

# **Quality Review Report**

## **2008-2009**

**P811M- The Mickey Mantle School**

**Early Childhood-Middle School- 811M**

**466 West End Avenue  
New York  
NY 10024**

**Principal: Barry Daub**

**Dates of review: March 13 – 17, 2009**

**Lead Reviewer: Mick Megee**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Mickey Mantle School is an early childhood-middle school with 360 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 41% Black, 49% Hispanic, 7% White, and 0% Asian students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 100% special education students. Boys account for 83.5% of the students enrolled and girls account for 16.5%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2007 - 2008 was 82.5%. The school is not in receipt of Title 1 funding.

This District 75 special school is located on a main site in Manhattan at a main site, two offsites in East Harlem and three general education inclusion sites. The students have autism, multiple disabilities, severe emotional disabilities, severe behavioral disabilities or severe communication disorders. Class staff ratios reflect students' needs, at 12:1:4 (students to teacher to paraprofessional), 12:1:1, 8:1:4, 8:1:2, 8:1:1, and 6:1:1. About half the students follow alternate assessment programs, with the other half following standardized assessment programs.

### Overall Evaluation

#### **This school is proficient.**

The clearly focused work of the principal, the administrators and the staff has brought about strong academic, emotional and social growth in this harmonious and happy school. Parents say that staff who work at the school have "an open heart and love our children as individuals." Staff work in very close partnership with families, providing them with daily information, in order to maximize improvement. The school effectively collects, utilizes and evaluates data about students' individual performance in English language arts, math, social studies and science. Staff make good use of probe data in these areas to identify where any student is underachieving and to put in place effective remedial strategies. The school does not yet gather and utilize data about students' performance in other core subjects. The school gathers some information in English language arts and math about the performance of subgroups, but not all subgroups are covered and targets for subgroups are not set or reviewed. This means that some underachievement may not be recognized.

The school collects good data about behavior and attendance and uses it very well to promote improvement in these areas. The school has developed a wide range of strategies, including very good modeling by staff, anxiety reduction, and reward systems to reduce unwanted behaviors. As a result, behavior is excellent throughout the school. Staff receive a very good range of first-class professional development, and the principal achieves consistency across the sites by judicious use of meetings and common planning. The school provides a good curriculum, although some teachers are not as skilled as others in ensuring a close match between the activities and the needs of all the students. There is good support for students with communication difficulties, although in some classes signs, symbols and object cues are not used as often as they could be.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school collects and utilizes detailed information about students' individual performance in English language arts, math, social studies and science that proficiently drives instruction.
- The principal leads by example, successfully promoting a culture of self-reflection and a constant search for ways to improve students' lives.
- The school's very good systems to promote personal and social growth mean that behavior is exemplary in the calm and industrious classrooms.
- The school and students' families very strong partnership is a key factor in students' successful personal and academic development.
- The excellent professional development opportunities mean that staff have very good specialist skills and knowledge to help the students move forward.
- All staff provide very good role models to the students for how to work together happily as a team.

### What the school needs to improve

- Extend to all core subjects the good work in data utilization already established.
- Ensure that teachers always match lesson activities precisely to the full range of needs and capabilities in the class.
- Ensure that staff always make effective use of signs, symbols and object cues to promote communication and aid understanding.
- Check more effectively on the performance of all the subgroups within the school to see if there is any unidentified underachievement.

## 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 is effective in collecting a wide range of information about individual, class and grade performance and progress in English language arts, math, science and social studies. It does not yet collect detailed information across all the core subject areas. In English language arts, and math, staff are beginning to analyze the information about the performance of the various subgroups in the school, although the school does not yet do this systematically in other areas of the school's work.

For all students, staff regularly measure progress against individual education program targets. The school makes extensive use of student portfolios to collect and assess artifacts of student work. For students who are able to undertake standardized assessments, this information includes Read180, Scantron online assessments, and Aris information. For other students the school makes good use of alternate assessments such as Brigance and ABLLS to measure performance across a wide range of domains. The school actively encourages teachers to develop and fine-tune their own assessments to more accurately chart the progress of their students. As the principal says, "Whatever it takes to get the job done right." Some teachers use weekly spelling and numeracy tests, while others have developed tests which allow students to self-assess their own emotional and social learning in a daily basis.

