



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

New Millennium Business Academy

Middle School X328

**1000 Teller Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456**

Principal: Dorald Bastian

**Date of review: February 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Cheryl McClendon**

The School Context

New Millennium Business Academy is a middle school with 175 students from grade 6 through grade 8. The school population comprises 31% Black, 65% Hispanic, 02% White, and 02% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 1.3% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 89.6%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Developing
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Developing
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, and teachers are supported with training and held accountable to those expectations. School leaders and faculty also communicate college and career readiness expectations to families, as well as provide support.

Impact

Faculty, parents and students understand student progress toward the expectations of school leaders.

Supporting Evidence

- During the leadership meeting, the principal shared that teachers engage in lesson study. This type of professional learning engages teachers in collaborative planning of focal lessons, lab-site observations, and reflection on what worked and what needs to be revised. The focus for this year's lesson study has been developing questioning and discussion protocols to fortify quality interactions between students.
- Through a partnership with Lehman College, based upon academic achievement, some male students participate in the Urban Male Leadership mentoring program. Each participant is assigned a college mentor and attends several programs at the college throughout the year. A grant-funded program, Project Boost, sponsors college tours for groups of students. The Hip-Hop 4 Life program teaches 8th grade students life skills that will help them in their transition to high school.
- Parents have access to Pupil Path, an on-line communication portal, to monitor their children's academic progress. Parents also stated that they exchange mobile numbers with teachers to facilitate necessary communication. Parents shared that the school provides after-school classes for test preparation.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across classrooms there is evidence that teaching practices are becoming grounded in beliefs about student learning that are in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching. However, there is an inconsistent practice of engaging students in appropriate Common Core-aligned tasks and in providing multiple entry points.

Impact

Although teaching practices are becoming aligned to the school's articulated beliefs about how students learn best, the inconsistent use of teaching strategies that promote multiple entry points curtails engagement in higher-order thinking skills for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- In a 6th grade science class, students engaged in a stationary “gallery walk” and collaborative discussion within their table groups to view and identify pictures illustrating radiation, conduction or convection. The teacher circulated amongst the groups to provide feedback and to pose questions to push student thinking. At the end of the session, groups shared their answers. A culminating exit ticket activity engaged students in further identifying characteristics of each heat transfer method. As students shared their answers, their peers used hand signals to agree or disagree with their answers. In addition, technology was integrated throughout the lesson and English language learners were strategically seated by bilingual “high-achieving” students for support.
- In one 7th grade English language arts class, the teacher used close-reading strategies with students to analyze the text, “Lyddie.” The teacher read the guiding questions from a handout while each student read along from his or her copy, and she instructed students to read specific pages in order to answer the questions. The guiding questions were high-level and there was a focus on academic vocabulary, as reflected in the following: “What actions did Diana do that led people to refer to her as ‘infamous’ or ‘radical’?” And “What does ‘ravenous’ show about Lyddie’s response to the book?” However the lesson was teacher-centered, with the teacher leading all students through every question on the work sheet. As each question was answered, the teacher wrote out the answer, and students copied each answer onto their worksheet. There was no evidence of differentiation during this lesson.
- In a 7th grade health class, the teacher read through the syllabus and spent the rest of the time asking questions from a “Who am I?” survey. As the teacher asked each question, such as, “Who has been to Disney World?” or “Who has been in a fight with your best friend?” students who experienced it, stood up. During the debriefing the principal noted that there was no teaching observed during this visit and further articulated that nothing observed reflected his articulated pedagogical expectations.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The coherence and alignment of the curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards are ensured by school leaders. Curricula and academic tasks engage high-order thinking skills and promote college and career readiness for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

