

NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
**CAMPAIGN FOR MIDDLE
SCHOOL SUCCESS:
A REAL SUCCESS STORY**

JUNE 2010



A REPORT BY THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
MIDDLE SCHOOL TASK FORCE
TO
SPEAKER CHRISTINE C. QUINN &
ROBERT JACKSON, CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

THE CAMPAIGN FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL SUCCESS (CMSS) is a collaboration with the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice, the New York City Council, the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers, the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators, academic institutions in the city as well as other community partners. The Campaign, guided by a citywide advisory group comprising of these partners, is committed to creating a system of middle grade schools that provides the academic and social support that students need to excel as well support for educators and parents.

This report offers a brief analysis of the impact of the CMSS and was prepared by the NYC Coalition for Educational Justice and the New York City Council Policy Division. Special thanks to the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University and the New York City Department of Education for the analyses used in this report.

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2007, the New York City Council (NYC Council) and the NYC Department of Education (DOE) announced the creation of a \$5 million fund to support school improvement initiatives in 51 of the highest-need middle grade schools across the city.¹ This fund was the result of an organizing effort led by a coalition of advocates, academics, education experts, teachers, principals and parents including the NYC Coalition for Education Justice (CEJ) and the NYC Council's Middle School Task Force. Recognizing that this fund was a major step forward but that more needed to be done, this coalition worked with the DOE to launch the Campaign for Middle School Success (CMSS) in the summer of 2008. The CMSS is a comprehensive initiative to dramatically raise middle school performance, close the achievement gap, and improve social-emotional development in middle grade schools across the city. The NYC Council and the DOE helped secure \$12 million to support the CMSS in FY09.

The CMSS, of which the Middle School 51 Initiative (MS 51) is now a part, has produced numerous tools and programs to support middle school reform, including a Blueprint for Middle School Success that catalogs best practices for middle school improvement, professional development seminars to build school and teacher capacity, student engagement programs and other resources that have impacted over 500 schools with middle grades citywide. The CMSS has also funded planning and implementation grants to support a range of school transformation initiatives that have greatly accelerated student success in over 100 middle grade schools. Data analyses clearly reveal that the 51 middle schools are making better academic progress than the city as a whole, due in part to the impact of the MS 51 Initiative.

WHY THE MIDDLE GRADES?

Middle-grade schools have long been defined as the critical turning point in students' educational careers, but prior to the Campaign for Middle School Success, not seen as sites for systematic reform. Fair Student Funding, instituted by the DOE in 2007 was believed to address the funding inequities.² However, the budgets of middle grade schools continue to be "well below what is needed to cover basic operations."³ Although underfunded, middle grade schools must prepare their students to persevere through new academic requirements. In 2008, the DOE introduced a new eighth grade promotion policy that requires these students to score at a Level 2 or above and pass all core subjects in order to graduate and move into high school. Also, new high school graduation requirements instituted by the New York State Education Department in 2009 now require all students to obtain a Regents diploma - making the quality of middle school preparation more vital than ever.

In New York City, there are almost 600 schools with middle grades serving over 220,000 students, of which 51% are male and 49% are female.⁴ About 40% are Hispanic, 33% Black, 14%

¹ See Appendix 1 for a list of the 51 schools in relation to their NYC Council District members, and Appendix 2 for a list of FY09 implementation grant schools by NYC Council District member.

² Fair Student Funding determines how much operating budget each school receives. The FSF formula provides each school with an allocation for each student (base amount) that is based on the average teacher salary cost, class sizes, and teacher coverage (the number of teachers needed to run the school).

³ Testimony of the New York City Department of Education on the FY 2011 Executive Budget. Before the New York City Council Committees on Education and Finance. Joel I. Klein, Chancellor. May 24, 2010.

⁴ Overview of Middle School Data and Middle School Reform Efforts, Presentation to the City Council Middle School Task Force, New York City Department of Education, May 2007.

White and 13% Asian.⁵ Additionally, 10% of middle grade students are identified as having special needs and 11% are English Language Learners.⁶

Recent research from several large urban school districts illustrates the urgency of the middle-grades crisis by demonstrating that students who fare poorly in the middle grades are unlikely to graduate from high school. Research conducted by the Parthenon Group (2005) for the DOE shows that students who achieve at Level 1 or low Level 2 in the ELA test in eighth grade have a four-year graduation rate of only 38%, compared with an 83% graduation rate for students at Level 3 in eighth grade, and a 94% graduation rate for Level 4 eighth-graders. These results are consistent with a 2006 Philadelphia study showing that sixth-graders who have poor attendance, *or* poor behavior, *or* fail mathematics or English have a mere 20% chance of graduating in five years, compared with a 60% chance for sixth-graders without any of those risk factors (Balfanz & Herzog 2006).

