



# **The New York City Department of Education**



# **Quality Review Report**

**Mott Hall Bronx High School**

**1595 Bathgate Avenue  
Bronx  
NY 10457**

**Principal: David Tinagero**

**Dates of review: May 9 - 10, 2007**

**Reviewer: John Collings**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

The Mott Hall Bronx High School shares the recently opened, purpose built, campus with three other schools. It has just attained International Baccalaureate (IB) accreditation. The students are expected to wear a school uniform and to attend the service learning program, where they spend one day a week working in the community. The school is also an empowerment school in its second year of taking students from grades 9 through 12. There are 335 students on roll in grades 9 through 10. Eight percent are special education students and 10% are English language learners.

The school received Title 1 funding. The student population comprises approximately: 61% Hispanic, 33% Black, 3% Asian, 2% White and 1% from other ethnic backgrounds. At around 84%, attendance is slightly above City averages and when compared with similar schools.

Empowerment schools have more flexibility to make key decisions and control the resources for their school community. Empowerment schools are free to develop or purchase professional development services, choose which schools to affiliate with, and benefit from reduced reporting and paperwork requirements.

## Part 2: Overview

## **What the school does well**

- The school runs very well and there is a very high level of professional collegiality and accountability in the school, which results in good student learning.
- The school has very high expectations of teachers and students, which have enabled it be accredited as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school.
- Very good professional development that is well targeted through systematic lesson observations informs the development of teaching and learning.
- Students are well known to staff and very well support and as a result they make very good progress based on their prior attainment.
- The school uses data effectively to create a rigorous curriculum.
- The very strong focus on effective teaching, and the high degree of mutual respect between students and staff, results in students making good progress.
- The principal is highly respected and has demonstrated his ability to initiate and implement change.
- Through the good allocation of resources, there is a strong emphasis on supporting students in greatest need.
- Teachers continually reflect on the effectiveness of their instruction to enable students to learn as effectively as possible.
- There is a very good program of internships and community service.
- The school has used the IB curriculum design well to ensure the curriculum continues to be broad and balanced with a strong emphasis on the arts.

## **What the school needs to improve**

- Refine the use of data to identify the additional value that the school adds to student progress more precisely.
- Review the school's intermediate and long-term goals, in the light of the recent IB accreditation.
- Ensure that class instruction includes a sufficiently wide range of expectations for different groups of students, which are firmly based on students' prior achievement.
- Improve the use of day-to-day assessment so that teachers plan work with greater precision to meet students' specific needs and to challenge lack of understanding.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

This is a school that is developing well with many positive features. A measure of the commitment to learning, and the high expectations it has of students and staff, has resulted in receiving International Baccalaureate accreditation. This enables the school to extend its courses in grades 11 and 12 beyond advanced placement programs and to prepare students very effectively, with an internationally and highly regarded qualification, for entry into college within and outside America.

There is a strong climate of professional collegiality where teachers support each other in developing an effective curriculum, including a strong commitment to art. The curriculum is very challenging and increasingly based securely on students' prior achievement. The school is also committed to requiring all students to take part in an afternoon's community service per week.

There is a very strong focus on effective instruction in the school. Teachers reflect on their practices and are continually looking for new and exciting ways to engage students in learning so that students achieve as well as possible. This approach has a significant impact on student learning. Many students enter the school with levels in English and mathematics lower than age-related expectation. In the two years the school has been opened, many of these students attain good pass rates in Regents examinations, with a significant number taking these examinations at least a semester early.

Although the school is using data effectively to inform instruction and curriculum design, its interpretation of value-added data is not yet effective. The school is successful in differentiating instruction through support programs for students, particularly those in greatest need. As yet, teachers are less rigorous in differentiating instruction by planning for a range of expectations in each class based on students' prior achievement.

The principal, administration and teachers are very clear about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are aware that the new International Baccalaureate accreditation poses many challenges for the school and it will need to review the vision and goals to ensure that it meets the high expectations it has set itself.

#### **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 proficient.**

The school has a good range of assessment systems in place and it uses these well to identify the performance and progress of each student, classroom and grade level. It is a small school and staff know the students very well. All students are appropriately supported when necessary through the school's good advisory program. This careful

tracking of students has a positive impact shown by the good progress many students make.

The specialized staff, whose responsibility it is to ensure these students make the best possible progress, carefully monitor English language learners and special education students. The school does not currently monitor the progress of ethnic minority groups, although it does identify particular groups over which it has concern. These students are monitored on a weekly or even daily basis to ensure appropriate support is given to enable them to succeed. The school is currently reviewing how it monitors student progress through the school as it adjusts its procedures to meet the International Baccalaureate accreditation expectations.

The school has not yet been open two years and therefore there is little longitudinal data which can be used for year on year comparisons. It has not yet had a graduating class so neither can it realistically compare itself with similar schools. However the school is part of the Mott Hall replication program and makes appropriate comparisons within this community. The school uses data very effectively to identify which students, classes and subjects make the best progress. The resulting data is used to inform instruction and curriculum design to enable students to make the best possible progress. This has resulted in, for example, students who entered the school at level 2, making very good value added progress to gain an 80% Regents pass rate overall, with many taking these examinations at least a semester early.

