



**NYCDOE**

**Quality Review: Final Report**

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



# **Quality Review Report**

**Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science**

**Middle School/High School 500**

**475 Grand Concourse**

**Bronx**

**NY 10451**

**Principal: Nicholas Paarlberg**

**Dates of review: February 2 - 6, 2007**

**Reviewer: Stephen Walker**

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## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science, Middle/High School 500, is an early college school of 535 students in grades 6 through 12. The school population consists of 75% Hispanic, 19% Black, 5% Asian and 1% White. English language learners comprise 12% of the school population and 80% of the students come from homes where Spanish is the first language. Twelve percent of the enrolment are special education students. The majority of students are Title 1 eligible. Attendance, at 92%, is above that of similar schools and higher than the City-wide average.

The school is a collaboration between the Department of Education and City University of New York. The school is part of the Early College Initiative which removes the traditional boundaries between middle school, high school and college. It is located on the campus of Hostos Community College in South Bronx. Hostos-Lincoln is now a zoned school and takes students from District 7. There are 37 teachers and over 11 support staff. The vision of the academy is to provide students with the confidence and skills necessary to graduate from both high school and college.

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school performs well when compared to City and similar schools, with most students demonstrating good progress during their time at the school.
- Over 85% of the students meet the graduation requirements and the majority of students progress to college education.
- An increasing number of students are taking early college classes during their time at school.
- Intervention programs support students who require additional help with their work.
- The principal provides reflective and supportive leadership with a clear emphasis on the success of all students.
- The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis supported by the teams of teachers and support staff.
- There is a developing program of professional development for teachers.
- There is a positive culture in the school resulting in good attendance and proactive behavior by the majority of students.
- There are very good systems of guidance and pupil personnel which support the performance and personal development of students.
- A growing number of academic and recreational after-school activities are arranged through the school and community organizations.

### What the school needs to improve

- Develop a consistent approach to the tracking of student progress in content areas to give a constantly updated picture of each student's achievement.
- Use this data to plan the next steps in differentiated learning in more detail for students.
- Make more systematic the analysis of data, including by ethnicity and content area, to check that all groups are doing equally well and use the data in setting measurable goals for school improvement.
- Develop further the shared vision across the school and translate it into agreed school policies and strategies for improvement.
- Improve the communication and liaison with parents so that they are encouraged to become more involved in supporting their children in school.
- Develop further the links and cooperation with Hostos Community College as part of the development as an Early College school.

## Part 3: Main findings

### Overall Evaluation

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

The school has a good record of achievement with the majority of students meeting the graduation requirements and performing well when compared to their attainment on entry. Good systems of guidance and support create a positive culture in the school, and promote the performance and personal development of students.

The school is developing effective systems to analyze performance data in order to improve the progress of students. The principal and assistant principals have a good understanding of the performance of students across teaching and subject groups. However, not all teachers and subject areas are yet fully involved in the analysis of data so that it can impact on the teaching and learning in the classroom. Professional development and lesson observations are helping to further improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

The principal provides reflective and supportive leadership with a clear emphasis on the success of all students. However, there is a lack of clear responsibilities and systems for monitoring due to the present structure of the cabinet and subject areas. The vision for school improvement is not fully shared by all members of the staff. The principal is well aware of the areas of improvement so that Hostos-Lincoln Academy can become a more effective early college school.

### **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 is developing effective systems to analyze performance data in order to improve the progress of students. Classroom assessment is a regular feature of classes but it is not at the moment an integral part of teaching and learning. The school conducts additional twice yearly assessments in English and mathematics for the middle school students. Subject areas have not agreed how much assessment information should be recorded to compile a detailed longitudinal portfolio with strengths and areas for development for each student. Individual student performance is analyzed by the school counselors through student transcripts and report cards in order to highlight underperformance.

There is a good overall understanding by the principal of the performance in subjects and classes as well as the overall performance of students. The principal analyzes achievement data from the education department, including the accountability reports and the annual school reports, in order to track differences between subjects and teachers. Class and subject grades are considered through the scholarship reports and trends are noted and discussed with some teachers. The data is analyzed by the principal and the teacher responsible for intervention but subject teachers are not involved in a detailed

analysis of the information. Variations in gender or ethnic groups are acknowledged although there has been no detailed analysis of these differences or discussion about strategies to support specific underachieving groups. The performance of English language learners and special education students is analyzed in detail and the school identifies the increase in the four year graduation rate for these students as an important priority. The school has not fully analyzed the variation of individual student performance between subject areas.

The school does not consciously compare performance with similar schools but it has been proactive in identifying areas of success in other schools and arranging for teachers to visit these schools to experience good practice. The principal is not fully using or sharing among teachers the data that is now available for the school.

**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.**

There are clear goals to support students so that they succeed in the courses but the school does not at the moment agree aspirational performance goals based on prior attainment for either students or classes. There is not as yet an agreed grading policy across the school so that subject teachers clarify and share with students the expectations for assignment and course grades.

Intervention programs effectively support students who require additional help with their work. There is a regular tutoring program after school and on Saturday morning which is mandatory for low-performing students and voluntary for other students. The use of the 37.5 minutes after-school program currently lacks structure and accountability. The summer bridge program is effective in supporting middle school students and helps to identify students who require additional support. The Wilson reading program provides extra help for students who have difficulties with reading. There is also additional counseling for at-risk students through the guidance counselors and social worker. Paraprofessionals are supportive but are not fully effective in the classrooms.