Moreover, research from the Consortium on Chicago School Research shows that student performance in ninth grade is a strong predictor of high school graduation. Each of these studies starkly demonstrates that to increase high school graduation rates, cities must aggressively stem systemic shortcomings in the middle grades.

The middle grades represent a critical platform for success in high school, college, and career – or pathways to failure and diminished lives. Unfortunately, in the New York City school system, the middle grades become pathways to failure for far too many students. The middle grade schools often fail to help students develop the critical intellectual and academic skills they need for maturation and educational advancement.

IMPACT AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

The CMSS has allowed schools to implement critical reforms that can provide students with solid foundations for high school and college. The CMSS per-school allocations (ranging from \$36,381- \$397,622 in FY10) have supported school-based programs that have helped to significantly improve student achievement. Examples of programs made possible by this funding include:

- Professional development, staff retreats and inter-visitations that build collaborative professional learning communities and improve teacher practice,
- Saturday and extended day programs that provide enrichment and intervention to support rigorous learning for all students,
- Summer academies to help incoming sixth graders make the transition to their middle schools,
- Technology initiatives that engage students and support 21st century teaching and learning,
- Hiring of social workers and guidance counselors, and the creation of advisories to meet the development needs of adolescents, and
- Initiatives to increase parental and community engagement, including events and workshops for parents and additional support for parent coordinators.

⁵ Id.

⁶ Id.

The funding has also supported centrally coordinated documents and initiatives. The Blueprint for Middle School Success is a document that “captures and shares key insights about school based practices that successful middle grade schools have implemented to drive their own performance.”⁷ The Blueprint also lays out the following five key elements of middle school practice:

- High expectations and rigorous opportunities for all students,
- Effective management of human capital,
- Adolescent development supports,
- Integrated parental and community engagement, and
- Supportive school structure and organization.

Moreover, the Blueprint provides profiles of schools that have developed innovative strategies to address the key elements.

Middle grade schools also have benefited from the Middle School Academic Achievement Gap Series. The series has provided an opportunity for school staff, parents and advocates to learn about school strategies that address the academic needs of Black and Latino boys, use of technology to engage students and how to engage middle schoolers in math and science among other topics. In addition, the DOE has held a summit and forums for school staff and parents to discuss and share strategies.

Finally, The Middle School Regents Initiative (MSRI) has helped to increase rigor and college readiness. Launched in FY 08, the MSRI is a 20-week middle and high school collaborative that provides 8th grade students with the opportunity to learn high school level advanced Regents Integrated Algebra.⁸ Since the inception of the program, about 150 middle grade students have taken and passed the Integrated Algebra Regents exam. Currently, there are four such clusters of schools (four high schools and nine middle schools).⁹

The strategies implemented by the CMSS middle grade schools represent a targeted approach to improving low performing schools and are aligned to the principles and overarching goals of the DOE’s Children First initiative.¹⁰ Principals and school staff (those closest to the students) in the middle grade schools make the decisions about how the funding will be used to help their students succeed. Schools are encouraged to use data to identify problem areas and determine how they should be addressed. Additionally, schools are supported in their efforts to find strategies that work via the Academic Achievement series to improve achievement and are provided forums to share those strategies with other middle grade schools.

⁷ The Blueprint for Middle School Success: Key Elements and Promising School-Based Practices. New York City Department of Education. 2008.

⁸ New York City Department of Education. Middle School Regents Initiative. Integrated Algebra Administrator Handbook (2009).

⁹ The nine middle grade schools participating in the MSRI are: I.S. 195 Roberto Clemente, M.S. 322, M.S. 584, J.H.S. 166 George Gershwin, J.H.S. 296 The Halsey School, I.S. 349 Math, Science and Technology, J.H.S. 57 Whitelaw Reid, M.S. 584 Upper Academy at P.S. 335, Middle School 322, 149 Sojourner Truth School and P.S. 282.

¹⁰ Children First launched in 2003 is the DOE’s plan to reform public schools in New York City with the goals of developing, supporting and sustaining a system of great schools.

MS 51 INDICATORS OF SCHOOL SUCCESS

Two years of funding and two years worth of test data available during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years have produced solid early indicators of success for middle grade students in the MS 51.¹¹ We examine achievement trends over these two years for 6th to 8th graders in the MS 51 compared to 6th to 8th graders in the rest of the city – using the previous year (2006-07 academic school year) as a baseline.

