



The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School

High School 473

**701 St Ann's Avenue
New York
NY 10455**

Principal: Ana Maldonado

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Reviewer: Stuart Sabinet

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School has approximately 320 students in grades 9 through 12. It shares a campus with two other small schools and was established five years ago when the previous school on the site closed. It is situated in the South Bronx. About 60% of students are Hispanic and 40% African-American. Approximately 10% of students are English language learners and about 16% are special education students. About 80% of students are Title 1 eligible, which is a higher figure than similar or City schools. The school has considerably better attendance figures (87% in 2005) than similar and City schools. The school has a close link with East Side House Settlement, the community based partner, which was centrally involved in the founding of the school.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has a good understanding of the needs of the community and a clear sense of mission which is reflected in her focused leadership of the school.
- The school has clear and systematic procedures for gathering data, which enable the effective analysis of student performance by all teachers.
- Teachers meet together regularly to discuss the progress of students and make effective interventions to improve performance.
- The very effective advisory system ensures every student receives regular support and guidance as part of a small group.
- The close relationship with East Side House, the partner organization, supports the school in meeting the needs of students.
- The college preparation and leadership program has been very successful in supporting and preparing students for higher learning.
- A highly collaborative planning process involves staff, students and parents in considering school goals.
- An effective professional development program has contributed significantly to the development of staff skills.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop a wider range of strategies to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Develop longer term strategic planning with measurable objectives.
- Build capacity in the school to lead the implementation of key developments.
- Extend the range of opportunities for high achieving students.
- Develop further the engagement of parents, particularly relating to the curriculum.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school with well-developed features.

The principal was involved in drawing up proposals for the new school in association with the East Side House partner organization and she has a clear sense of purpose. The mission of the school is centred on raising expectations in the community and encouraging each student to go to college. The school is well-organized and has developed effective systems designed to ensure that the needs of students are clearly established and their progress monitored. It is already making considerable progress in raising the achievement and broadening the horizons of students. Eighty six percent of the first cohort of students graduated on time and more than 60% went straight to college. There is a consistent emphasis on college preparation with an effective program for advising students on personal skills which has contributed to the success of college applications. There is a clear focus on raising academic achievement which is based on a good knowledge of students' needs linked to a consistent development of teaching and learning strategies. Strong foundations have been laid for further progress because secure systems are in place. The school recognises that it needs to continue to build leadership capacity through further well-targeted professional development.

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 school keeps comprehensive and regularly updated records of student progress and achievement. Each teacher contributes to this record on a regular basis through the provision of clear data on academic performance. The records are readily accessible and are kept on a database which is used by the principal and teachers to understand the performance of individual students and groups. Teachers act as advisors for small groups of students and keep binders which are used effectively to review progress on a weekly basis. Advisors meet together in "Kid Talk" meetings which consider the performance and progress of students at grade level and agree interventions to improve the performance of students. The meetings ensure that the progress of students is kept under regular review and contribute to a shared understanding of overall progress across the school. They are also used effectively to consider the progress of particular groups of students. For instance, when a review of data revealed limited progress by a group of boys, an all male advisory group was set up to improve academic performance and change attitudes to learning.

Questionnaires are used to gather data to explore student attitudes. These have raised levels of understanding about the needs of different groups of students. The data also gives a clear picture of the progress of English language learners and special education students. As a result, individual education plans are regularly updated. The regular review of data encourages comparison of performance across groups and the school is starting to analyze data year on year as their second cohort moves towards graduation in 2007. This is also leading the school to consider its own performance against other 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 well developed.

The school has a highly collaborative approach to drawing up the overall goals which are identified in the Comprehensive Education Plan. Teachers, parents and students are involved in a retreat where the priorities for the year ahead are identified following reviews of data and past performance. All involved are asked to consider what was accomplished in the previous year, decide what needs to change and consider areas of development. There is a greater emphasis on annual rather than long-range planning but there is a clear overall direction. The process is effective in encouraging reflection about improvement strategies and gaining a commitment to future actions.

The principal shares her key goals with the school community, teachers are surveyed and discussions take place at grade and departmental meetings leading to high levels of awareness across the school about what needs to be done. The goals are closely linked to a consideration of data. All subject teams consider the previous year’s academic performance, agree measurable progress criteria and set challenging goals. Particular attention is given to those in most need of improvement. The effective analysis of data is supplemented by information gathered and discussed as the result of observations. At least twice a year every teacher follows a student as they take part in classes and this provides further useful qualitative data which contributes to an assessment of needs and the formulation of strategies for meeting those needs.

