organization and the school provides varied and differentiated support and professional development for the staff in the use of data; a key feature of which is to help teachers develop various strategies for differentiation. This is highly evident in many core classes, but not spread evenly throughout the school. Prioritizing data analysis and training in this aspect has resulted in improved student achievement as measured by unit and teacher tests. Teachers lead the inquiry team, instructional cabinet, the student Senate and professional development activity. Parents are engaged, through various progress reports and report cards that include goals, but are not sufficiently immersed in the monitoring and revising process.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school leadership and faculty deliver a rigorous and engaging curriculum in core subjects imbedded in the state standards.
- The school and faculty use data tools developed by the leadership to effectively analyze a range of data targeting specific skills in all core subjects.
- The leadership allocates its resources to effectively and strategically target classroom instruction, allowing for flexibility to implement innovative approaches in this area.
- School leaders encourage teacher leadership within the instructional cabinet, inquiry teams and structured professional collaborations.
- School leaders are committed to the continuous improvement of student achievement as they develop new structures, procedures and protocols.
- Youth development activities and support programs promote the academic and personal growth of students very well.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that analysis of the data regarding all subgroups develops into actionable plans in classes, grades and the whole school to support the needs and learning outcomes of each group.
- Involve students and families in the development of student goals in all core subjects that effectively allow for their clear understanding and the instructional steps that students need to take to achieve them.
- Ensure that teachers deliver lessons in the best possible ways including differentiation that address the needs of individuals, as well as subgroups in meeting their goals.
- Continue to engage and enhance the roles of faculty and parents to further develop mutual trust and collegiality.

Part 3: Main Findings

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do and to monitor the student's progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school leadership has adapted and designed new tools to collect data, and developed school goals based on these. Special education students have been targeted through the reorganization of the pupil personnel committee. This committee now has individual targets for each member and it has developed specific protocols for the individual education plan and coordinator and teacher roles. Specific goals and planning times for the evaluation and monitoring of this special education group's progress have been added this year. Such detailed arrangements for management and analysis of other subgroups including gender, English language learners, and habitual absentees are in the developmental stages.

Teachers effectively use the school-generated data and include their own from: student work, tests, running records and so on to develop detailed data folios to help them to determine class and student needs. A student data and assessment portfolio is then established in order to understand what each student knows and needs to do to improve. Teachers do not systematically analyze student performance to identify trends in subgroups within their classes.

New systems have been devised to track and monitor students' attendance and on a daily basis data is collected. An automated calling system has been installed, various personnel counsel students and parents and student activities have been introduced. There are no systematized processes for the analysis of the underlying causes and reasons for absences but these measures have resulted in slightly improved attendance.

School leaders and teachers provide students and parents with feedback about progress at various intervals. Parents are enthusiastic with the progress of their children, but they are not fully engaged in the goal setting process. They are supportive of parent activities that will engage them in understanding the goals set for their children, as detailed in the progress reports and report cards.

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.

School leaders and faculty meet at various intervals to set and adjust timeframes to reach goals. All core subject teachers inform students of their class and individual goals in all core subjects. Students proudly carry their "Reading is Power" bookmark, which outlines their short- and long- term goals in reading. In most cases students are

engaged in the development of ambitious reading goals and learning steps needed to achieve the short-term goals. They are thrilled to discuss and show their advancement through the reading levels. In other areas of English and other core subjects, students are aware that their teachers have set goals for them, but they do not know them well enough, nor are they able to explain what they need to do to achieve them.

School leaders provide families with detailed progress reports that include goals for all core subjects and are given opportunities to respond on the report itself. Teachers meet with students, including encouraging parental participation, to conference about their goals several times during the year. These collaborative and data informed processes target individual students but do not target subgroups within the class.