As illustrated in Graph 1 below, longitudinal student achievement trends indicate that the 51 middle grade schools have made consistent academic gains that surpass the rest of the city's 6th to 8th graders. The proportion of 6th to 8th grade students achieving proficiency (Levels 3 or 4) on English Language Arts (ELA) state assessments in MS 51 schools has increased from 25% in 2007 to 48% in 2009. These ELA gains outpaced the average percentage point gains for the rest of the city's grade 6th to 8th students; the percentage of MS 51 students achieving Levels 3 or 4 increased by 24 percentage points from 2007-09,¹² compared to an increase of 21 percentage points for the rest of the city. At the same time, the percentage of MS 51 6th to 8th grade students scoring at the lowest level (Level 1) in ELA has dropped from 13% in 2007 to only 2% in 2009, leaving the MS 51 with about the same proportion of Level 1 6th to 8th grade students as the rest of the city. Moreover, 60% of the MS 51 schools did better than the rest of the city's 21 percentage point increase on the ELA exam.

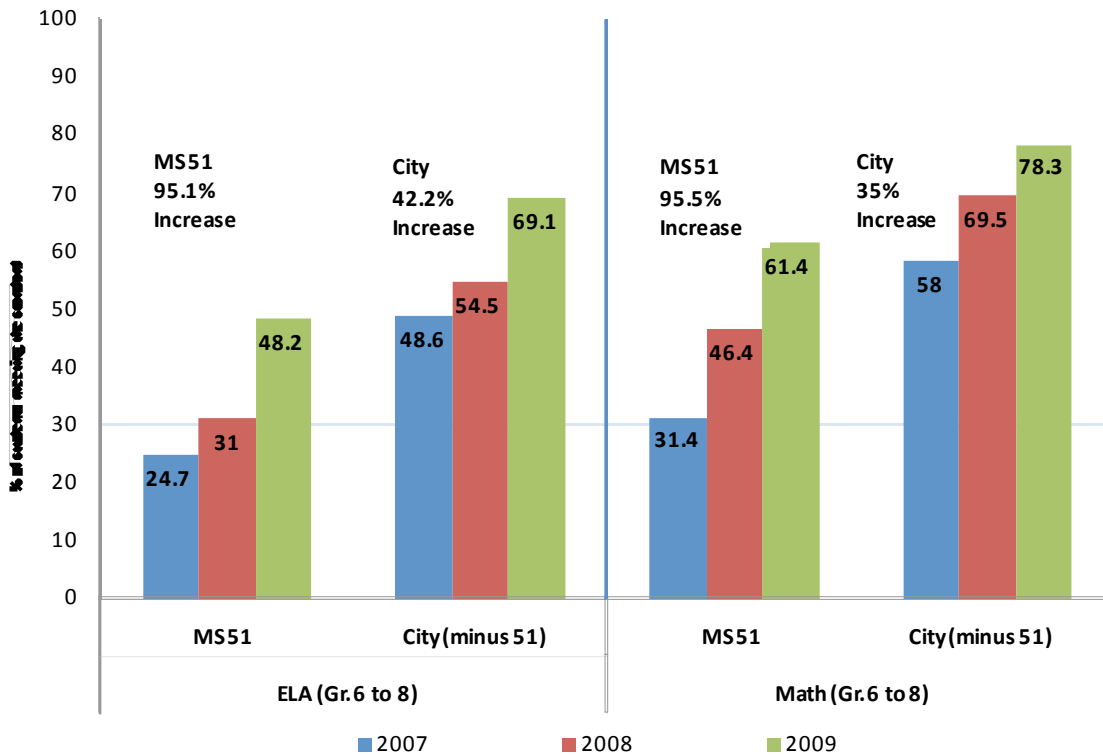
Math results also illustrate higher 2-year percentage point gains for the MS 51 compared to the rest of the city – 30 percentage points compared to 20 percentage points. Additionally, the percentage of MS 51 6th to 8th grade students scoring at the lowest level (Level 1) in Math dropped from 25% in 2007 to only 7% in 2009. Furthermore, 90% of the MS 51 schools did better in Math than the rest of the city's 20 percentage point increase.