Advisory meetings are very effective in setting clear goals for individual students and encouraging high expectations. Progress towards goals is kept under regular review and individual students who are making good progress or failing to make progress are identified on a weekly basis. Parents are closely involved in this process and receive information about expectations but the school has made less progress in encouraging engagement on issues related to the curriculum.

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.

Teachers work collaboratively to develop the curriculum using cross-curricular groups to agree strategies and materials which align instruction to meet the needs of students. As a result, they share ideas and improve effectiveness. The principal regularly scrutinizes curriculum planning and teaching practice holding teachers accountable for the quality of instruction and levels of student engagement. Clear pedagogical guidance and regular professional development has increased the active engagement of students. The school is still building capacity in its fifth year of operation and recognises that this will involve the further development of curriculum leadership to improve instruction further.

There is much proficient practice which is reinforced by clear guidance in the staff handbook and regular discussion of data and strategies at group meetings. There are good examples of well-differentiated work but practice is not yet consistent across the school. Teaching programs are well-targeted to raise standards from low levels but there has been less emphasis on extending high achieving students. The principal bases

staffing decisions on the need to hire people who are firmly committed to the mission of the school and reinforces this through induction and guidance once a teacher joins the school. Budgeting decisions have been clearly linked to overall objectives. For example, the formation of small groups is a significant priority which has had implications for the budget, staffing and scheduling. As a result, teachers know students well and there are very good support structures which reinforce the “family” atmosphere and this is appreciated by students.

There is a strong focus on attendance with daily and weekly checks backed up by meetings and interventions. As a result attendance levels are higher than those in similar and City schools.

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.

Students, teachers and administration are all involved in hiring staff and decisions are based on a clear rubric which links to the school mission of encouraging high expectations. A carefully thought-out professional development program encourages the development of all teachers and is supported by the National Association for Excellent Education which works closely with the school to develop strategies. Meetings are held each week to discuss the program and there is a proactive approach to adjusting the training to meet particular needs. There is much useful reflection on instruction which has impacted on classroom practice and clear pedagogical guidance linked to the use of data is given in the staff handbook. Regular class observations take place and these have a clear focus on particular skills and strategies for differentiation. The principal and administration give feedback which impacts on instructional practice. Although there is strong overall leadership on this issue, transformational leadership at a subject level is still being developed. Self and peer evaluation takes place in a planned way with the effect that teachers regularly exchange ideas to improve practice based on class observations. The school works with the Math Science Program to develop new strategies and this has helped to improve instruction across the school. The principal has been effective in establishing a collaborative culture where there is a clear focus on instructional practice and professional growth. The policies and procedures are carefully constructed to support the overall mission. For instance, the high degree of collaboration is true to the principle of developing a learning community. This is reinforced by a range of partnerships whose work supports the aim of making students active members of their community through the development of personal and social skills.

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 has been successful in making the Comprehensive Education Plan an effective working document that is regularly discussed by teachers. The involvement of all in the development of priorities has encouraged a culture where progress is regularly analyzed and reviewed. Teacher, student and parent surveys give useful feedback from a variety of perspectives. Data from scholarship reports provides interim information about student

progress which is used to check progress against goals. The key areas of development are related to developing instruction which challenges all students and increasing student participation. These priorities have led to much effective work which has had an impact on practice across the school and this has been adjusted according to experience. Evaluation of progress has been based on detailed consideration of what has worked well but less consideration has been given to longer term planning. Teachers regularly discuss which strategies are working in the classroom but measuring impact through the scrutiny of longer term data happens less frequently.

Because the school has a strong commitment to a clear mission and has pursued this vigorously, it has not focused so intensively on comparing its progress and practices with other schools. There is much good self evaluation linked to the monitoring of student data and this feeds into the annual planning procedures. Because plans tend to have annual rather than interim goals, adjustments tend to be made in the new annual plan. The school has reached the point where its second cohort is about to graduate and recognises that this gives the opportunity to build on its proficient monitoring by focusing more on progress over time and considering how the school should develop in the future.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME: Mott Haven Village Preparatory High School (HS 473)	∅	✓	+
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	