School leaders and faculty consistently collect, review and revise behavioral data. They communicate high expectations about behavior through an incentive program to build points for admittance to activities or awards. Students and families are aware of the high expectations set for them in this area. Students' behavior and attendance are factored in a point system, which is monitored by the guidance counselor which has, together with the incentive initiative, lowered the level of suspensions and has produced fewer classroom and hallway misbehaviors. This in turn has had a positive impact on teaching and learning, as evidenced in increased student progress in the periodic assessments, classroom grades and reading scores.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students' learning goals.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

All core subjects follow a rigorous curriculum imbedded in State standards. The school leadership and faculty collaborated on the introduction of the *Rigby Literacy* program that includes links to social studies and science. All core subjects have reading and writing components in keeping with the school focus of improving these areas for all students. Various elements of differentiation are imbedded in the program, as observed in some classes. Differentiation of tasks for both lowest and highest performing students is not evident in some classes. Student groupings tend to be assigned by reading levels and behavioral criteria, changing mostly when a higher reading level has been achieved, or behavior improved.

The school leadership utilizes the budget well to maintain a high teacher to student ratio. This strategic organizational decision has promoted less incident rates in the classroom as compared to last year's data. There is evidence of increased class and periodic assessment scores as a result.

The school leadership is involving the school community in some aspects of decision-making and is building leadership capacity through teacher leaders in the inquiry team and instructional cabinet. This practice in building mutual respect is encouraging other teachers, students and parents eager to be involved in strengthening and broadening the school goals and organizational plans and defining more clearly the school's vision and mission.

Quality Statement 4 - Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school's goals for accelerating student learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

Very effective youth development activities include a student senate, after school sports program and weekend academic and sports programs. School activities, such as talent shows, multicultural shows, reading to younger students, as well as dance and music programs further engage students in promoting their self-esteem and leadership capacity. All these activities allow for a student voice, as evidenced in the senate protocols, whereby the leadership engages in rich conversations and student feedback. By promoting the personal growth of students, the school leadership and faculty have invested time and resources wisely, as seen in the improvement in student behaviors and academic achievement.

Teacher leadership is very well promoted: most prominently in the inquiry team, instructional cabinet and informal teacher collaborations. The inquiry team has laid the basis for school wide use of data, analysis and its use to inform instruction. This year more teachers are involved in the process and are the strategic leaders. The leadership, though engaged in the process, takes a back seat in driving the agenda and building capacity within the team. Through the inquiry process teachers have been encouraged to engage in and lead various collaborative teams, such as the grade and subject meetings.

The school leaders refer to the teachers detailed professional development plans when observing teachers, lessons, setting school and student goals. The school leadership actively supports teachers in initiating innovative ideas and putting them into practice through varied professional development opportunities. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate, study and investigate various means by which to improve the delivery of instruction or improve the curriculum. Informal professional development occurs in study groups and lunch and learn activities that promote teacher leadership as well as learning. From these groupings, class inter-visitations have been initiated and innovative and best practices are shared.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student's progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

School leaders and faculty monitor the curricula at several points in the year and make revisions and adjustments for the next school year. The teachers periodically evaluate reading to assure each student's progress towards their goals. All core subject teachers use various data from unit tests and periodic assessments to regularly evaluate and modify students' learning plans. It is not always clear when plans are modified by teachers or even if they change or adjust strategies to differentiate instruction to meet student needs in some classes.

The school's self evaluation is an accurate reflection of the school's practices. The leadership has a vision for the school's development, which is evident in the

engagement of many teachers and students in various activities, programs and collaborations that promote their academic, personal and professional growth. The Comprehensive Educational Plan identifies measurable success criteria, desired outcomes and is clearly aligned with the school's goals for improving student achievements.

