



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Samuel Huntington School

Public School 040

**109-20 Union Hall Street
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Tanya Walker

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Reviewer: Terry Brown

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

This elementary school provides education for 515 pupils from pre-kindergarten to grade 6. Nearly 72% of the students are Black, and 18% are Hispanic. The remaining 10% comprise White, Asian and other groups. English language learners make up 5% of the students and special education students 10%. Attendance, at just below 90%, is below that of similar and City-wide schools.

It is a Title 1 school, located in the same building as a middle school for girls, which causes some complications with shared areas and staircases. One outside play area is unusable and another is being renovated.

There have been many changes of leadership, but some staff have worked at the school for a number of years.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal is a subtle but powerful agent for change through positive interventions with students and staff.
- There is a focus on areas which are basic and of the greatest long-term need, as well as on areas of short-term gain.
- Attendance issues are being dealt with in a sophisticated manner, by making school more attractive to the students in a range of ways, and by immediately following up absences and lateness.
- Substantial attention and resources are allocated to improving reading.
- There is increase attention to those students in most need of support, as well as those whose performance can readily be improved.
- All staff are being encouraged to look at student work, and assess and record progress on a frequent and regular basis.
- Students are learning appropriate routines in and out of the classroom, which encourages an orderly and calm learning atmosphere.
- Staff are assigned appropriate responsibilities to attend to a range of issues.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' confidence and competence in the required analysis of data and consequent differentiation of curriculum and instruction.
- Analyze performance data related to groups represented in the school so as to have a detailed picture of their progress, and use this to set and review specific goals.
- Extend developing good practice in instruction and student engagement more consistently across the whole school.
- Rise expectations of the students among all adults in the school.
- Develop the use of data to set measurable whole-school interim and long-term goals, so that progress towards improvement can be readily assessed.
- Continue the work to involve parents more fully in their children's academic development.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is an undeveloped school with some proficient features.

The new principal has analyzed all available data and initiated developments, allocated resources and provided professional development and planning time to tackle a number of important and immediate issues. Suspensions are now virtually non-existent.

The staff are not consistently in the habit of scrutinizing student work, gathering data and using it to differentiate instruction. Constant assertive, professional and considerate interventions by the administration and instructional team are improving the situation, although there remains a lot to do.

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 undeveloped.

Following analysis of the available data and overall school performance, a good start has been made on developing the staff's confidence and competence in assessment of student achievement, data-gathering and analysis. This has informed the prioritization of the school's focus on parents, student routines, reading, holdovers and boosting the performance of students scoring at high level 2 to improve the school's overall performance.

The school is beginning to use a range of formal and informal data in order to gain a better understanding of the performance and progress of its students. It also uses its own six-weekly assessments, showing that it is starting to generate its own data. Conferencing notes made by teachers on their discussions with students are another example of the way in which data is now being generated throughout the year to support a clearer picture of the progress of individual students, and from that to be able to address specific individual needs. Some, though not yet all, students are therefore receiving targeted attention related to their needs.

Not all staff are confident and competent in data analysis, and consequently, while there is a gradual move to a whole-school approach, it is not consistently applied to all students, groups, classes and grades. The school has identified the need to increase the numbers of students who are reaching grade proficiency. At the moment, the school is not monitoring the progress of different groups of students, by ethnicity or gender for example. Similarly, the progress made by English language learners, whose performance in both English language arts and mathematics is below that of similar schools, and special education students are not looked at as groups. The school is not therefore yet in a position from which it can effectively address the underachievement of these groups. This lack of analysis also makes it difficult to make meaningful comparison of performance against that of similar schools, while measurement of the school's own progress over time is hindered by a lack of historic data showing previous levels of achievement.

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 undeveloped.

School leaders and some staff members are engaged in a collaborative process to develop general goals and plans to tackle immediate issues. As the ability to use data to identify individual needs improves, so teachers are better able to re-group students as the year progresses to meet their needs. In turn, this is starting to support students in maximizing their potential as a result of being given goals that are challenging, yet achievable. Because not all teachers are competent in analysis of data and goal-setting, it therefore follows that while some teachers are in a position to give particular attention to meeting the identified needs of those most at risk, this is not yet consistently the case.

However, the school does make provision for those at most risk. For example, weekly academic intervention services staff follow the progress of identified students, and grade 5 students who are still performing at level 1 receive the support of an additional teacher assigned to them. Similarly, additional support is provided in the other grades. During the current school year there is a focus on small group instruction across the curriculum through incorporating elements of the balanced literacy program. The academic intervention services provide effective support. Students who have been subject to holdover have personal intervention plans, shared with parents. This group is receiving targeted support to support their ability to make better progress in future.