The school collects daily information about students' progress towards meeting their behavior targets, and this intense focus helps students to move forwards rapidly. Corridors and classrooms are peaceful and orderly. Attendance is about the average for this type of school. Many students have complex medical needs so that absence is mostly for health reasons. The staff collect detailed information about attendance, and respond quickly to limit absences as far as possible by daily phone calls, sending out postcards and home visits. The school has appointed a new family worker dedicated to this work. As a result attendance is moving up, albeit slowly.

Parents receive formal monthly progress reports as well as daily updates on their children's progress, through home/school books. They appreciate this and say that staff go the extra mile to constantly inform them about their children's successes, problems and well-being. Parents feel that there is a very solid partnership with the school to support their children and gain steady improvement. As one parent said, "With this school, you get the whole package. They keep you informed about all the issues: behavioral, medical, reading or whatever." Often the amount of progress amazes them. As one said, "I got this report and I read it. I said to myself 'Wow! He's on the level he's supposed to be!'"

**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.**

The school sets targets for individual students through their individual education programs, across a number of different domains, including reading, math and social competences, including behavior. Staff review these goals formally each marking period, although teachers keep account of students’ progress on a daily basis through their assessment practices, particularly on behavioral goals. The school sets goals at class, grade and school levels in English language arts, math, social studies and science. The school does not yet set goals for other core subjects. There are a few goals set for different subgroups within the school, although the school does not cover all relevant subgroups. This means the school misses an opportunity to find out, for example whether the positive behavior procedures work equally well for girls as boys. Most goals are suitably specific and measurable, although a few are not written sufficiently tightly, and this makes it difficult to see whether they have been successfully achieved.

The school-wide goals set in the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan are the outcome of collaborative processes involving the cabinet, staff, coordinators and parents. The school sensibly uses the same processes for the Comprehensive Educational Plan as it does for its self-evaluation, as there is naturally a strong link between the two. The plan goes through several stages of drafting between the various stakeholder groups until there is a final agreed version. In this way, all stakeholders have a very good understanding of the school’s current strengths and areas for development, and know what targets will need to be reached.

Staff have regular formal and informal conferences with students and their families about the individual goals that are set. In this way, most parents have a clear understanding of what they need to do at home to support their children’s progress. For a few parents, however, there is not a clear understanding of the exact goals and this holds their children back from even faster progress.

**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 proficient.**

The school provides a good range of activities to promote students’ intellectual, emotional, academic and physical growth. Students say how much they enjoy what the school offers. As one said, “I love the sports club. You get to play soccer, go swimming, even ice-skating. School is fun!” There are opportunities for creative development in art on all the sites, but one or two sites do not yet benefit from having a music teacher. Students say this is unfortunate and that they would like to learn music, particularly singing. There some innovative aspects to the school, such as the culinary program that features an antique 40’s-style diner where students learn to purchase, prepare and serve food. Every day students offer a range of delicious lunch items for staff members to purchase. Like many of the programs in the school, this is a multi-disciplinary program that incorporates literacy, math, science, social studies and art. The school has

had budget cuts over the last year that mean that unfortunately it can no longer afford to offer its extensive after-school program. Parents understand why this has been necessary, but wish the school to reinstate this much-valued program as quickly as possible. The principal is doing his best to find the funds from elsewhere. In lessons, teachers generally provide interesting activities that are well matched to the students' levels. A few staff are not quite so skilled at this differentiation and consequently they may provide work which is too easy for some of the students or too challenging for others.

There are very good relationships throughout the school and classrooms are harmonious, happy environments for learning. Students are adamant that there is no bullying or fighting. There are a number of reasons for this. Staff themselves act gently and respectfully to each other, providing good role models in teamwork and partnership. Staff within the very small groups know the students well, and can predict if they are likely to become upset, and can act quickly to take the heat out of any situation. The school has a first-class positive behavior system promoted by every member of staff, where students who choose to demonstrate specified positive behaviors and acts of kindness earn rewards and privileges. Staff have good skills and knowledge in specialist teaching techniques, such as TEACCH, that are designed to reduce any anxiety or insecurity which may prevent students from settling quickly to their tasks.

