



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Lorraine Hansberry Academy

Community School 214

**1970 West Farms Road
Bronx,
NY 10460**

Principal: Joy Elaine Daley

Dates of review: October 20 – 23, 2006

Reviewer: Martin Pavey

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Lorraine Hansberry Academy is a coeducational, comprehensive school in the Bronx. It has 835 students in grades pre-kindergarten through to grade 8. The school is multi-ethnic. 40% of students are Black, 59% Hispanic, and 1% are of other backgrounds. 119 students receive special educational support. There are 81 students receiving help as English language learners. The school declares every student in the school to be Title 1 eligible. Attendance has been 93% in 2006, above the latest average for similar schools. In test results in 2005, the school did not make sufficient annual yearly progress in the elementary-level in English language arts. At middle-level, it did not make sufficient progress in either English language arts or science. However, the school remains in good standing in terms of the educational status awarded by the City. The school is very popular with parents. It provides a good level of student support and a large number of extra academic, social and cultural programs.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal is highly respected, works very well with an able senior team, and has hugely improved the school.
- The school is very clean, safe and welcoming.
- Teachers work well together and look after their students carefully.
- Data is well used to assess the progress of grades and students.
- Teaching is particularly good in the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and elementary grades.
- Teaching and progress in grade 6 are now good, reflecting the very positive development of the science academy,
- The curriculum is well organized, at all levels, with good resources readily available.
- There is a good range of extra academic, sporting and social activities. .
- Attendance is well followed up and has improved over recent years.

What the school needs to improve

- Results in English language arts tests at elementary level have improved, but there is more to be done before they reach the levels now seen in similar schools.
- In grades 7 and 8, results in all subjects are in need of improvement and the following could make contributions to meeting this need:
 - increase the pace, challenge and rigor of teaching;
 - improve the use of data, to ensure students make more rapid progress;
 - gain greater collaboration in the students' work;
 - encouragedeeper involvement of parents in their children's education

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

'Hell on wheels' is how the principal described the school when she took over in 2000. Under her energetic, highly committed leadership, the school has improved enormously. It is now quiet, friendly, purposeful and well run. Parents speak highly of the school and its range of extra activities. Teachers and students get on very well together. The curriculum is well designed and imaginative. Students are happy and, as a result, attendance has been improving steadily and now exceeds the City average.

Students in pre-kindergarten to grade 5 generally make good progress, although there is room for further improvement, particularly in English language arts. Good teaching and progress are evident in grade 6, where the new science academy is starting to bring improvements. Achievement in grades 7 and 8 requires further improvement and students do not maintain the levels achieved in the earlier years, although they compare favorably with those in some other schools in the district.

The principal wisely started her improvements in the earlier years, and the result is very positive. Shortcomings are now limited to grades 7 and 8, where significant improvement is now taking place.

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

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

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

The principal and senior staff know their students and their levels of performance very well. They make good use of test data, comparing the school's overall results with similar schools and analyzing results by grade and level to identify how well particular grades are performing. Their analysis for 2006 reveals that students in grades 3 to 5 are doing comparatively well, but the performance of those in grades 7 to 8 is not so good.

In the classroom, teachers in grades pre-kindergarten to 6 use assessment data very well to match work to the individual needs of the students. Each teacher has a folder for each student, and compares individual progress of the students over time. Teachers place students accurately in groups within the class, on the basis of this data, according to need. Because these teachers know their students very well, their referral of special education learners and English language learners is accurate and effective. Teachers in grades 7 to 8 use the same systems, but in some lessons they do not exploit the data as well to match work accurately enough to the needs of the students. This leads to a lack of motivation and purpose in some lessons and has a negative impact on learning.

The school tests students at every marking period and administers regular practice tests. This gives it an accurate, detailed view of each student's development and of the overall progress of each grade. The regular grade meetings, attended by assistant principals, keep the school community very well informed on overall progress. In addition, senior staff compare the school's test results with the achievement of other local schools.

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 proficient.

Senior staff are keen to make sure that each student is performing at the highest possible level. For example, a meeting of the pupil personnel committee discussed four students, each identified for promotion from the special program to a mainstream class. Data was used meticulously to debate the merits of each case. The principal and assistant principals frequently use data to check the progress of groups, grades and individuals. Among faculty, competence in the use of data varies, but most teachers collaborate well in setting clear goals that are based on a good understanding of the levels students have reached.

The school is very good at supporting individuals who need special help. Support staff and coaches work closely with teachers and assistant principals to provide an extensive range of support. All students in grades 4 through to 8 receive extra tutorial help. Teachers, along with those responsible for special education and English language learners, are clearly aware of their students' needs and keep good records of their progress. The principal ensures that the classes with the greatest need are taught by the most experienced teachers.