The majority of the MS 51 schools started off among the lowest achieving schools in the city, so it is appropriate to consider achievement results within this context to exemplify just how far these schools have come. Graph 1 below also illustrates the extent of MS 51 success by showing that 6th to 8th graders in the 51 middle schools have made greater percentage gains than the rest of the city's 6th to 8th graders (recognizing of course that the rest of the city's 6th to 8th graders had less room for improvement), relative to where they started in 2007. The 51 middle schools posted a 95% increase in the percent of students meeting ELA standards. Similar results hold true for the percent of students meeting the standard in Mathematics; the 51 schools posting a 96% increase.

¹¹ The MS51 received funding in the FY 08, FY 09 and are currently receiving their third year of funding in FY 10.

¹² Please note that the numbers were rounded up.

GRAPH 1: % of Students in Grades 6 to 8 Meeting the Standard in ELA and Math (2007-2009)



SOURCE: NYC DOE. New York City Results on the New York State English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests (Grades 6-8). 2007-2009 results by School and Grade.

NOTE: The city aggregate excludes the 51 Middle Schools.

Continuing the Progress of the Campaign for Middle School Success

Since 2007, the NYC Council and the DOE have been able to secure almost \$30 million to support struggling middle grade schools and as a result these schools have experienced promising academic gains. For FY 10, the MS51 received a \$5 million grant to continue implementing school improvement strategies. The additional \$12 million previously secured was not renewed; however, schools were able to roll over remaining funds. While the CMSS has helped the lowest performing middle schools to make progress over the last few years, continued investment is needed to help even more students meet ELA and math standards at these schools through the expansion of these reforms. We urge the NYC Council and Mayor Bloomberg to renew this funding for FY 11. We also encourage the DOE to maintain a focus on the middle grades, allowing schools to sustain and build on the strong work they have begun, and to prepare all students to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

APPENDIX 1 – The Middle School 51 by NYC Council District

DBN	MS 51 -- School Name	Council District No.	Council District Member
03M044	WILLIAM O'SHEAMIDDLE SCHOOL COMPLEX	6	Gale Brewer
05M195	I.S. 195 - ROBERTO CLEMENTE SCHOOL	7	Robert Jackson
05M286	I.S. 286 - RENAISSANCE MILITARY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	7	Robert Jackson
04M045	JOHN C. ROBERTS SCHOOL	8	Melissa Viverito
04M101	P.S. 101 - ANDREW DRAPER	8	Melissa Viverito
03M149	SOJOURNER TRUTH SCHOOL	9	Inez Dickens
05M469	CHOIR ACADEMY OF HARLEM	9	Inez Dickens
06M218	I.S. 218 - SALOME UKENA	10	Miguel Martinez
06M322	MIDDLE SCHOOL 322	10	Miguel Martinez
11X142	JOHN PHILIP SOUSASCHOOL	12	Larry Seabrook
09X117	JOSEPH H. WADE SCHOOL	14	Fernando Cabrera
09X313	SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	15	Joel Rivera
09X339	SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	15	Joel Rivera
10X391	M.S. 391 - ANGELO PATRI COMPLEX	15	Joel Rivera
10X399	ELIZABETH BARRET BROWNING SCHOOL	15	Joel Rivera
12X129	TWIN PARKS UPPER SCHOOL	15	Joel Rivera
12X318	I.S. 318 - MATH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY THROUGH ART	15	Joel Rivera
08X301	PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR MIDDLE SCHOOL	16	Helen Foster
09X022	JORDAN L MOTT SCHOOL	16	Helen Foster
09X166	ROBERTO CLEMENTE SCHOOL	16	Helen Foster
09X219	NEW VENTURE ACADEMY	16	Helen Foster
09X229	I.S. 229 - DR. ROLAND N. PATTERSON SCHOOL	16	Helen Foster
09X232	C.I.S. 232	16	Helen Foster
09X325	URBAN SCIENCE ACADEMY	16	Helen Foster
09X328	NEW MILLENNIUM BUSINESS ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL	16	Helen Foster
07X151	HENRY LOU GEHRIG SCHOOL	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
07X203	M.S. 203	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
07X223	M.S. 223 - THE LABORATORY SCHOOL OF FINANCE & TECH.	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
07X296	SOUTH BRONX ACADEMY FOR APPLIED MEDIA	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
08X302	LUISA DESSUS CRUZ M.S.	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
12X216	BUSINESS SCHOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
12X217	SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS	18	Annabel Palma
24Q061	LEONARDO DAVINCI SCHOOL	25	Daniel Dromm
28Q008	J.H.S. 008 - RICHARD S. GROSSLEY	27	Leroy Comrie
27Q053	BRIAN PICCOLO SCHOOL	31	James Sanders, Jr.
32K296	HALSEY SCHOOL	34	Diana Reyna
32K349	I.S. 349 MATH, SCIENCE & TECH.	34	Diana Reyna
13K571	M.S. 571	35	Letitia James
17K352	EBBETTS FIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL	35	Letitia James
17K353	EIJAH STROUD MIDDLE SCHOOL	35	Letitia James
16K035	P.S. 035 - STEPHEN DECATUR SCHOOL	36	Albert Vann
16K057	J.H.S. 057 - WHITE LAW REID	36	Albert Vann
16K534	UPPER SCHOOL at P.S. 025	36	Albert Vann
16K584	M.S. 584 - UPPER ACADEMY AT P.S. 335	36	Albert Vann
19K302	J.H.S. 302 RAFAEL CORDERO	37	Erik Martin Dilan
32K291	ROLAND HAYES SCHOOL	37	Erik Martin Dilan
15K442	NEW HORIZONS SCHOOL	39	Brad Lander
19K166	GEORGE GERSHWIN SCHOOL	42	Charles Barron
23K150	CHRISTOPHER STREET SCHOOL	42	Charles Barron
31R027	I.S. 027 - ANNING S. PRALL	49	Deborah Rose
31R049	BERTHA DREYFUS SCHOOL	49	Deborah Rose

