



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Manhattan High School

Public School 035 Manhattan

**317 West 52 Street
New York
NY 10019**

Principal: Marta Rojo

Dates of review: March 12 - 14, 2007

Reviewer: Frank Jones

Content of the report

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall evaluation

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

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Public School 035M, Manhattan High School is a special education school consisting of one main site and two off sites, one of which is a day treatment center in a hospital setting and the other for students in alternate assessment in a local high school. There are 32 classes housed in the main site, grades kindergarten through 12, which cater for students with severe emotional and behavioral needs, those on the autistic spectrum and moderate to severe cognitive disabilities. All students have individual education programs. Those students that are unable to access the New York City Assessments are mandated to the New York City Alternate Assessments.

Fifty four percent of the students are Black alongside 38% from Hispanic backgrounds, 5% White and 3% Asian. Approximately 4% of the students are English language learners when they enter the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is extremely able and provides strong caring leadership for the school community.
- The talents of the assistant principals compliment those of the principal and combined they provide clear direction for the school.
- The principal is passionate about the students in her care and will do whatever is necessary to provide opportunities for them.
- The staff are highly motivated and totally committed in their resolve to do the very best for all students.
- The collection, analysis and use of data by the principal and staff operate at an advanced level.
- There is a good connection between professional development that reflects teacher needs and those of the students.
- Staff are mutually supportive and form part of the learning organization that is PS 35M.
- The expertise and the support which is available, both within the school and that which is accessed externally, play a significant part in meeting student need.
- The principal and staff have high expectations that are shared with students, parents and the wider community.
- The self-evaluation form is a well-written document and illustrates the in depth knowledge the school has of itself.

What the school needs to improve

- Maintain and improve teacher understanding of the potential and use data has to impact on learning and instruction.
- Refine targets for students so they are more quantifiable and clearly identify the next steps in learning.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a well-developed school.

The principal has been the school leader for ten years and many of the staff have considerable experience, both of which are beneficial to the school. The principal is passionate about meeting the needs of the students and this is evident in all she does and the exceptional leadership she provides. The understanding and care provided is of a high quality but does not detract from the fact that rules and regulations are in place, are enforced and students are very clear about these non-negotiable parameters.

The high involvement of other professionals with complimentary expertise ensures that the needs of the whole student are identified and considered strategies implemented. The further monitoring and evaluation of the impact of these strategies enables refinements and alterations to be made to individual student plans. This is a well developed feature of the school.

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

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The use of data is well developed and is fully integrated into the practice of the school. Quality data, which is specific to individual students, groups, grades and subjects is generated by the school and well used. They make good use of State and City data to supplement their own. The school has carefully identified which assessment systems provide the best quality information for teachers to enable them to focus on key development areas for all students. Benchmarks for students are set following computer based analysis of entry data. The use of outcomes to inform performance data identifies progress and achievement and is linked to emotional, social, behavioral and medical data to give a comprehensive picture of each student. Needs are precisely identified and programs are developed to meet them.

The assessment data that is used reflects the abilities and needs of the student population. Individual education programs are in place for each student and used by staff to set goals, and strategies to achieve them. Targeted support for special education students ensures they make good progress in relation to their goals indicated in their individual education plans. Brigance is used well to provide information on what a student knows and can do and to inform future learning goals. Where a student is unable to access the mandated curriculum then the New York alternate assessments are used to support development and monitor progress. The extensive analysis of data and the use made of it ensures that the needs of each student are known and planned for. The school therefore has little reason to disaggregate data according to ethnicity or gender considering the comprehensive picture it has of individual student need. A clinician attends the frequent meetings that take place to monitor and record progress, and modify programs as necessary.

The school measures progress against goals it has set itself at all levels within the school. This constant evaluation impacts positively on the progress students make and the accuracy in identifying the next steps in development for students, grades and specific types of students. Comparisons made with similar schools are positive. This information is used to benchmark progress in a wider context.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The principal is passionate about providing appropriate opportunities for all students in her care and is successful in meeting their disparate needs. The staff works tirelessly, often in extremely challenging circumstances to support them. The pervasive culture of mutual support, openness and desire to improve performance, both instructional and for student achievement, result in the school being a highly organized learning organization. Plans and goals are developed, reviewed and realigned in cohort or grade teams, utilizing to the expertise of staff from different disciplines such as therapists, guidance counsellors and the behavior coach. This procedure is a positive feature at each site and embraces all students with differing but specific need.

The analysis of medical, behavioral and academic data provides a complete picture of each student and recognizes the importance of stabilizing behavior patterns if learning is to occur. This individualized approach to students ensures that appropriate support is in place and incremental development occurs. Where formal and informal teacher assessments indicate that progress is not being made the program of instruction is altered and new strategies developed and implemented. The principal and assistant principal who are responsible for the curriculum discuss data outcomes with staff during faculty and grade conferences and share best practice. Teachers welcome the common preparatory periods, which are scheduled four times a week and use this time to seek support, discuss student progress and set goals. This is supported by focused data that is disseminated to teachers. This combined with teacher knowledge of student needs, informs and refines the detailed planning for daily instruction and the creation of long-term instructional goals.

