

Quality Review

Report

2008-2009

New Millennium Business Academy Middle School

Middle School 328

1000 Teller Avenue

Bronx

NY 10456

Principal: Dorald Bastian

Dates of review: February 1-2, 2009

Lead Reviewer: Lori Bennett

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

New Millennium Business Academy is a middle school with 475 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 38% Black, 59% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 22% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 89%. The school is in receipt of Title 1 funding with 69% eligibility.

The New Millennium Business Academy shares a building with three other middle schools.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

The school conveys high expectations about attendance, behavior and academic achievement resulting in a supportive environment focusing on student success. The school places a high priority on improving student outcomes. The principal has done a very good job in creating an engaging learning environment resulting in a climate of mutual support and trust. Students are excited about learning and are proud of their school. Student achievement, celebrated at monthly assemblies, has resulted in a positive effect on their attitude towards attaining academic success. Some goals, with which to track students' progress, lack benchmarks and timeframes. Careful monitoring of attendance has resulted in steady improvement.

The school has successfully addressed most of the issues from the previous Quality Review. In some aspects, such as improvement in the use of data and student goal setting in English language arts and math, it has done well. Students are beginning to set learning and behavioral goals for themselves and are reflective about their personal progress. The school is building on a good introduction to differentiated instruction but this not fully established as a consistent practice throughout.

The principal has made effective decisions about budget, staff recruitment and scheduling based on student needs. The administrative team, coach, lead teachers and staff work collaboratively and use organized systems to gather data and determine learning goals for students for them to make academic progress and achieve mastery. The curriculum does not include sufficient art and technology and other programs to further extend students' learning and engagement. Tracking of gender and ethnicity subgroups to identify possible trends from which to inform revision strategies is yet to be accomplished.

The inquiry-team work is focused on students who achieve in the lowest third, particularly those in grade 8, whose performance levels in literacy are one to two years below grade level. The team generates and shares with the school community helpful ideas and insights on how to improve student performance by focusing on literacy interventions for its target population. The team's work is creating a reflective approach to improving instructional outcomes for all students.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is a highly effective leader committed to creating a supportive environment where all students are successful.
- The school conveys high expectations to students, staff and families.
- The administrative team, coach, lead teachers and staff work collaboratively to make sense of data and determine appropriate learning goals for students to make academic progress and achieve mastery.
- The inquiry team is generating helpful ideas on how to improve student performance and the teams' work is creating a reflective approach to improving student outcomes.
- Students are beginning to set their own learning goals and are reflective about their personal progress.
- Effective procedures for attendance have resulted in steady improvement over time.

What the school needs to improve

- Improve the use of data to enable staff to better plan and deliver differentiated instruction.
- Build on data-analysis systems to include comparisons of gender and ethnicity when tracking students, to identify possible trends and revise strategies and teaching accordingly.
- Refine goal setting to include measures, benchmarks and timeframes in order to effectively monitor performance.
- Develop the professional growth plan model that addresses the individual needs of all teachers whatever their level of experience.

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 generates and analyzes data at many levels in order to determine the performance of all students. Effective use of data for planning and academic interventions is a high priority for the school. The principal analyzes summative assessments, diagnostic assessment data, the progress report, and State assessment scores and uses the information to determine content learning targets. At the classroom level, teachers formulate academic mission statements building on the school-wide goals. Acuity data, tracking logs and conferring notes are used regularly to determine student-learning targets and to create weekly plans and assessments. Bi-weekly grade meetings enable opportunities to share and discuss data and to make timely instructional adjustments regarding student progress. Students maintain goal sheets and work samples in portfolios.

The group of students who achieve in the bottom third is the target population for the inquiry team and the high achievers are the subgroup of study for the literacy team. The 100-Book Challenge, Kahn Writing and Renzulli programs are used for differentiation, by providing varied and individualized learning activities for students.

The school notes that Black students perform lower in English language arts and are more represented in special education than Hispanic students. They are further analyzing these findings to make targeted decisions to improve individual student progress. There is an intention to include comparisons of gender and ethnicity when tracking students, to identify any trends and revise strategies.

School-wide performance data are shared with the school community to identify trends. The faculty uses multiple data sources and identifies strengths and areas for improvement in student learning. Tracking sheets, learning logs and Acuity data are used to monitor student progress and parents receive communication through mid-semester progress reports.

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.

Goal setting is an established process and the school has good collaborative systems in place to set broad goals for whole-school improvement as well as for content and grade levels. The entire staff is involved in these processes that are firmly established and refined in English language arts and math but still developing in social studies, science

and the other content areas. Teachers' goals for classes align with units of study. These procedures provide information enabling teachers to track student progress and set learning goals along with, as well as for, their students. Students are beginning to set learning and behavioral goals for themselves and are reflective about their personal progress. They are excited about learning and are proud of their school and its academic expectations. Goal-setting to plan for differentiation in all core subjects, establish measures for tracking students' progress and to analyze and monitor student performance, is not yet well enough developed in the school. In particular, benchmarks and timelines are missing. The school has recognized this as an area for improvement. The staff works collaboratively to communicate high academic expectations to students and their families.