Expectations vary in the school. Generally, teachers in grades pre-kindergarten to 6 are well in control of all aspects of their students' work. This is because the principal has wisely concentrated on improving education in the earlier years and has built up clear expectations of behavior and attitude there. The latest class to be tackled in grade 6 is the newly designated science academy, which has been given extra resources and professional support. Expectations in grades 7 and 8 are high enough in some classes, but not in others and some students are not set work that is sufficiently challenging.

Parents and caregivers are well informed about their children's progress. They are very pleased with the school and the many opportunities they get to learn about their children's work and to help them improve it. Parents of younger students attend these meetings regularly, but this is not so true in the upper grades. Parents have played a major role in raising funds for a very successful annual visit to Canada.

Goals and plans for improving performance are well designed and increasingly well shared. They are now very effective in most grades. The school knows its next priorities and is aware that a detailed action plan is needed for its highest two grades.

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 proficient.

The school is well organized to provide the right challenge for each student. It is imaginatively arranged in four different academies to reflect the different age groups. For example, all students in grades pre kindergarten to 2 are in the heritage academy, which teaches them about different communities. A good curriculum map has been prepared for all grades, and provides a firm structure for planning. Teachers are generally good at planning their lessons, particularly in the use of data to provide work at the right level for individuals. Through the school's very good system of meetings, teachers are held accountable for improving the performance of their students. This produces good results in most grades.

Student data has clearly revealed that the higher grades need further enrichment to raise standards to the levels now achieved in earlier grades. Accordingly, the principal has budgeted for very good extra resources for grade 6. The need for finer use of data to assess the effectiveness of the new Science Academy in its first year has led to the appointment of an extra teacher in this area, to guide staff in the use of data and resultant planning. More generally, the school has responded well to the need to give every student the chance to make progress. It has provided a very good range of support staff and coaches. Parents and students confirm that needs are promptly and effectively met. The school is good at scheduling its instruction and meetings so that all necessary requirements are met and extra time is provided for activities. This is seen, for example, in the school's wide cultural and recreational programs and its very helpful meetings with parents.

In most grades, students are active learners. Students interviewed were full of praise for their school. They attend regularly and greatly enjoy being at school. Staff members know children well and value them very highly. The atmosphere is friendly and very supporting. Attendance has been rising, thanks to good analysis of trends and the good work of attendance staff.

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

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

Leaders and all staff work well together as a team. The principal has worked tirelessly to establish high standards and to encourage all staff to see the welfare and progress of the children as the school's main goal. She has selected staff carefully, on the basis of their commitment to young people, and requires their whole-hearted dedication. She has succeeded, overcoming all obstacles, and is greatly loved and respected for this. To see the students rushing up to her for a quick hug is to understand the nature of this school and what makes it work. 'I love you bigger than the universe' is how one young student put it to her principal. Thanks to her, the school now feels very purposeful and positive. The school runs very smoothly overall, but it is now time to help grades 7 and 8 to feel as positive as the rest of the school.

Professional development is good. The professional development team is able and very well informed. Professional development is based on a careful analysis of teachers' needs. Not every teacher has benefited from this, but the majority has been enriched, and teaching is now generally good as a result. The principal talks to everyone and listens hard. She knows everyone and exactly what is going on. She undertakes the mandated visits to classes, and teachers say these appraisals are very helpful. The principal likes to be around her school at all times and this has a very positive impact on behavior and the general ethos of the school.

There are many activities and partnerships. The eacon program provides a good range of after-school activities. The school hosts an adult/continuing education program, NASA makes visits to tell students about the space program, there are visits from prestigious performing arts organizations, and expeditions to museums and performances.

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 proficient.

The school evaluates its programs and progress through the Comprehensive Education Plan, the regular teachers' meetings and the detailed, analytical work of its professional teams. The pupil personnel committee, for example, is a significant central force, drawing together well qualified opinions on individual students and relying on members' detailed knowledge of them. At the classroom level, plans are revised by looking closely at data. At the school level, senior staff review the success of policies through a good network of committees, and are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the different grades. Over time, these committees have monitored the success of their policies to improve students' progress. Thanks to their good use of data and their accurate information about the performance of staff and students, they have identified what is now the school's greatest priority. This is to act on its knowledge of the weaknesses in some areas of middle school and to improve the education there to at least to the level required by the State.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Lorraine Hansberry Academy (CS 214)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

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

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

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

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