**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.**

There is a good collaborative process through which staff contribute in setting the school goals. These goals are clear and objectively measurable but are now under review to accommodate International Baccalaureate accreditation. The school is committed to a rigorous interdisciplinary curriculum, which prepares students for Regents and advanced placement programs as early as possible. This also prepares them to study the broad-based and academically rigorous International Baccalaureate program in grades 11 and 12.

Each grade level and academic subject interprets the school’s wide goals, which are then used by teachers to create goals and aspirations for each class and student. The school pays very good attention to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement. The impact of this is seen through the very good academic progress by students who enter the school at levels 1 and 2.

The school has very high expectations of students. This is exemplified in students taking Regents examinations early and with the longer-term aim of students attaining the International Baccalaureate. This has been central to the identification and setting of challenging goals. Parents are regularly invited to the school to discuss their children’s progress. They fully support the school and its plans. Students are also regularly involved in formative assessment to help them to identify what they need to do to improve. Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress are thus part of the ethos of the school and, as cited earlier, are currently under review.

**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 innovative in its interpretation of the curriculum. It uses an interdisciplinary approach to emphasize cross-curricular links. These enable knowledge, understanding and skills learned in one subject to be applied and consolidated in another. During its first two years it has also been mindful of how its curriculum would support the International Baccalaureate in anticipation of attaining accreditation. It therefore has high expectations and uses data very well to support and implement these goals.

Teachers use data effectively to inform their instruction. The school places considerable emphasis on the commitment of teachers to support students who are not making expected progress. Teachers not only support students in their own time, but also through morning, after-school and Saturday classes. Teachers differentiate work to meet individual students’ needs largely through additional tuition or instruction for those students who are not meeting the high expectations of the school. Teachers use day-to-day assessment less effectively in planning differentiated activities within lessons, based on students’ prior achievement to ensure all students are fully challenged.

The school makes a significant commitment to support English language learners and special education students through the appointment of specialized staff. The school also supports lower attaining students with additional staff and team teaching. Both these initiatives improve the progress these students make. The school also commits additional class time to preparation for the chemistry Regents examinations. This results in students successfully taking the examination at least semester early. The school is currently considering how best to use its budget, staffing and scheduling to meet the new challenges.

Staff know students very well. There is a strong climate of mutual respect between staff and students. Students feel safe in the school and trust adults with academic and/or personal problems. There is a strong structure of advisory sessions within the school and, where necessary, mentoring to ensure students are making the best possible personal progress. Attendance is a very high priority in school. Students are very clear that any absences are followed up very promptly. Students are actively engaged in learning and feel well supported by the school.

**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.**

The school is committed to appointing high quality staff who share its vision, have high expectations of students and are willing to reflect, in a mutually supportive environment, on the effectiveness of their instruction. Teachers are expected to be innovative, creative and to use data to inform differentiated instruction.

Professional development is a very high priority in the school. There has been significant professional learning to prepare for the International Baccalaureate accreditation. Teachers concentrate on curriculum design to identify where there are constructive cross

curricular links which can be used to support and enhance student learning. Data is used well to inform this planning. There is a significant amount of inter-visitation, where teachers candidly evaluate themselves and each other. They use the findings to inform improvement. This is particularly well developed where teachers frequently work in pairs to visit each other's classrooms. Teachers also make inter-school visitations within the Mott Hall community and also with schools who are accredited to teach the International Baccalaureate. This improves instruction and student progress.

The principal and assistant principal frequently observe teaching through a regular, well-structured, program of both formal and informal classroom observations. Their opinions are highly respected and there is a strong climate of wanting to improve instruction so that students make the best possible progress. Teachers work within grade and subject teams to ensure instruction meets the needs of students most effectively. Teachers also meet in a critical friends group, not only to reflect on instructional issues, but also to establish how to support students who are not making the progress expected.

The school runs very smoothly with a strong climate of mutual respect. There is a strong commitment to students working in the community. Wednesday afternoons are used for students to spend time within, for example, the South Bronx community internship program and other community programs in New York. The school is also very committed to include art, dance and drama, not only with in the curriculum but also as extracurricular activities.

**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 uses data effectively to monitor and revise plans and to give support with additional resources as and when required. It uses a significant amount of data to assess students and monitor progress by class and subjects. Results are used to amend goals and expectations. An implicit goal, not yet well articulated, is the desire for students to make the best individual value added progress. While the data clearly reflects that the school is very successful overall and revises expectations and instructional practice accordingly, it is less clear about the value added progress students make towards interim goals.

Up to now the school has largely used its progress towards IB accreditation as its main focus and has used a range of objective measures to evaluate its progress towards this. In addition the school has also effectively monitored its progress towards other goals, such as; implementing measures to improve attendance and the implementation of curricular changes and various support programs. As a result of accreditation, goals are now not well consolidated into an overall view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. However, the school is now at the stage of revising its vision, intermediate and longer-term goals and the means of evaluating its progress towards them

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Mott Hall Bronx High School (HS 252)</b>	∅	✓	+
<b>Quality Score</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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"> <li>• each student, classroom, grade level,</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students*</li> </ul>		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"> <li>• all other categories of interest to the school*</li> </ul>		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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 1</b>		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.

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 2</b>		X	

<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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 knows 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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 3</b>		X	
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 4</b>			X
<b>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.</b>	∅	✓	+
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	
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>		X	