Parents are provided with regular report cards and are invited to parent teacher conferences twice a year. Attendance at these meetings is variable and a large number of parents are not fully engaged in supporting the progress of their children. Students are generally aware of their targets although these targets are not always differentiated according to abilities. Communication and liaison with parents is not at a level that they are encouraged to become more involved in supporting their children in school.

**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.**

Courses are aligned to the levels and interests of the students and groupings are arranged as a result of test scores. New courses have been introduced to meet students’ needs, including middle school health and drama, a one-year course in global history, creative

writing, law and Latin American art. The middle school has introduced the Teachers' College reading and writing project, as well as literacy strategies across all the curriculum areas. An increasing number of students are taking early college classes through Hostos Community College. There is a growing number of academic and recreational after-school activities arranged through the school and the Liberty Partnership program. The school debating team and 'Mindframe', the school literary magazine, have both won City awards.

Teachers are accountable for their classes and discuss the progress of their students with the principal and assistant principal. The majority of instruction is proficient and promotes effective learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most lessons actively engage students. Most classroom management is good and students show good levels of concentration and interest. Students appreciate teachers who are supportive and check their understanding of the work. However, there is limited instructional differentiation in classes so that teachers do not always address the individual learning needs of students. Teachers have not fully developed effective use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

The deployment of teachers and the scheduling of courses are clearly guided by the drive to improve student performance. Intervention strategies clearly demonstrate scheduling modifications to support students who are at risk of failing their assessments. Budgeting decisions are well focused on improving students' performance. For example, additional money has been allocated for teacher supports in the middle school and guidance counselors for the whole school.

There are very good systems within the guidance and pupil personnel teams which support the performance and personal development of students. Students trust adults, and are confident of receiving help if needed. There are effective systems in place to monitor absence, and attendance is over 92%. The school contacts home by telephone for absences and letters are sent home for lateness and absences of more than one day. The attendance coordinator arranges home visits in response to persistent absence or tardiness. The school is examining the introduction of an automatic first day telephone call system and a system to improve punctuality in the mornings. The school has been effective in reducing the drop-out rate and as a result over 85% of students meet graduation requirements.

**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 proficient.**

Teachers are appointed through a rigorous process on the basis of their subject knowledge, and willingness to work as a team member. The use of data is not currently considered at hiring, but the school is aware of the need to develop this area. New teachers are well supported and have recently been reading selected texts in order to empathize with the pressures on high-achieving students.

Lesson observations are well established in the school and all teachers have formal observations as required. In addition, some teachers have developed inter-visitations with their colleagues in order to share good classroom practice although this is not formalized across the school.

There is a developing program of professional development with an emphasis on improving classroom instruction, although this has not impacted on all teachers. The English and mathematics teachers have attended national conferences and more teachers are now visiting other schools to examine good practice. There are regular meetings for grade 6 through 8 teachers who are supporting each other with planning and successful teaching and learning strategies. The literacy coach provides valuable support for teachers on developing literacy strategies. Training on the use of assessment data within subject areas is not fully developed to ensure that this becomes an integral part of teaching and learning.

The school has good partnerships with outside bodies including the Liberty Partnership, Lincoln Hospital and Hunter College. The school gains extra funding through the Gates Foundation and an additional social worker through the Joe Torre Foundation and Safe Horizons. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, well supported by the teams of teachers and support staff. Procedures are not always clear and systems of communication could be improved. There is a positive culture in the school, resulting in good attendance and responsible behavior by the majority of students.

**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 provides reflective and supportive leadership with a clear emphasis on the success of all students. He has done a great deal to move the school forward as part of the Early College Initiative. The challenge is now to develop further the shared vision across the school so that there are agreed school policies and strategies for improvement. There is more of a team approach in the middle school years but there is still a minority of staff who are not fully engaged in the future development of the school. The absence of a formal cabinet and subject leaders does not help with the planning, evaluation and monitoring processes across the school.

The school evaluates its performance and seeks new ways to improve the learning and progress of the students. However, staff are not fully involved in discussions of school improvement and decisions are not always taken based on teachers' understanding of students' progress. There are priorities within the Comprehensive Education Plan but these are not well aligned with the subject action plans that have been mainly written by the principal. The principal acknowledges that there is an opportunity to involve subject leaders and teachers in the development of subject plans so that there is ownership of and commitment to the action plans. At present there is no clear plan of improvement that is shared and supported by all staff and the leadership team.

The school is flexible in the ways it modifies the curriculum and forms of instruction in response to the identified needs of students through external and teacher assessments. New initiatives are not always formalized so that there are clear actions which are communicated, monitored and evaluated. The principal is constantly looking at new ways of improving the school and subsequently raising the success of the students. The links and cooperation with Hostos Community College as part of the early college initiative are not fully developed. The present management structure for the cabinet and subject areas is not fully effective in ensuring that there are clear responsibilities and systems of monitoring throughout the school.

## Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

<b>SCHOOL NAME: Hostos-Lincoln Academy of Science (MS/HS 500)</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>	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	
<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>	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	
<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>	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		
<b>Overall score for Quality Statement 5</b>	X		