

Mott Hall High School

Mott Hall High School

High School 304

6 Edgecombe Avenue

Manhattan

NY 10030

Principal: John Sullivan

Dates of review: April 7 – 11, 2006

Reviewer: Godfrey Bancroft

Cambridge Education

Mott Hall High School

Content Of The Report

Part 1: The School Context

Background information about the school

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

What the school needs to improve

Part 3: Main Findings

What is the school's overall performance

How well does it meet New York City's evaluation criteria

Other key observations

Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Mott Hall High School

Part 1: The School Context

Information about the school

Mott Hall High School is now in its second year and currently provides for students in the 9th and 10th grades. Over the next two years it will expand to include students in the full four grade of senior school. The values and philosophy of the school are based on the nurturing philosophy of the Mott Hall group of schools. The school is fully inclusive and the students from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. There are some who face significant challenges in their lives, including those who have significant additional learning needs as English language learners or have special educational needs, but attainment on entry is close to grade level for the majority of students.

Mott Hall High School

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Students enjoy attending the school. They regard the school as a 'family' that cares for them and meets their needs very well.
- The school expects students to behave well and apply themselves to their learning. Students respond well to these expectations.
- Parents and guardians greatly appreciate the school's expectations and the standards set.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach, enabling them to plan instruction, which makes learning manageable for students.
- Teachers assess students' progress accurately. The information gained from assessments is used effectively to ensure that students' subsequent learning needs are met well.
- The curriculum provides a range of interesting and challenging activities. This provision includes an outstanding programme of service education.
- The school works very effectively to develop the skills students need to become competent learners. It prepares them well for the next stages of their education, and for the world of work.
- The school is very good at creating opportunities for students to influence decisions about how the school is run. It has good procedures to seek their views about the quality of education it provides.
- The principal leads the school well. He has successfully brought together a team of teachers and other staff who are committed to the promotion of a nurturing environment in which students can thrive.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to develop and implement strategies to support for those students who are habitually late arriving for school and classes.
- Develop the skills of questioning and response for both teachers and students.
- Develop the use of time in class by providing opportunities for students to consider how well they have met the objective set, the progress they have made and to consider what they need to do to improve.
- Maintain the current focus of devising strategies to assist and supporting parents and guardians in their efforts to help their children extend learning at home.
- Continue work on the culture of high expectations so that all students adhere to the expectations set.

Mott Hall High School

Part 3: Main Findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school in which many features are well-developed.

The school has high expectations of how well students will progress academically and similarly high expectations of how well students will behave whilst in school. Many students respond well to these expectations and to the support provided. The school has some students who have additional learning needs, linked to their emotional and social development. It meets the needs of these students well. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. These features of the school's work help students to progress well and ensure they are prepared well for the next stages of their education, for adult life and the world of work. The school benefits greatly from the effective leadership and management of the principal.

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

The school is successful in meeting all the quality indicators included in the New York City evaluation criteria at proficient level, at least. In many cases its response to these indicators is well-developed. There are no indicators in which the school's performance is regarded as under-developed.

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.

This aspect of the school's provision is proficient.

Attendance levels are good overall. The school monitors these closely and responds promptly to any unexplained absences. However, there are some students who are habitually late for classes and sometimes disrupt learning when they arrive.

Despite having only two grades on roll, wherever possible the school uses data to compare its performance with that of other schools in New York and with similar schools. The principal and the teachers undertake careful analysis of the data and information available to them and consider how to respond to any areas for improvement. For example, they are currently considering ways in which middle attaining students are challenged to aspire to higher standards.

Students make good progress. In the first year the school was open students attained well in their examinations. Predictions for the second, current year, since opening suggest these standards are likely to be maintained.

Quality Statement 2: 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.

The school is at least proficient in this aspect of its work, with many well-developed features.

There are good arrangements to ensure that new students are well prepared to start at the school and for teachers to become knowledgeable about the likely performance of these students.

Mott Hall High School

There are good opportunities for teachers to reflect on and improve their practice; they meet regularly in grade teams and use these meetings well to plan curriculum developments and to make certain that work is matched well to student's needs. The meetings are also used to share assessments of pupils and ensure they are consistent. Procedures to assess students' work and advise them about how to improve are good. Written feedback on students' work is thorough and often includes helpful comments about how to improve. The clearly written rubrics explain what is expected in order for to achieve well. Students have good understanding of these rubrics.

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

Teaching, its impact on learning and the curriculum are well-developed.

The curriculum provides students with an interesting and challenging range of activities that are matched well to their abilities. These activities are particularly effective in providing them with the skills they need to become successful learners in the full range of subjects. They include the development of independent research skills, the use of computers and strategies that help students to organise their work and time efficiently. Teachers also make very good use of homework to reinforce what students have learned in class.

Teachers set clear and well focussed objectives for their classes. They explain to students what they are expected to learn. However, whilst learning and progress over time is discussed in depth, less attention is given to allowing students to explain how they feel about the learning that takes place class-by-class.

Teachers are very knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. This enables them to plan students' learning into a logical sequence of steps that students are able to manage successfully. Teachers also promote good relationships, enabling students to become increasingly confident and competent learners. They use questions well to challenge and extend students' thinking. Students, in turn, are keen to answer questions. However, they are sometimes not provided with enough time to plan their answers or enough guidance about how to present what they want to say.

