Quality Review Report

2016-2017

New Millennium Business Academy Middle School
Junior High-Intermediate-Middle 09X328
1000 Teller Avenue
Bronx
NY 10456

Principal: Dorald Bastian

Dates of Review:
March 23, 2017 - March 24, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

New Millennium Business Academy Middle School serves students in grade 6 through grade 8. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tr>
<td>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</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</table>
Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
The implementation of a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) program, student assemblies, student government, and success mentors foster the school’s approach to building a safe and inclusive school culture.

Impact
A school culture that focuses on attendance and youth development results in a safe and inclusive learning environment that meaningfully involves students in school improvement efforts and positively impacts students’ academic and personal behavior. The school has teams and structures in place to ensure that each student is known well by an adult.

Supporting Evidence

- The PBIS program, student government, and student assemblies contribute to a safe and inclusive school culture where student voice is welcome and valued in key school decisions. The schoolwide discipline matrix, aligned to the PBIS program, emphasizes the core characteristics of being trustworthy, eager, accountable, and mature (TEAM). Teachers reward students that exemplify TEAM behavior with business bucks. School assemblies reinforce and celebrate students’ academic achievement, behavior, and attendance. TEAM is embedded in the school’s philosophy of, “If I practice the New Millennium Business Academy TEAM philosophy, it will guarantee me academic success, a safe environment to grow, and prepare me for the world...”

- The student government meets regularly with the principal to discuss issues, such as the implementation of a schoolwide recycling program, an anti-bullying campaign, and surveying students about quality of school lunch and school uniforms. The student government has successfully launched a schoolwide recycling program, instituted “no uniform Fridays” and completed student surveys about the school lunch to inform the popular food choices of the students. Faculty also provide a forum for students to share their voice through the delivery of prose.

- Eighth graders submit applications, attend a summer retreat as well as receive weekly training from guidance counselors to become success mentors to incoming sixth grade students. Eighth graders receive classes in building their leadership skills and mentor sixth graders on transitioning to middle school, students develop TEAM characteristics, time management skills and support one another in adapting to their new teachers. The success mentors program fosters positive behavior for all parties involved.

- The Student Success Team meets weekly to discuss chronically absent and at-risk students and serves as an opportunity for an adult to know a student well. Members of the Student Success Team coordinate attendance outreach with mentors and counseling personnel from a community based organization (CBO). An adult from the school and a mentor from the CBO are assigned specific students, implement interventions, and meet as a team to follow up on the efficacy of their interventions. Guidance and support practices result in improvements to daily attendance for target students. In addition, superintendent and principal suspensions have decreased from 15 to 1 and 20 to 5 comparing results from 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 respectively.
### Area of Focus

### Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy

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<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices align to the curricula and reflect an articulated belief that students learn best when engaged in high quality discussions. However, this belief was not reflected in some of the classes visited.

### Impact

Teacher practices align to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts and student work products and discussions, in most classrooms, reflect high levels of student thinking and participation. A lack of adherence to articulated beliefs in some classrooms, hinders coherence of instructional practices across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal articulated that students learn best when teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in “high quality and sustained interactions” that support students to “elaborate and illustrate their ideas in their speech and writing.” In a mathematics class with diverse learners, the content objective required students to “…analyze the attributes of cones and spheres to determine the best fit of a scoop of ice cream.” The teacher showed students an image of a rectangular pan and two round pans and asked them to predict which image will hold more cake batter? Students engaged in “sustained interactions” and used a math discussion protocol to explain their rationale for the cake pan selected. Students also used mathematical calculations to substantiate their predictions. In a social studies class, students engaged in an online classroom exercise that asked the overarching question, “How does the author use the environment to reveal aspects of the Great Depression?” Students posted their responses to the teacher via an electronic form and all students viewed the answers. Although similar practices were seen across most classrooms, teaching practices in some classrooms did align to the articulated set of beliefs.

- In an English Language Arts (ELA) class with diverse learners, the content objective required students to analyze a test prompt that compares two articles. Student leaders led their groups in reading and annotating the articles. Students responded directly to one another using accountable talk stems and cited evidence from the articles to substantiate their answers. In another ELA class with diverse learners, the learning objective required students to perform a close read to find textual evidence that correlated to their extended response outlines. However, discussions in this classroom were primarily teacher-to-student and there was only one opportunity for student-to-student discourse via a teacher led turn and talk. To prompt the turn and talk, the teacher posed the question, “What more do you want to try when writing your paragraphs?” Student engagement in this class was passive and compliant, limiting students’ opportunities to take ownership of their learning.