The planning and implementation of Common Core-aligned curricula promotes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school implements the Expeditionary Learning curriculum for English language arts instruction which is aligned with the Common Core. Teachers modify the pace of some units by lengthening time for instruction within standards in which students are not proficient. In addition, in order to support independent reading, teachers implement the American Reading Council 100 Book Challenge. Through this program students engage in reading at their independent reading level for 30 minutes daily.
- The Connected Math Project 3 curriculum is implemented throughout the grades. The principal shared that the program was selected because of its alignment to the Common Core. However, teachers still have to provide scaffolds to bridge students' conceptual understanding of the CMP3 curriculum. between the standards and concepts that were taught in alignment with the New York State standards and the heightened standards and concepts of the Common Core.
- Teachers integrate the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) strategies of front-loading challenging vocabulary, planning language objectives for every lesson and round-robin reading to provide scaffolds for English language learners.
- For instructional planning in social studies, teachers use the New York City scope and sequence to plan units and lessons. The New York State science standards are used in the planning of science units.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is developing in their use of common assessments to measure student progress across grades and subjects. Across classrooms there is an inconsistent use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Although the school is developing in the use of common assessments to measure student progress, on-going progress-monitoring at the classroom level is inconsistent and limits the ability of teachers to effectively tailor instruction to accommodate all students' learning needs

Supporting Evidence

- During the leadership meeting the principal shared that the school uses several common assessments to measure student progress across grades and subjects. In the beginning of the year, a baseline writing assessment is administered. The faculty used the New York State expository writing rubric to grade the baseline assessment. Analysis revealed a deficit in the area of elaboration in the eighth grade. As a result, the principal stated, the teachers decided to provide students with sentence stems in order to scaffold vocabulary development.
- The school uses the iReady online assessment program. The principal stated that the beginning of year assessment data revealed deficits in four key English Language Arts standards: citing textual evidence, determining the meanings of words in a text, determining the central idea of a text and defining character and evaluating decisions. In response to the data teachers have incorporated these standards into their "Do Now" and homework tasks. The school also uses the Independent Reading Level Assessment and Datacation to track student progress. And the school has adopted the American Reading Company's 100 Book Challenge program to facilitate independent reading and track reading progress. The 100 Book Challenge data posted in the principal's office reveals a significant percentage of students are reading far-below grade level.
- In some classrooms teachers were observed effectively checking for understanding as students engaged in group work. However this practice varied across classrooms. For example in one 8th grade science lab, students were engaged in exploring the relationship between mass, volume and density through hands-on exploration. However during the hallway debrief, the principal noted that although the teacher did circulate, she missed opportunities to provide guided support. In an English language arts class, the teacher began with reading aloud an excerpt from a text and modeling an analysis of the character's perspective and the reader's perspective, on the Smart board. After which students were instructed to collaboratively read and to analyze another excerpt using the same lens. The fact that some students were not engaged in the task during the group work went unnoticed by the teacher.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The majority of teachers participate in inquiry-driven teacher team meetings that promote the achievement of school wide goals and fortify teaching capacity. Distributed leadership structures promote teacher leadership and allow teachers a voice in key decision-making.

Impact

Teacher team collaboration enhances school-wide goal attainment, teacher capacity and teacher leadership.

Supporting Evidence

- During an English language arts teacher team meeting, teachers were observed discussing the reading progress of targeted students. Each teacher selects a student to perform a case study on. The progress of these students is discussed during teacher team meetings. The lead teacher began by reading her student’s profile aloud. Although not all teachers in the group had written student profiles, each teacher gave a descriptive narrative of his or her student’s challenges and progress.
- During some teacher team meetings, it was reported, teachers analyze student work through the use of the Santa Cruz student work analysis tool, although this was not observed on the day of the visit.
- Teacher teams also engage in lesson study. They plan lessons collaboratively, observe a colleague implement the lesson and engage in a formative feedback session. One team member shared that lesson study has been the most supportive job-embedded professional development that teachers have received.
- Teachers also meet in teams to analyze and revise curriculum. Through data analysis and curricular analysis teacher teams develop scaffolds to provide intervention for assessed skill deficits in math and English Language Arts.
- There are lead teachers in each grade and subject, and veteran teachers serve as mentors to less senior staff.