The school has a high commitment to supporting informal professional development collaborations such as *lunch and learns* and inter-visitations to assess and advise on instruction. Many teachers attest to the targeted learning that they receive from teacher leaders and the school leadership. As some of these activities are not structured within the school schedule not all teachers are able or willing to attend these occasions. However, other professional activities are included within the school structure, such as grade and subject professional development and after school and off-site programs. The school leadership and instructional team monitor and revise professional development after the marking periods and regularly communicate the results and requirements to the staff in a calendar form.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School name: The Multicultural Magnet School	△	▷	✓	+
Overall QR Score			X	
Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, generate and analyze information on student learning outcomes and use it to understand what each student knows and can do, and to monitor the student’s progress over time.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
1.1 collect and analyze actionable information, including assessment results and attendance data, to provide a complete view of the learning outcomes and needs of individual students and groupings of students?			X	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?			X	
1.3 engage in an open exchange of information with students and families about students’ learning needs and outcomes, including assessment results and attendance data?			X	
1.4 design or adapt tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize and analyze student performance, identify trends and inform instructional and organizational decisions, and to enable students and their families to assess and track each student’s progress?			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 student’s learning.				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
2.1 use collaborative and data-informed processes to set measurable, actionable and differentiated learning goals in core subjects for individual students and groupings of students and develop differentiated plans and timeframes for reaching these goals?			X	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			X	
2.3 ensure that the achievement of learning goals, and the implementation of plans and timeframes for reaching these goals, is the central focus of school leaders, faculty, students and families?			X	
2.4 communicate high expectations to all students and families, and involve students in developing their learning goals and plans and in taking their next learning steps?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X	

DEFINITIONS

“**Analyze**” or “**analysis**” includes, but is not limited to, comparisons of:

- the current and past outcomes of . . . individual students, administrative groupings and sub-groups of students and the school itself in core subjects;
- the outcomes of different classrooms and sub-groups in the same grades and core subjects; and
- the school’s Progress Report and other outcomes to those of peer/other schools

“**Assessment results**” include student outcomes on summative assessments (e.g., state ELA, math, science and social studies tests, NYSESLAT, Regents Exams, and Performance Based Assessment Tasks) and formative assessments aligned to the school’s curriculum (including Periodic, DYQ, and teacher-developed Classroom Assessments).

“**Core subjects**” are ELA, math, science, social studies/history, the arts, foreign language, and physical education/health.

“**Data-informed processes**” include analysis of Progress Report, Quality Review, Learning Environment Survey, Inquiry Team findings, assessment results and attendance data

“**Groupings of students**” include classrooms, grade levels and high school cohorts.

“**Organizational decisions or strategies**” refer to a school’s use of budget and resources, staffing, planning, scheduling, grade structure, departments and teacher teams and other aspects of the school’s structure and organization that can affect student outcomes.

“**Sub-groups of students**” include special education students, English Language Learners, the other NCLB sub-groups, boys, girls, and other groups significant to the school.

Quality Statement 3 – Develop Coherent Instructional and Organizational Strategies: The school uses rigorous curricula, teaching and organizational decision making to engage students and faculty in meeting all students’ learning goals.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
3.1 school leaders and faculty deliver challenging and engaging curricula in core subjects, including the arts, that are aligned to state standards?				X
3.2 teachers plan and teach lessons that are differentiated to meet the needs of individual students and student groupings and are designed to enable all students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.3 school leaders make strategic organizational decisions to support a coherent and rigorous instructional approach that enables students to reach their learning goals?			X	
3.4 school leaders maintain a culture of mutual trust and respect and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X	

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building to Goals: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals for accelerating student learning.

<i>To what extent do school leaders...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
4.1 use their own observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of student outcomes to implement an explicit, differentiated strategy to improve each teacher’s instruction, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 encourage teachers to take part in Inquiry Teams and other structured professional collaborations (informed by the examination of student work, assessment outcomes and their own peer observations) and share in the instructional leadership of the school with the goal of improved student learning?				X
4.3 provide professional development that encourages teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve student outcomes?			X	
4.4 utilize youth development, support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X	

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating each student’s progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

<i>To what extent do ...</i>	△	➤	✓	+
5.1 the school’s plans for improving student outcomes and its strategies for improving each teacher’s instructional practices include measurable interim goals and suitable time frames for evaluating success and making adjustments during the year?			X	
5.2 school leaders and faculty use interim checkpoints and data to inform lessons, improve curriculum, differentiate instruction and revise student learning plans throughout the year?			X	
5.3 school leaders use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of and modify organizational decisions, structured professional collaborations and teacher improvement strategies?			X	
5.4 school leaders and the school community have a clear vision for the future development of the school and implement procedures and systems to support academic, personal and professional growth?			X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
△	Underdeveloped	➤	Underdeveloped with Proficient Features	✓	Proficient	+	Well Developed