

# Quality Review Report 2011-2012

**EAST NEW YORK MIDDLE SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE**

**Middle school K678**

**605 SHEPHERD AVENUE  
BROOKLYN  
NY 11208**

**Principal: Rose Anne Gonzalez**

**Dates of review: January 26 - 27, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Rose Marie Mills**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

M.S. 678 East New York Middle School of Excellence is a Middle school with 214 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 63% Black, 32% Hispanic, 1% White, and 4% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 27% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.4%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is developing.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- Organizational decisions around time and programming are key steps in supporting the school's instructional goals thus strengthening student and teacher work. (1.3)
  - The principal uses the school-based option to provide teachers with time to meet twice weekly and engage in inquiry work. Additionally, departments meet on a monthly basis and mathematics and English language arts teachers meet before school on Fridays. These structured collaborations allow teachers to create or revise curriculum maps, examine student work, and choose academic tasks for students, resulting in improved student writing and math tasks.
  - Small class size and strategic programming result in teachers providing instruction to a manageable group of students. Specifically, the average class size for the school is twenty-three students. In addition, administrators organize students in the extended day according to their needs and match them with the expertise of staff. High performing students are homogeneously grouped in order to prepare them for the Regents math and science examinations. Likewise, English language learners are grouped in classes so that the teacher provides both push in and pull out support. Teacher assignments and programming decisions support the needs of all students as evidenced by improved students' essays and the school scoring a letter grade of "B" for student progress on the New York City progress report.
- Administrators support teachers through short, frequent observations that include feedback aligned to a research-based rubric that promotes teacher development. (4.1)
  - School leaders use the Danielson framework, a research based rubric, to provide feedback to teachers through short, frequent observations that surfaces their areas of strengths and needs in order to provide specific support. At the beginning of the school year, all teachers complete a self-evaluation on the Achievement, Reporting and Innovation Systems (ARIS). This information guides decisions on the professional development provided. Informal observations focus on the identified areas in need of improvement. Administrators use the appropriate criteria from the Danielson framework to capture low inference classroom observations and provide feedback and clear next steps, based on what both the teacher and students are doing. For example, feedback to one teacher recommended asking higher order thinking questions in order to propel students' thinking and guide student-to-student discourse. All teachers have a "buddy" teacher and new teachers receive support from a mentor and consultant to guide the development of effective instructional strategies. These structures support the improvement of instructional practices to propel student advancement as reflected in observation reports that show steady improvements in professional growth.
- Students benefit from a safe and caring learning environment that promotes both academic and socio-emotional development. (1.4)
  - The school has implemented an advisory program to ensure that school staff knows the needs of all students. Advisors meet with students four times a week and play a pivotal role in coordinating support for advisees. Specifically, they serve as the first point of contact regarding overall performance, distribution of

report cards, set goals, discuss concerns, engage in team building activities and make outreach to parents. Parents articulate that they receive frequent telephone calls from advisors and students state that they contact their advisor if they need support with any matter. This structure enhances the overall social-emotional development of students.

- The school designed enrichment clusters foster students' academic and socio-emotional development. For example, four times per year, students choose one course from a wide array of mini-courses to support their development. Courses include stage stars, French fusion, arts and craft, charm school, nice knitters, family cooks, gamestar mechanics, tie-dying , jewelry design, flower making, steppers delight, a touch of dessert, guitar hero, hot shots, and fashions around the world. Students engage in acquiring academic knowledge as well as specific skills related to the areas of interest, and hands on experience. Students rave about these activities and indicate that participation enhance their proficiency and make school exciting.
- The principal and her team gather and analyze an array of data that results in the clear understanding of students' needs, thereby guiding instructional and organizational supports. (2.1)
  - The review of a cadre of data ensures that school leaders understand the strengths and needs of the school. The instructional team analyzes data from the Learning Environment Survey (LES), Progress Report, NYStart, Achieve 3000, and Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) to determine school wide trends, and create appropriate goals. An evaluation of the data indicated the need to bolster student performance in math and English language arts (ELA). Consequently, the principal has implemented a seamless school day where all students receive targeted intervention services, in order to boost overall performance.
  - The use of additional data evaluation is conducted to unveil school wide tendencies. The data specialist analyzes Periodic Assessment data as soon as it becomes available, and discusses the information with the instructional cabinet. Discussions focus on school, classroom, and sub-group trends, and needed adjustments such as the reorganization of the extended day program to support skills acquisition in an effort to guide student improvement efforts.
- Effective partnerships, along with professional development, result in a positive school culture that fosters the holistic development of students. (4.4)
  - At the beginning of the school year, and at monthly faculty conferences, staff receives professional development to ensure the maintenance of an orderly school environment. School leaders embed this training, which includes strategies on dealing with bullying, and respect for all, with guidance on the implementation of the school's advisory curriculum. Accordingly, staff members have garnered the necessary skills to maintain a safe school environment as evident in the grade of "A" that the school received on the 2010-2011 LES.
  - Collaborations with organizations such as Computer for Kids, Family Dynamics, and Columbia University, provide meaningful experiences that support the social-emotional and academic growth of students. Students participate in trips, karate, robotics, science academy, and tutoring. Each school year sixth grade students receive computers from Computers for kids. Students and families attend a series of mandated training sessions in order to benefit from the program.

Students and families appreciate the range of offerings facilitated by the school that foster students' academic and social development.