- In another ELA class, students compared two articles about the work of Lewis Latimer and John Deere and wrote a comparative essay. Students in this class used a checklist to evaluate their essays and provide a writing partner with feedback. In a mathematics class, groups of students discussed strategies used to solve the area of a polygon and used a scaffold entitled, “Area Cheat Sheet” to support their work. During this lesson, classmates assisted other students that demonstrated productive struggle. However, in another mathematics class, there were no clear structures or protocols in place for collaborative work, and students expressed frustration with the task. In most of the classrooms observed, student discussions reflected high levels of student thinking and participation; however, in other classes visited, levels of thinking and participation varied.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1 Curriculum

**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula aligns to Common Core Learning Standards and integrates writing from sources and the citing of text-based responses. Teachers plan and refine lesson and units using student work and data.

**Impact**

Alignment of the curricula to Common Core Learning Standards and the integration of the instructional shifts builds coherence to ensure college and career readiness for all students. Refinements to curricula ensure that a diversity of learners have access to instruction and are cognitively engaged.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school has adopted Common Core aligned curricula such as the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program and the Hundred Book Challenge for ELA, Passport for social studies, and Glencoe for mathematics. Units across content areas incorporate opportunities for students to write from sources and provide text-based answers. A social studies unit plan requires students to support their claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. One task required students to write an argumentative essay discussing the degree to which the United States should be involved in the affairs of other nations and support their claim and counterclaims with evidence. Similarly, an ELA unit plan requires students to write a position paper from multiple perspectives, using claim and evidence to support their position, and a science lesson requires students to write an argumentative essay to determine how people use the laws of motions to ensure safety. Unit and lesson plans build coherence through the incorporation of the instructional shifts, thus promoting college and career readiness.

- An ELA curriculum map shows a change in the sequence of writing topics to provide students with additional support based on the results of their baseline assessment. An ELA lesson plan shows modifications for the diverse learners which include individualized supports such as checklists, checks for understanding, task monitoring, and dual language partners. A review of math unit plans also provides evidence that teachers make adjustments to the scope and sequence of a units based on student data. One math plan demonstrates that teachers made revisions to a unit on ratios and proportions to better meet students’ instructional needs.

- The school has adopted a system of differentiating planned questions as mild, spicy, and hot that aligns to the spectrum of questions in the Webbs Depth of Knowledge. An ELA lesson plan also shows modifications to assign students to differentiated learning groups. A social studies lesson plan includes modifications for English Language Learners (ELLs) such as translated passages in English and Spanish. A review of plans and lessons demonstrates that teachers plan for student access and engagement across content areas.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Teachers use rubrics and assessments that align to the school’s curricula. Teachers use varied assessment practices to consistently check for understanding and provide students opportunities for peer assessment.

Impact

Teachers use data from assessments and rubrics to provide students with actionable feedback. Ongoing checks for understanding allow teachers to make effective adjustments to instruction that meet the needs of a diversity of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- A math problem solving report requires students to write a problem statement and solution in an organized format, and reflect on their learning. The teacher assessed the task using a rubric and provided feedback in the form of glows and grows. The glow stated that the student’s work is detailed and provides clear explanations. The grow recommended that when providing an opinion, the student should rely on factual information and not be ambiguous in their answer because it may confuse the reader. Another task requires students to solve a mathematical riddle using an algebraic expression and provides a rationale for their solution. The glow on one student’s response stated that the student provided a thorough explanation and understood how to write the equation. The grow recommended that the student challenge themselves and attempt the extension activity.

- In a social studies class, the teacher posed a question to students using an online platform. The teacher asked, “How does the author use the environment to reveal aspects of the Great Depression?” The teacher captured all student responses via the online format. One student responded that an outcome of the Great Depression was unemployment among families. The teacher in this class commented on the student’s response and asked if families were also emotionally, physically, or mentally impacted. The teacher then reconfigured the student groups based on their responses. In an ELA class, the teacher checked for understanding using whole class questioning and individual conferences. After reviewing student work samples, the teacher directed students to proofread their writing to make sure they recorded quotes using accurate punctuation. The teacher also conducted a small group lesson for students she determined had not achieved the learning target. Students in this class used a revision checklist and provided feedback to one another in small groups. Similar assessment practices were observed across most classrooms.