The principal focuses on ensuring the achievement of learning goals and meets regularly with the staff and the school leadership team to review and refine work in this area, specifically creating a culture focused on student success. The instructional cabinet meets weekly and content and grade teams meet to review and discuss student progress. Teachers maintain data binders to analyze and track student performance utilizing weekly test results, periodic assessments, Acuity data and student conferring resulting in more consistency of practice across subjects. Students formulate goals during the beginning of each marking period utilizing a goal-reflection lesson conducted by the content-area teacher.

The principal models goal setting and shares the school goals with staff at department and grade level meetings. He conducts daily informal observations providing teachers with consistent feedback. Monthly assemblies, student honor rolls, and frequent conferring with teachers help students to remain focused on academic goals. Attendance is closely monitored to ensure that students maintain high daily attendance.

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 underdeveloped with proficient features.

The school offers a New York State standards-based curriculum. It has strived diligently to procure a curriculum that is engaging and challenging. Teachers work collaboratively with the instructional team to plan, review and refine the curriculum with an emphasis on project based learning and technology to encourage student engagement. In one science classroom, student groups effectively presented final projects on the systems of the body utilizing power point and other multimedia showcasing research strategies taught in the English language arts classroom.

The administrative team and school staff focuses intently on improving literacy skills in all content areas and specifically on the English language arts and math programs to improve student performance in state assessments. To provide uniformity and continuity of instruction, the curriculum and school-wide grading policy is collaboratively designed by the coach, lead and content teachers. The leadership study group meets to identify resources and strategies to improve the support for under resourced learners and provide aligned academic intervention to targeted students.

Differentiation of instruction is not evident in all classrooms although some teachers are routinely planning and teaching differentiated lessons. Teachers are beginning to utilize leveled books, content classroom libraries and targeted assisted interventions across all content areas. Staff is trained in Acuity to identify students' strengths and areas in need of improvement, in order to identify next steps. The focus of the school's work is to continue to refine lessons to meet the needs of individuals and groups of students. Comprehensive data generated after each marking period allows the administrators to closely monitor the effectiveness of subjects and progress of individual students.

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.

Professional development currently focuses on teachers examining the needs of middle level learners and best teaching practices to support students' academic and personal growth. Teachers are observed regularly and provided with timely feedback. As one teacher noted, "I have been impressed with the level of feedback I receive about my practice. It helps to visit other classrooms to observe students in different settings and learn new strategies." The principal works with all teachers to establish professional goals, which are periodically reviewed to ensure continuous improvement.

All teachers participate in common planning and grade-level meetings. New teachers are mentored on a weekly basis utilizing the Santa Cruz model. Mid-career and veteran teachers, receive the contractual yearly observations. All teachers receive comprehensive training on classroom management and project-based learning, which has resulted in improved behavior and engagement of students. The professional-growth plan model does not focus on the individual needs of all teachers, whatever their level of experience. Although useful, the model only provides opportunities to differentiate training to cover some of the elements of; individual teacher needs, personal interests or for school goals.

The school works hard to ensure the academic, social and emotional needs of the students are met. The school has developed partnerships with many organizations that provide challenging and enriching opportunities for students. There are several after-school programs, teams, clubs, and cultural programs. The Micro Society club gives students the opportunity to explore entrepreneurship. "Turn Around for Children", a social service program, helps teachers to create behavioral intervention plans for all students in need of this targeted support.

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.

The principal is a highly effective leader committed to creating a supportive environment that allows all students to be successful. His vision drives the agenda of the school at all levels and the school has made steady improvement over the past three years with the capacity to continue in this positive direction.

The administration makes careful and efficient budgeting, staffing and scheduling decisions based on student needs. An eighth-grade student voiced his approval of the principal's recruitment efforts by stating, "Since I have been in this school, I noticed that (the principal) has done a great job in getting us good teachers that care about children."

The special education program was departmentalized to capitalize on teachers' strengths in academic subjects, resulting in the steady progress of special education students in English language arts and math, as noted on the school progress report. The school is aware that although the test results have improved, close focus is needed to raise achievement levels for all students. The writing program and emphasis on literacy across the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on students' literacy skills. As yet, the curriculum does not include sufficient art and technology and other programs to further engage students in their learning.

There is a generalized professional-growth model for faculty and open-request policy about professional development needs. The principal reviews goals with teachers quarterly to evaluate effectiveness and ensure alignment to whole school goals. Students are provided with comprehensive guidance support. Scholarship reports and weekly assessment are reviewed and monitored by the administrative team and parents report satisfaction with school communication.

School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

School Name: New Millennium Middle School	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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>	Δ	➤	✓	+
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, DYO, 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				
P							
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