Some staff, many students and, in particular parents, do not have high enough expectations of themselves or other members of the school community, nor do they engage fully with developing goals and implementing plans for improving student performance and progress. Collaborative information sharing and planning is neither comprehensive nor consistent across the school. Parental support has been an issue for the school and it is now working hard to develop greater involvement

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 undeveloped with some proficient features.

The school is developing its ability to select a curriculum that aligns with the needs of its students, as shown in the increasing use of data, though overall this remains a work in progress. The school has responded to consistently declining English language arts scores by employing two coaches to support staff and improve the curriculum. This has also allowed for more monitoring of student work by the coaches and administration. Further work is needed on establishing a more consistently standards-based curriculum for each unit.

Most teachers scrutinize their students’ work and monitor progress. However, these processes are not established across the whole staff. While some staff understand their students’ performance and attempt to align instruction according to their needs, this is not yet consistent practice across the school. Not all staff are yet cognizant of their accountability for improving outcomes or attending to their students’ personal needs. This

means that differentiated instruction aimed at developing individualized learning is not yet in place across every classroom.

A budget manager has been appointed to ensure appropriate and efficient allocation of funds. This allows the school to target its spending on the identified areas for improvement. Staff scheduling is focussed on the identified priorities. For example, all adults in the schools are pushed in to classes during the whole school reading block, an example of the way in which the school has responded to the need to raise standards in reading. All out of class staff members have daily schedules to see students who are at risk of social and academic failure.

Most students appear to be actively engaged with their work, though some require frequent teacher attention and do not work in a sustained way. Attendance is a major focus, recently instituted interventions including immediate contact with parents and the principal ensuring she is in the entrance to gently encourage latecomers to arrive on time in future. The strategy includes making school a place that students enjoy. These, together with developments to make the school more inviting and orderly, are beginning to have the desired affect.

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 undeveloped with some proficient features.

The new principal is working effectively with all staff, and the changes she has initiated are beginning to have a positive impact on school tone and the learning environment. A number of staff have been reassigned within the school so that their strengths match the needs of the students more appropriately. The principal has established an instructional team with strengths in the analysis of data, and an academic intervention services team which has had an appropriate focus on held-over students. These form part of her actions to build a more effective staff team, focussed on school improvement.

Professional development opportunities designed to encourage teachers to gather and use data to align instruction are being provided. Staff are gradually becoming appreciative of the need and usefulness of this, although not all yet understand the benefits to student achievement of the analysis and use of data to guide instruction. The principal visits classrooms informally every day, as well as implementing formal observations. Her focus for these is continuity of instruction and learning, and differentiated instruction. Some teachers choose to observe their colleagues' lessons, always with a particular focus linked to their professional development needs. Common preparation times and other team meetings have been instituted to encourage staff to plan and evaluate. As yet, there is not full use of these to share good practice and calibrate responses to student work. Staff are assigned specific areas of responsibility and there is a developing sense of common purpose. The coaches provide effective modeling and are supporting the drive towards small group instruction that is now a focus.

The principal is respected by staff, students and parents. Her presence spreads calmness and order, and she models professional and caring personal interaction. She effects change both by assertiveness and clarity, and by more subtle approaches such as asking teachers in passing about the progress of minor developments she has initiated.

Lunchtime and after-school activities further support youth development. A large number of boys are involved in these. A small number of external partners have recently become involved with the school.

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 undeveloped.

The principal is clear about what is required to develop built-in structures to evaluate and accelerate student progress. The developments informed by the initial analysis of the school and student basic needs have laid the foundations for success. This cultural change is supported by instructional goals communicated in weekly notes, daily announcements and walkthroughs by the instructional team. Scrutiny of diagnostic assessments, along with constant formal and informal dialogue with staff and students on an individual and group basis, are beginning to disseminate and inform the revision of interim goals and plans.

Staff are being encouraged to look at student work, keep individual student portfolios and use data provided from periodic assessments to alert them to their students' needs and to modify instruction accordingly. Rigor, consistency and alignment with State standards are being developed. The portfolios create an immediate picture of individual progress and the school is developing its ability to be flexible in amending provision during the course of the year. This is because it is getting better at collecting and using data on individual students.

At the moment the ability to break down long-term planning into phases, with clear interim and final outcomes, is in the process of being instituted. However, the variability in the ability to make effective use of data limits the overall effectiveness of measuring progress and the extent to which interim goals are achieved.

The appropriate procedures and routines established in the school are a sound basis for other planned developments. Since not all teachers are currently assessing their students' work in an effective way, the school is not yet fully in a position where it can use information generated from assessments and diagnostic measures of progress to be flexible in amending instruction to meet emerging needs.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: The Samuel Huntington School (PS 040)	∅	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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.	Ø	✓	+
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		