- In a math class, the teacher checked for understanding by capturing student responses using an electronic data collection system. However, all students did not respond, thus impeding the data collection process. In this class, the teacher did not make adjustments to the lesson based on the student responses. In another mathematics class, the teacher checked for understanding by asking questions such as, “What is a parallelogram?” and “What is the area of the composite figure?” The teacher in this class also used an electronic platform to check for understanding. In this class, there were no on-the-spot-adjustments made to the lesson and students were unaware of their next learning steps. Although most teachers utilize frequent checks for understanding to make effective adjustments to instruction, there are a few classrooms where this practice is not yet in place.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders convey high expectations for communication, professionalism, and instruction to the staff via an all staff newsletter and subject specific notices grounded in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to families connected to college and career readiness.

Impact

The administration provides training to support staff in meeting high expectations and has a system of accountability for those expectations. Clear expectations conveyed to families help them understand their child’s progress toward grade level expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations to the staff through the *Millennium Muse* newsletter. The newsletter communicates expectations for professional learning, the role of peer collaborative teachers, protocols for book study, and student lead conferences. In addition, leadership delineates expectations for instruction in a document entitled *Business Basics*, which outlines expectations for classroom environments, grade level teams, questioning and discussion, assessments, flow of a lesson, and other classroom related items. The principal also clarifies expectations for hosting a lab classroom via a *Lab Classroom Action Plan*. This year teachers participated in a series of on-site professional development workshops to support them in scaffolding strategies for ELLs across content areas. Leadership holds staff accountable for expectations through the feedback provided from observations and intervisitations conducted by peer collaborative teachers.

- Leadership outlines expectations for instruction across the content areas in subject specific lesson models and notices. The notices delineate the curricula, and elements of a model lesson that define teacher moves, classroom applications, instructional strategies, assessment tools, and possible student work products that demonstrate student thinking.

- Teacher teams and staff articulate expectations connected to college and career readiness to families through online grading platforms, quarterly progress reports, student lead conferences, weekly parent engagement meetings, report cards, and a curriculum night. During the parent meeting, parents attested to their use of the grading and communication platforms as well as receiving phone calls from the school that keep them abreast of their child’s academic performance. The school hosts parent workshops on parenting strategies, family counseling, and support services. Faculty have also facilitated an immigration forum, coat drives, food pantry, and an Academic Parent Teacher Team (APTT) that describes how parents can partner with the school. During the parent meeting, parents also attested to attending workshops hosted by the school on immigration, English as a New Language (ENL), and family support services.
**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and assessment data for students they share or whom they are focused. Peer Collaborative Teachers (PCT) exemplify distributed leadership structures that are in place schoolwide.

**Impact**

Collaborative analysis of assessment data result in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for students, however, mastery of goals for groups of students is not yet demonstrated. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Assessment data revealed a decrease in student performance in the informational writing unit as compared to the literary text-writing unit. The humanities team was observed analyzing student informational writing samples to determine if implemented supports such as scanning, observation, annotation, and reviewing (SOAR) and outlining, elaboration, and planning pages, had an impact on student performance. After analyzing student work and discussing the strategies used in the classroom, teachers concluded that there was an improvement in student work samples. Teachers completed a task analysis sheet to reflect on their findings and chronicle the tasks as well as the strategies used. After the reflection period, teachers determined which strategies they would present to colleagues during a share-out. During the teacher team meetings, teachers stated that the collaboration of teachers and sharing of strategies has helped to improve instruction across the grades. Although consistent analysis of student work has led to progress toward goals, mastery of goals for groups of students is not yet evident.

- A math team conducted an intervisitation and observed a math lesson on identifying when two expressions are equivalent. The team analyzed student work collected from the classroom visit using guiding questions to determine which standards were addressed in the assignment as well as the level of rigor in the task. Team members were able to identify the standards aligned to the student tasks and determine the level of rigor incorporated in the lesson. As a result of these practices, teachers are cognizant of and can speak to the level of rigor in their instructional practices.

- Peer Collaborative Teachers (PCTs) serve as liaisons to the administrative team and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. PCTs meet with the principal weekly to discuss key instructional items and relay information to each department. During the teacher meeting, teachers mentioned that the PCTs assist in planning professional development for the staff, and recommends resources, technological tools and educational apps to support teachers during instruction. PCTs also mentor new teachers by connecting them with colleagues who provide targeted instructional support.