APPENDIX 2 – Campaign for Middle School Success Implementation Grants by NYC Council District

DBN	School Name	Implementation Grant Amount (\$) FY09	Council District No.	Council District Member
10X368	In-Tech Academy (MS./High School 368)	242,876	11	G.Oliver Koppell
11X144	J.H.S. 144 Michelangelo	250,000	13	James Vacca
97X010	P.S.X010	234,329	13	James Vacca
09X117	IS. 117 Joseph H. Wade	200,000	14	Fernando Cabrera
10X206	I.S. 206 Ann Mersereau	200,000	14	Fernando Cabrera
10X254	I.S. 254	200,000	15	Joel Rivera
12X211	P.S. 211	248,120	15	Joel Rivera
12X214	P.S. 214	250,000	15	Joel Rivera
12X271	East Bronx Academy for the Future	249,964	15	Joel Rivera
08X123	J.H.S. 123 James M. Kieran	250,000	16	Helen Foster
09X022	J.H.S. 022 Jordan L. Mott	250,000	16	Helen Foster
07X223	MS. 223 The Laboratory School of Finance and Tech.	249,776	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
07X296	South Bronx Academy for Applied Media	249,999	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
97X017	P.S.X017	213,985	17	Maria del Carmen Arroyo
08X131	J.H.S. 131 Albert Einstein	249,017	18	Annabel Palma
97Q023	P.S. Q023 @ Queens Children Center	250,000	23	Mark Weprin
27Q183	P.S. 183 Dr. Richard R. Green	249,425	31	James Sanders, Jr
15K429	Brooklyn School for Global Studies	215,000	33	Stephen Levin
15K497	School for International Studies	230,561	33	Stephen Levin
14K586	Lyons Community School	250,000	34	Diana Reyna
32K349	IS. 349 Math, Science & Tech.	241,418	34	Diana Reyna
17K352	Ebbets Field Middle School	250,000	35	Letitia James
17K353	Elijah Stroud Middle School	221,860	35	Letitia James
16K057	J.H.S. 057 Whitelaw Reid	250,000	36	Albert Vann
16K584	MS. 584 -- The Upper Academy at P.S. 335	250,000	36	Albert Vann
17K354	The School of Integrated Learning	249,990	36	Albert Vann
19K302	J.H.S. 302 Rafael Cordero	249,988	37	Erik Martin Dilan
23K073	P.S. 073 Thomas S. Boyland	200,745	37	Erik Martin Dilan
15K462	Secondary School for Law	200,000	39	Brad Lander
15K464	Secondary School for Research	250,000	39	Brad Lander
20K062	J.H.S. 062 Ditmas	250,000	39	Brad Lander
17K246	MS. 246 Walt Whitman	245,189	40	Mathieu Eugene
17K533	School for Democracy and Leadership	249,994	40	Mathieu Eugene
23K327	P.S. 327 Dr. Rose B. English	248,782	41	Darlene Mealy
19K328	P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley	233,762	42	Charles Barron
21K099	P.S. 099 Isaac Asimov	250,000	44	David Greenfield
18K068	I.S. 068 Isaac Bilderssee	249,998	46	Lewis A. Fidler
22K014	J.H.S. 014 Shell Bank	250,000	46	Lewis A. Fidler

NOTE: Bolded/highlighted text indicates presence on the Middle School 51 list.