Because of the communication needs of many of the students, staff make frequent use of additional communication cues such as pictures, symbols, object cues and signs. Not all staff are equally adept at this, and as a result students may not have a very clear understanding of what is being said. Parents agree and say that they wish there was more signing going on in the school and they would like communication workshops so that they could help increase their children's ability to make their wishes known.

**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.**

In order to continually improve the students' learning experiences, the school ensures that all teachers have an individual professional development plan that outlines how they can improve their practice, and recommends appropriate training to be undertaken. The plan is developed on the basis of lesson observations, teachers' self-assessment and collaborative discussions between teachers and administrators about their own aspirations for the future. The plans are generally of good quality, although they sometimes contain suggestions for improvement, rather than easily measurable targets. The individual plans underpin the school-wide professional development plan, which the school has introduced this year. Alongside this, the school's guidance plan outlines how the school intends to accelerate the students' academic and personal growth through the use of support services and other partnerships. The school-wide plans ensure consistency of provision across all the sites but they do not yet have measures to demonstrate the impact of guidance and professional development upon outcomes for the students. The school recognizes this and plans to introduce these measures shortly.

Teachers say how much they value the support they receive from the administration, through lesson observations, practical help and professional conversations about their teaching practice. For example, one relatively new teacher said that an administrator had helped him to devise a general communication board so that he could improve classroom interactions. Another teacher said, "You go to the principal or assistant

principals with an issue, they always come up with a solution.” Teachers have effective, regular opportunities to share good practice through cross-site meetings and intervisitations.

The principal fosters strong partnerships with external academic institutions to afford staff high-quality opportunities to develop their instructional skills. These partnerships include those with the University of North Carolina, which is a centre of expertise of teaching methodologies for students with autism. Hunter College provides the school with first-class professional development opportunities in administration and supervision. The school staff work very well in collaboration with families and other service providers, such as speech and occupational therapists, to provide “wrap-around” care for students and families who require it. Individual students who are falling behind receive good, timely, frequent support from the school counselors so that they get quickly back on track.

**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.**

Staff at the school make extensive and frequent use of probe data to evaluate students’ individual performance. This allows teachers to identify quickly if students are still on track to meet their individual targets and to take remedial action as required. The school has good collaborative structures within which teachers can share their concerns and take a joint approach if necessary. This usually takes place at the monthly staff meetings. The school plots interim benchmarks for class, grade and school-wide goals in English language arts, math, science and social studies and the school sets these out in the Comprehensive Educational Plan. The school does not yet have these processes in place for all other content areas, or all the subgroups in the school. The cabinet meets every week to discuss and evaluate the school’s progress to meeting the wider goals. Where necessary the administration takes robust action. For example, last year the cabinet became aware of a group of students who were underachieving in math, particularly in mathematical operations such as addition and multiplication. The cabinet set up an inquiry team who researched the issue, identified very effective strategies and brought about rapid improvement.

Teachers speak glowingly about the quality and vigor of the leadership within the school. As one said, “We have a great young leadership within the administrative ranks.” The principal’s own contribution to the life of the school is valued very highly by all members of the school community. He has a very clear vision for the future of the school, and he takes every step to ensure that the whole school community shares this vision, for example by displaying the school’s mission statement in classrooms and corridors. He meets frequently with all the stakeholder groups, including parents, to give an account of how well the school is doing and what next steps need to be taken. Parents are deeply impressed by the principal’s leadership, believing that the facts speak for themselves. One parent commented, “I’m so happy with my son’s progress, and with the atmosphere, the mood, the people in the office and the other children. Whatever his vision is, I’m for it.”

# School Quality Criteria 2008-2009

<b>School name: Mickey Mantle School</b>	△	▷	✓	+
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty regularly...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
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?			<b>X</b>	
1.2 focus analysis on the learning outcomes and needs of all sub-groups of students?		<b>X</b>		
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>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.</b>				
<i>To what extent do school leaders and faculty...</i>	△	▷	✓	+
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?			<b>X</b>	
2.2 use collaborative and data-informed processes to develop the school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
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?			<b>X</b>	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>			<b>X</b>	

## 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, DYQ, 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.

<b>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.</b>							
<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			
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X				
<b>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.</b>							
<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				
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>			X				
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
△	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	➤	<b>Underdeveloped with Proficient Features</b>	✓	<b>Proficient</b>	+	<b>Well Developed</b>