## What the school needs to improve

- Create systems to evaluate capacity building and leadership development in order to ensure continuity and build instructional coherence across the school. (5.4)
  - While school leaders have established teacher teams that meet regularly, there is no clear system in place to gauge the effectiveness of each teams' work. Observations and teacher interviews reveal that team members rotate the roles of leader, presenter, timekeeper, and recorder. Discussions around student work focus on what students accomplished, did not accomplish, and suggestions on resources. However, there is no discussion on pedagogical practices in an effort to enhance teachers' skills. Additionally, teams have not collected data pertaining to the specific area of focus and school leaders do not have a transparent system to discern if the work of teacher teams is making the desired impact. The school has not yet established clear systems to gauge the work and effectiveness of teacher teams thereby limiting efforts to build coherence across the school.
  - Currently, due of the addition of the eight grade and staff attrition, thirteen of the eighteen instructors are new to the school. Of the eighteen teachers, ten are untenured and six are new to the teaching profession. The only assistant principal on staff was assigned to the school in November of this school year. Consequently, systems to develop distributed leadership are not yet in place. Without the structures for leadership development, the school cannot consistently evaluate its progress towards capacity building.
- Accelerate the development of a rigorous curriculum, challenging, and engaging tasks that align to key standards, in order to promote the development of higher-order thinking skills for all students. (1.1)
  - Across classrooms and subject areas, student work products on display and in folder, along with classroom observations indicate that students are inconsistently engaged in rigorous tasks. Teachers in the eighth grade use the forensic anthropology task bundle from ARIS and guide students in completing the tasks. However, the task bundles are designed for students performing on grade level, hence the need to scaffold the activities, in order to make them suitable for the majority of students. Many teachers have not garnered the expertise to make the needed change so students struggle with completing classroom tasks. For example, in a Student with Disabilities (SWD) class, the teacher had all students read from the suggested text, and complete responses to prompts given. Students struggled with reading aloud as they were unable to pronounce new vocabulary. Conversely, in a Social Studies class, students worked in groups to analyze paintings depicting scenes from World War I, and wrote arguments to support the evidence based on an analysis of the events and their background information. Thus, consistently engaging students in rigorous curricula and engaging tasks to accelerate their learning is not evident.
- Deepen instructional practice so that delivery of lessons, across the school, include effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking, extends learning, and offers suitable challenge for all students. (1.2)

- School leaders provide teachers with students' assessment data and have begun to provide professional development on using data to provide targeted instruction. However, student interviews reveal that although they sit in groups, instruction is generally undifferentiated and some student groups have not changed since the beginning of the school year. Pre-classroom visit discussions along with classroom observations confirm that a majority of lessons followed a whole-class instructional format and were teacher dominated. Additionally, across classrooms teachers' asked low-level questions that did not promote high levels of cognitive engagement. As a result, students do not consistently produce work that require deep thinking as evidenced in student discussions and work products in students' folders.
- Ensure the use of well-aligned assessments to curricula so that teachers accurately identify students' strengths and needs resulting in targeted instructional supports at the team and classroom level. (2.2)
  - The school utilizes Acuity assessments as one tool to capture school-wide data on students' performance in English language arts and math. Classroom teachers and teacher teams choose or create assessments for the units of study. The recent Acuity data, for math, was below the anticipated outcome. However, the math team disputes the result and alludes to extraneous factors as reasons for the poor performance. The school's created assessments have not been analyzed to ensure that they are aligned to targeted skills interventions. As a result, there are missed opportunities to make changes in curricular and instructional decisions to improve student achievement.
  - The school purports that teachers use a range of assessment to include conferencing, on- going questioning, and exit tickets in order to ensure that there is full understanding of students' learning. However, observations of nine classrooms reflect that teachers' questioning was below par. One teacher utilized exit tickets, and student conferencing notes were not evident across classes. Additionally, the school requires teachers to have students' assessment data readily available in a binder in order to conduct on-going checks for understanding, but a majority of observed teachers did not have the data or the data was not organized in a user-friendly manner so that trends are easily identified. Consequently, assessment practices do not consistently gauge students' achievement, thereby inhibiting adjustments to propel students' progress.
- Strengthen goal-setting practices so that teachers develop data-driven goals for students thus propelling improvement of instructional practice and student performance. (3.2)
  - Whereas the school has established protocols for setting data-driven goals for students, interviews with students reveal that goals are inconsistently developed using data. While one student articulates a process where the teacher guided him to review assessment data, identify areas in need of improvement, and set goals, the remaining six students did not engage in this process. Additionally, the school has created a template to guide student goal setting. One section of the template provides a guide for students to review Acuity data and asks them choose three areas they can improve in math. However, many students were unaware of their performance on the Acuity assessments and stated they did not receive this information. These inconsistent practices, around setting measurable and differentiated learning goals for students, stifle their progress.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

<b>School name: EAST NEW YORK MIDDLE SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
<b>Overall QR Score</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?		<b>X</b>		
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?		<b>X</b>		
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet student learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			<b>X</b>	
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?		<b>X</b>		
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?		<b>X</b>		
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students' progress toward school and class expectations?		<b>X</b>		
<b>Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.</b>				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?			<b>X</b>	
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?		<b>X</b>		
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?			<b>X</b>	
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?		<b>X</b>		

<b>Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			<b>X</b>				
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?		<b>X</b>					
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?		<b>X</b>					
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?			<b>X</b>				
<b>Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.</b>							
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>UD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>WD</b>			
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?		<b>X</b>					
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?		<b>X</b>					
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?		<b>X</b>					
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?	<b>X</b>						
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>