Daily advisory sessions for each student help to keep track of their progress consider their needs and ensure that problems are identified and resolved at an early stage. The school has some students who have additional learning needs, linked to their emotional and social development. These students have individual education plans and sometimes exhibit very challenging behaviour. However, the school meets their needs well and provides teaching and support, which ensures they are making good progress. This is partly because the school searches for areas of learning in which all students can be successful. It also recognises and celebrates the efforts and successes of all students.

Quality Statement 4: 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 aspect of the school's work is well-developed.

Arrangements for the appointment of new staff are very effective. These arrangements mean appointments are made against carefully considered criteria and involve representatives of all the school's stakeholder groups. The arrangements are helping the principal to form a team of teachers who are fully committed to the aims, objectives and ethos of the school.

Mott Hall High School

They are also fully committed to extending the caring, nurturing environment on which the Mott Hall group of schools is founded.

The principal monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning regularly. This enables him to be aware strengths and to assist in rectifying any weaknesses. Teachers also evaluate their own performance, in reference to their additional responsibilities, and identify areas for improvement. Students are regularly asked to evaluate the quality of teaching and the quality of the courses they receive. These arrangements for gathering and responding to student's views are very good. The student council also enables students to influence decisions about how the school works. There are similarly very good arrangements for parents and guardians to comment on the quality of education their children receive. The school is part of the New York City Education Autonomy Zone. The principal manages the available resources very well, ensuring that students benefit as much as possible.

Quality Statement 5: 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 aspect of provision is at least proficient, with many well-developed features.

Students' performance is analyzed as soon as they join the school. Their learning needs are, therefore, identified at an early stage and this leads to the planning of appropriate and supportive intervention, as required. This pattern is continued throughout students' time at the school. Teachers modify what they teach in response to assessments and take great care to meet students' individual learning needs. Advisory sessions are also used effectively to identify and discuss any problems that students might have and to consider ways of rectifying any identified weaknesses in their learning.

Other key observations

The school has an outstanding programme of service education. This involves all students, for half a day each week, gaining experience at a place of work or supporting a community project, such as helping with the education of younger children. This programme makes a very good contribution to preparing students for the world of work and in caring for and understanding their community.

The school communicates well with parents and guardians and keeps them well informed about how their children are making progress. It also seeks their views about the quality of education it provides for their children. Parents and guardians expressed very positive views of the school, they are pleased with the standards that their children attain. They are especially pleased with they ways in which the school enforces its dress code and encourages their children to behave well and to work hard. However, it is important that the school continues to explore ways of helping parents and guardians to support and extend children's learning.

The school is developing an increasingly wide range of additional activities. Students enjoy participating in these activities and other events, such as the school's very popular talent show.

Mott Hall High School

Part 4: Evaluation Criteria Grade Summary

Quality Statement 1: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor and facilitate the student's progress over time.	o	✓	+
<p>1.1 The school uses available data (e.g., diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, students work products, standards-based portfolios, attendance, descriptive review, security data, etc.) and generates its own to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of how well each student, classroom, grade level, and other important categories of students and the school are:</p> <p>(1) currently performing, and (2) progressing over time, on English Language Arts, mathematics, and other important academic subjects.</p> <p>Criteria for measuring student progress are "objective" when they are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • standards-based, • consistent across students, • capable of revealing progress or a lack of it over time and ways to close the gap between current and expected practice, <p>and when they allow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the performance of different students to be compared, and • learning activity to be broken down into component parts so strengths and weaknesses on each sub-activity may be identified. 		X	
<p>1.2 The school makes effective use of the data to assess the performance and progress of students by racial and ethnic groups, English Language Learners and special education students, and all other categories of interest to the school.</p> <p>{This criterion and the next are partially aspirational as of now. City and State Report Cards and Division of Accountability and Assessment reports provide only some of the necessary data. The NYC DOE will soon provide schools with fuller access to better data.}</p>		X	
<p>1.1 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, racial and ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.</p>		X	
Quality Statement 2: 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.	o	✓	+
<p>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 it develops plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.</p>			X
<p>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 warranting attention.</p>		X	
<p>2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.</p>		X	
<p>2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. That information is central to setting reasonably challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.</p>			X
<p>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.</p>			X

Mott Hall High School

Quality Statement 3: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	0	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with the school's high expectations and improvement plans and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals.			X
3.2 Decisions about the use of teacher and student time are based on the organization of the day and week needed to inform teachers about each student's performance and next learning steps, set goals and plans for improved student learning, and implement and continuously improve plans for reaching stated goals.			X
3.3 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.			X
3.4 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.5 Teachers are accountable for student outcomes. 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	
3.6 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
3.7 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
3.8 Instructional programs actively engage students.			X
3.9 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.			X
Quality Statement 4: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	0	✓	+
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 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 Leaders, faculty, and staff share the same goals and frequently evaluate themselves, their interventions and each other's plans and interventions, including, when possible, by comparing outcomes across classrooms and schools. The school monitors its performance and tackles weaknesses. Even in areas where the school is successful, leadership is not complacent, but aims to improve further. The goal in all cases is to improve student and school performance and progress.			X
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results and revision of plans takes place in teams.			X
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed.			X
Quality Statement 5: 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.	0	✓	+
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 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	
5.4 Information generated by interim 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
5.5 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive each successive phase of goal setting and improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve students' academic outcomes.			X