Students appreciate the high expectations the school has and the fact that they are valued. It is this total support and trust in each other that is crucial for many of the student population and forms the bedrock that success is built on. The majority of students follow a standard high school curriculum with associated sporting and other enrichment activities in place. Particular importance is placed on the care given to those students who are most vulnerable and programming is modified and matched to need. Parents who report that they are kept well informed and advised on how to support their children at home welcome the open door policy operated by the principal.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is well developed.

The school successfully aligns its curriculum and instruction programs to meet a diverse range of complex needs. The school uses the curriculum mandated by the New York State but when data analysis indicates that this is not appropriate then the New York

Alternate Assessment is used. Instruction is driven by intelligent data analysis and informs the detailed lesson plans that are in place. Students on the autistic spectrum develop their communication and independence skills as a result of the well-delivered instruction program. Emotionally disturbed students, following the introduction of a comprehensive reading program that directs the next steps in learning, have made rapid progress in reading. Flexible organization of the day increases opportunities for students to attend after or evening school and to access a wider curriculum. This system is also used to retain educational opportunities for those students not attending in the day. Groupings and differentiated instruction within classrooms are developed using information from interim assessments, student portfolios of work and conferencing. Outcomes are closely monitored and used to refine both the curriculum and the instructional approach and this has had a positive impact on student achievement. The assistant principal meets with teachers regularly to discuss student progress and this is reinforced through more formal monthly meetings between the teachers and the principal where the progress of each student is discussed.

The gradual implementation of technology to support instruction and enhance learning is evidence that budgetary decisions are used intelligently and creatively to implement the long-term goals the school. The technology is well used to support differentiated learning and provide access skills to wider knowledge. Day to day expenditure and decision-making is driven by the needs of the students to increase the range of opportunities and learning experiences available. Students are able to practice hairdressing and beautician skills on peers following the development of the cosmetology room. Open access to the principal and surveys enables students to be actively involved in decision-making processes and therefore assume increased responsibility for the way the school operates.

Staff are well supported and held to account by the principal and assistant who have a positive influence on the teaching that takes place through observations and regular grade meetings. Scheduling is flexible and altered to meet the needs of students often on a daily basis according to the disposition of individual students. Staff are hired for their commitment to making a difference to students life chances and expectations. Training and practical support is available for all teachers. The care provided for students and understanding of how to meet their needs is at a high level. Students feel they can talk to staff and appreciate what is done for them especially the opportunities available to visit theatres and other off site experiences reflect this.

There are detailed strategies in place to promote attendance including outreach and home visits and immediate phone calls by the assistant principal. The nature of the school population makes the attendance levels below those of mainstream education but the 67% attendance attained by the school reflects the impact of the strategies employed.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

The experienced view the principal as extremely supportive and share her vision for the direction for the school. They admire the principals many qualities and the considered way plans are implemented. The staff are highly motivated and totally committed in their resolve to do the very best for all students. In depth professional development follows appointments of staff, who are selected for their subject expertise, care and commitment to children. The school runs smoothly because of the collegiate leadership that encourages administrators and teachers to contribute views to develop the school and its procedures.

This collaborative approach is a hallmark of the principals' leadership. The high involvement of staff and their comfort in expressing their views ensures they feel ownership of the issues that drive the school forward and are not afraid of altering plans in the light of discussion.

A wide range of professional development opportunities are offered to all staff to keep them informed of the latest developments in autism, literacy and positive behaviour approaches as well as reinforcing strategies that inform current teaching practice. Teachers have the opportunity to engage in inter-visitations and with Teacher's College partner school. The program of formal lesson observations, walkthroughs, informal observations and discussions with staff by the leadership team ensure that the administration has an in depth understanding of the instructional quality of each teacher. This enables them to match staff with appropriate staff development targeted at individual need. This comprehensive program of support for staff raises their expertise and impacts positively on the learning experiences of all students. This connection between the needs of the students and training for the teachers is well developed.

High quality partnerships exist between the school and numerous support agencies and are key to the development of the student, their ability to acquire functional skills and through the various therapeutic opportunities understand and control their emotions. Wider involvement with the community extends the curriculum for students and involves parents of students in all sites.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is well developed.

Data is used to inform the school Comprehensive Education Plan as well as the principal's performance review and assistant principal's goals and objectives. It provides direction for the school, an analysis of where success has occurred but importantly what it needs to be done to improve further. The knowledge the school has of itself and what it needs to do next is as a result of the quality of evaluation prevalent in the school at all levels and is evidenced in the school evaluation statement.

The staff is equally adept at monitoring curriculum and instructional plans. Individual education plans are written collaboratively and reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year and adapted according to the ongoing identified developmental needs of the student. Staff and students are surrounded with programs and services that provide a range of academic and support options to select from. In this way staff are prepared to alter, modify and change plans, secure in the knowledge that other programs are available to meet student need.

One of the great strengths of the school is its confidence and ability to realign the curriculum and the way learning is organized to respond to the needs of individual and groups of students in each site. The effective analysis and use of relevant data is of paramount importance in enabling this to improve outcomes for students with such complexities.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Manhattan High School (PS 035M)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score			X

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> each student, classroom, grade level, 			X
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ethnic groups, English language learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1			X

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.			X
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.			X
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.			X
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 2			X

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	∅	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.			X
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3			X
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	∅	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.			X
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 4			X
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	∅	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.			X
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.			X
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.			X
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 5			X